



Lake Lure Parks & Recreation Board
Regular Meeting
July 1, 2021

Call to Order

Vice Chairman Mr. Ed Dittmer called to order the July 1, 2021 meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board at 1:35 p.m.

Roll Call

Board Members present:

Mr. Ed Dittmer, Vice Chairman	Mr. Bill Massey	Mr. Robin Worcester
Mrs. Maureen Bay	Mr. Larry Czajkoski	Mr. Dan Bragdon
Mr. Mark Hoek, Alternate		

Board Members absent:

Mr. Jim Walters, Chairman

Town Council and Officials present:

Councilman Christopher Patrick Bryant

Other Town Staff and Contributors Present:

Ms. Dana Bradley – Town of Lake Lure Parks, Recreation and Trails Coordinator
Ms. Baily Hornstein – AmeriCorps Project Conserve
Ms. Laura Krejci - Town of Lake Lure Communications Specialist
Dean Givens - Parks, Recreation, and Lake Director

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MEETING MINUTES

The Agenda for the July 1, 2021 meeting was reviewed. Mrs. Bay asked to add the topic of “Morse Park Master Plan – The Lake Lure Amphitheatre” to the Agenda as well Commissioner Bryant asked to speak after the Amphitheatre due to time constraints. **Mrs. Bay made a motion to approve the Agenda and Mr. Hoek seconded the motion and all members were in favor.**

The Minutes of the June 3, 2021 meeting were reviewed. **Mr. Massey made a motion to approve the Minutes and Mrs. Bay seconded the motion and all members were in favor.**

Special Topics – Presentation & Discussions

Morse Park Master Plan – The Lake Lure Amphitheatre – Ms. Bradley reviewed several renditions of a new amphitheater structure in Morse Park. Ms. Bradley mentioned the company, STITCH Design had given her

several ideas. The Board discussed the designs and spoke about designs they felt would work better for the area. There was discussion regarding funding for this projects. Ms. Bradley reviewed the Rutherford Bound Project, which included the Morse Park upgrade plan. This funding would have to be matched by the town. Members of the Board discussed the use of the grassy area, which is now used by people for various venues such as sports. Overall the Board didn't like the thought of losing the green area for parking. Other discussions were made regarding parking and the old campground across from the Town Center was discussed. Ms. Bradley will look into that land and the cost to purchase. The Board felt that that cost may be less than building a large parking area. There was further discussion. The Board felt favorable for the amphitheater with revisions and further thought into the structure. Ms. Bradley encouraged the Board to send her an email with their thoughts and any other ideas for an amphitheater.

Parks & Recreation Board Members Presentation and Discussion

Input from Town Council Liaison – Commissioner Christopher Patrick Bryant

Commissioner Bryant mentioned the fireworks on the 4th at 9:30pm and thanked Mrs. Doster from the Chamber for the Chamber taking this on. He discussed the ideas for the amphitheater and felt the Board's discussion was good. There was discussion of the TDA Occupancy tax money that the Town receives as well as other funding projects. Commissioner Bryant also discussed the cell phone tower that AT&T has been working with the Town on. He mentioned a possible location of the town property on Boys Camp Road that is in the Village of Chimney Rock jurisdiction. He mentioned they are all working on the project and he will update as things move along.

Parks, Recreation & Lake Report – Ms. Dana Bradley

Ms. Bradley reviewed her report. There was a brief discussion concerning a rumor regarding blue/green algae. Lake Lure does not have the blue/green algae. It was discussed the Lake is tested monthly as well as the water (creeks, rivers, streams) that bring water to the lake. The Lake, does not meet the criteria to be tested for blue/green algae. There was discussion regarding the water testing results and Ms. Bradley will add results to her monthly reports. Ms. Bradley reviewed Luremont Trail and mentioned they were just waiting for all affected property owners to be on board. Ms. Bradley discussed finds designated for the trails would be used to repair/repave the boardwalk in front of the Beach area and replace the boardwalk by the Gazebo. Ms. Bradley is continuing to work on the Open Space Plan. She additionally mentioned that the summer intern was great having around and that he gave many helpful ideas. The Two for Trails Grant was applied for and the Town should hear something back by the end of July as to whether the grant is awarded that will help build the Buffalo Creek Park gravel parking area. This grant was for \$24K. There was also a discussion regarding previous mention of using the biking trails for a competition venue and after research it was best decided this would not be good for the trails.

Golf Course – Mr. Mark Hoek presented findings and happenings regarding the golf course. (Document Attached). The Board had a brief discussion and thanked Mr. Hoek for his review and felt it was quite informative. It was mentioned that with this information and previous discussions regarding the golf course, the Board may be able to get together to make a recommendation to Town Council.

Buffalo Creek Park, Weedpatch Mountain & the Trail to Eagle Rock

Mr. Czajkoski the trail counters and mentioned Weed Patch was down however it was discussed because that trail is difficult and with the extremely hot and humid days, hikers may take easier trails. Ms. Hornstein reviewed word days on the trails and there was mention that Eagle Rock had been vandalized however is now back to normal. Ms. Bradley mentioned the emergency access roads are clear. There was discussion regarding an area that needed some work due to erosion. Mr. Czajkoski was very appreciative to all those who continue to do a fine job of trail maintenance.

Dittmer-Watts Nature Trail Park – Mr. Ed Dittmer

Mr. Dittmer stated the trail counter number was down but there was discussion that it's quite possible not all hikers are being counted now that the second entrance was added and there is no counter there. Mr. Dittmer mentioned finding items on areas of the trail, where things were placed and it was discussed that they were from the Frisbee Golf Tournament. There was mention of trees that were cut down as well in those areas. The Board was not pleased with this news and mentioned that Mr. Minick needs to know about this. Ms. Bradley was very concerned that trees had been cut down. Ms. Hornstein reviewed work done on the work day.

Lake Lure Flowering Bridge – Mr. Bill Massey

Mr. Massey mentioned that the trail counter counted 24,620 passersby for June. Ms. Bradley mentioned that number would include workers and people going back and forth across the counter. Mr. Massey mentioned there are now 12-14 cameras and that the police department was able to identify the two women who stole plants and they will be trespassed. Mr. Massey reviewed events and mentioned the Chimney Swifts they are hoping to have make the new tower a home. They are planning a Pollinator Day where the Monarch Butterfly will be the subject. There are plans for games and crafts. There are plans for the website to be updated. The next big event will be "Bears" which will feature painted bears. Mr. Massey mentioned they have signed up some new volunteers but are still looking for more. The donations are still doing really well.

Ms. Dana Bradley added that she has been communicating with a Mr. Josh Alfonso, and analyst with NCGrowth, which helps business and communities create good jobs and equitable opportunities through applied research and technical assistance. He is working with Chamber Executive Director, Laura Doster to create an asset map of existing and potential outdoor recreation and supporting assets in the Hickory Nut Gorge region. He is also working on how to connect visitors to local businesses to attract outdoor recreation businesses.

Morse Park – Mr. Jim Walters

Mr. Walters was not present however it was mentioned that the park is looking very well and was suggested having small concerts at the Gazebo where folks can sit on the lawn and enjoy the lake and music.

Parks & Recreation Programs and Initiatives

Mr. Bragdon had to leave earlier in the meeting.

Other Comments:

Chamber President Laura Doster reviewed the plans for Independence Fireworks.

Mrs. Krejci discussed the Town of Lake Lure's new website and reviewed with the Board Members the workings of all the new features.

Adjournment

Mr. Czajkoski made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:28 p.m. Mr. Worcester seconded the motion and all members were in favor.

Minutes were transcribed by Kat Canant

The next regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board meeting will be August 5, 2021 at 1:30 pm. It is currently scheduled to be held at the Town of Lake Lure Town Hall.

ATTEST:

Kat Canant for Jim Walters
Jim Walters, Chairman

Kat Canant
Kat Canant, Board Clerk



Dean Givens; Parks, Recreation, and Lake Director

DEPARTMENT: Parks, Recreation, and Lake

REPORT DATE:

PREPARED FOR:

June 28, 2021

Town Manager

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Current Parks, Recreation, and Lake Projects:

1. Boy's Camp Rd. Campground – <i>Not selected for PARTF funding</i>	2. Luremont Trails – <i>Trail scouted; permits filed; Plan approved by Parks and Rec. Board, legal opinion received; working on next steps</i>	3. Marina Phase II and Amphitheater Funding – <i>Working with TDA/ Rutherford Bound to keep projects moving forward</i>
4. Monetization Schedule for P&R Assets and Facilities – <i>New ideas being considered</i>	5. Updating Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan – <i>Working with Ed Dittmer and Moe Bay on updates</i>	6. Morse Park Walking Path Expansion Grant – <i>To expand the pavement back to town hall</i>
7. Morse Park Parking Expansion – <i>Working on plan to create more parking</i>	8. CRSP Ingress/Egress – <i>Meetings planned to discuss how this is going to be done</i>	9. Seeking Grants for Buffalo Creek Park parking lot expansion – <i>Grant has been submitted</i>
10. Permit for Filling in Half of Pond in Morse Park – <i>According to the Morse Park master plan</i>	11. Deep Water Launch – <i>Applying for permits</i>	12. Naming Rights – <i>Working to update policy</i>
13. Dredging Grant – <i>Finalizing budget</i>	14. Golf Course Plan – <i>Golf Course study</i>	

PR&LD ACTIVITIES:

1. Oversee daily operations for Parks, Rec, & Lake
2. Attended multiple staff/public meetings
3. Attended multiple project meetings
4. Worked on multiple projects
 - Dredging
 - Cell Tower
 - Amphitheater
 - Boardwalk/Marina Ribbon Cutting
 - Island Creek Rd. silt disposal site
 - Deepwater Launch
 - Walkway pavers in front of beach
 - New seawall at gazebo
 - Hired new staff
 - Annual firearms qualifying
 - Mining permit updated
 - Chapel Point Rd. lake access easement

PR&TC ACTIVITIES:

1. Worked with PR&L intern on new potential activities/events (Paint in the Park, concerts/movies by water, etc.)
2. Worked on Lake Use Survey
3. Began training new PR&L employee, James Dennett
4. Added more information to the Parks, Recreation, and Lake Department Standard Operating Procedures
5. Added to the PR&L Tools and Equipment Inventory Spreadsheet
6. Collaborated with Rutherford Outdoor Coalition on the Two for the Trails grant for potential funding for the Buffalo Creek Park parking lot expansion – grant has been submitted
7. Checked Buffalo Creek Park, Dittmer-Watts Nature Trails, and Weed Patch Mountain for damage
8. Led Weed Patch Mountain Trail workday on 6/15 to remove trees and clear overgrowth – 4 volunteers; 32 volunteer hours
9. Organized Dittmer-Watts workday on 6/16 to remove trees and clear overgrowth – 6 volunteers; 24 volunteer hours
10. A volunteer cleared overgrown brush from the Buffalo Creek Park Trail on 6/17 and 6/19 – 1 volunteer: 9 volunteer hours
11. Led Buffalo Creek Park workday on 6/22 to repair erosion – 5 volunteers; 20 volunteer hours
12. Led Weed Patch Mountain Trail workday on 6/23 – 4 volunteers; 24 volunteer hours
13. Planned upcoming trail maintenance days and recruited volunteers to help
14. Utilized volunteers to collect water samples – 2 volunteers; 14 volunteer hours
15. Utilized a total of 84 volunteer hours
16. Attended several meetings

P&R Maintenance Activities:

1. Performed regular ground maintenance activities at all areas
2. Cleaned parks, boat ramp, and marina
3. Sprayed playground equipment and picnic tables with bleach

4. Repaired the fountain
5. Installed summer annuals around Lake Lure sign
6. Took down library banners and put up Olympiad and 4th of July banners

Lake Activities:

1. Buoy maintenance
2. Debris pickup

1. FOLLOW UP

1. Open Space Plan: Will continue working with Ed Dittmer and Moe Bay to update the Open Space Plan
2. Luremont Trail: Plan has been approved by Parks and Recreation Board; legal opinion received; working on next steps
3. Boys Camp Road: Not selected for PARTF funding.
4. Dredging Grant: \$637,500 grant awarded, working to finalize budget
5. Naming Rights Policy: Continuing to gather information for Naming Rights Policy for Town properties
6. Lake Lure Trails: Work days held on Lake Lure trails each month to ensure they are properly maintained

2. OTHER

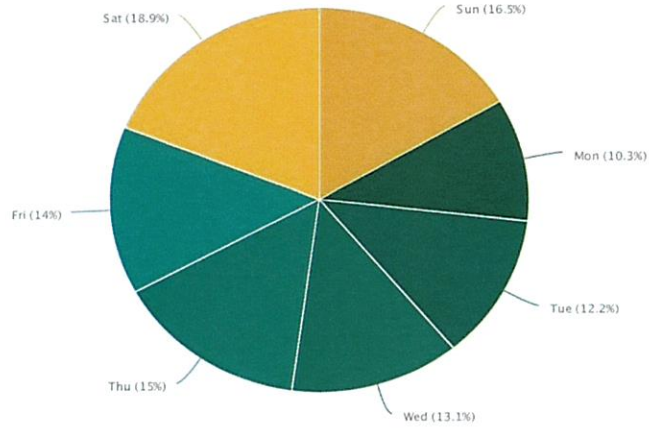
1. Marina Slips Available: 0

LAKE LURE FLOWERING BRIDGE

Year	Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Days with data
2018	LL Flowering Bridge						8,412	23,829	17,368	11,199	14,662	7,051	4,006	206
2019	LL Flowering Bridge	1,248	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	173
2020	LL Flowering Bridge							7,798	16,105	17,342	17,876	11,900	6,809	191
2021	LL Flowering Bridge	3,440	3,723	12,230	17,130	22,236	24,620							147

Days of the Week

2021-06-01 to 2021-06-28



Site Name	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
LL Flowering Bridge	583.7	692.3	746.8	850.8	798.3	1074.3	939.5

Lake Lure Golf and Recreation Center

Solution Template

Beginning:

- March '21 Lake Lure Golf Mgt informed of Town's desire to possibly end lease early
- April '21 Informal petition started at golf course (Voice of the people) currently has 560 persons signed
- May '21 Town's residents informed of Town Mgt's plan to close golf course
- June '21 Parks & Rec Board unanimously agrees to identify potential solutions to keep open

Current Situation:

- 9-hole public golf course with "mini" (no woods) driving range
- Owned by Town of Lake Lure, subsidized and operated by 3rd party under contract to April '22
- Extensive capital expenditures required on dam and sewer system results in need to eliminate subsidy
- Golf course may need to be closed if improved i.e. multiuse remedy cannot be found

Goals: Town wins, taxpayers win, visitors win, new management team wins. Identify lease operator or buyer who commits to:

- Keep golf course open and utilize historic clubhouse. Expand via extensions i.e. additional revenue streams and along Town's Open Space plan. Possible to achieve preservation / conservation trust to ensure golf park in perpetuity.
- Eliminates current subsidy along an agreed to timeline
- Buyer / Lessee would report to an advisory board made up of personnel from Town Mgt, Town Council, Parks & Rec Board etc. on a regular basis to ensure transparency. Owner's discretion to name a Board unless operating within non-profit guidelines.
 - o Examples: Charlotte Mecklenburg Parks & Rec (5 courses) and Asheville City Golf Course (muni)

Potential Solutions:

1. Sell golf course outright on condition course is kept open and expand recreational activities (revenue streams)
 - a. **ACTION:** Appraisal – Town is required to have an appraisal done every 10 yrs so hired TB Harris & Associates out of Charlotte to complete our appraisal in May and reported in June. Tax Parcel 1649620 totals 201.98 acres but some of that has been deeded to LLCA, the Fire Department etc. Appraiser was asked to appraise 5 parcels or "pods" totaling 109.3 acres. Appraiser was asked to provide "highest and best use". [Byon reports comparable municipal 18 hole courses generally sell for \$1.8M-\$2.5M]. What were results?
 - i. **Completed:** Copy of Appraisal received June 26. The appraiser was directed to appraise all 5 pods 3 ways: with no water or sewer, with water only and with both water and sewer. The totals of all 5 pods were \$421 K with no water/sewer, \$440 K with water only and \$984 K with all water and sewer.
 - b. **ACTION:** get copy of current Deed (**completed**)
 - c. **ACTION:** get copy of Town Open Space Plan (**completed**) Confirms our current working document includes moving some recreational activities from Morse Park (to make room for more parking) to Golf Course property which then also qualifies the site as multi-use.

d. **ACTION:** identify potential Buyers / Brokers

- i. Example: Broker Brett Miller (Jun 7 initial discussion). Lives in Fletcher 13 yrs experience, experience with Broadmore, Cleghorn, Lake Junaliska, Augusta municipal and Lake Lure Golf Course (Dale Minnick). Can do a search for straight buyer or lease operator termed "on-going concern". Generally charges \$145/hr freelance, 4.5%-6% commission for sale (some in industry charge as much as 8%-10%) or straight search \$6500. Says superintendents generally earn between \$45K-\$65K

2. Identify new golf course lease operator under new lease agreement terms that works for all parties

Example what to do: Asheville municipal, Donald Ross design, 18 hole with Bar & Grill and like Lake Lure, much of it is in the flood plain. Managed by Pope Golf Mgt (Sarasota, FL). Prior to 2009 Asheville was managing themselves and losing approx \$300K/yr. Current agreement is Pope pays the city of Asheville "X" amount flat fee in quarterly payments, manages the operation and does all the maintenance. If they lose money they eat it and if they make money they keep it all. Going on 10 yrs now and relationship is very good.

Example what not to do: Black Mountain was operating their course at a loss. Raised prices and lost more. Made agreement with Lease Operator Billy Casper Golf but allowed them to dictate terms that required Black Mtn to pay a flat fee of \$85K just to initiate agreement and pay them a \$65K/yr subsidy. Terminated agreement after a few years, went back to operating the course themselves and are in the process of recovering. This gaffe cost the Town Manager her job.

Example: Forest City has excellent subsidized recreational facilities and considers them (1) Quality of Life improvements for citizens and visitors and (2) Goodwill significant generation. Difference is they own their energy and sell to Duke power. They subsidize their golf course \$300K/yr but the employees of the course are employees of the City. Average return on investment is close to break even.

ACTION: Met 6/16 with Pope Golf Management's Pat Warren (GM) & Chris Mahoney (Golf Course Superintendent) at course and gave initial tour. They desire topographical map of course and past 3 years of financial statements. They have responded positively that they are having internal meetings amid planning of future visit.

ACTION: Resort Development Partners (RDP) initial conference call 6/24 on referral from Brights Creek. Founding partner C. Douglas White. They currently have 6 golf/resort properties with 7th in progress. They strictly stay-n-play firm but potentially interested if can build a boutique hotel. Follow-up visit planned in July.

ACTION: Contact Ratcliffe Golf Mgt (Charlotte, NC)

ACTION: contact King-Collins Golf Course Design & Construction

3. Identify potential multiple streams of income to make Lake Lure Golf and Recreation profitable
 - a. Expanded Driving Range – no full ones locally (Lake Lure and Rumbling Bald irons only)
 - b. Miniature golf
 - c. Restaurant / Bar / Grill – requires grease trap (last quote \$16K) and liquor license. NC law says 9-hole courses must have multiple uses in order to obtain liquor license.
 - d. Top Golf – moving into smaller markets and looking for real grass locations
 - e. Formal disc golf course – (note we may be late to the party here as 2 are currently being built in area, one is being built off Big Level in Polk County and another is being built on old Rutherfordton golf course off of 108.
 - f. 4 Tennis courts / pickle-ball courts so can sponsor tournaments
 - g. Some courses utilize food trucks
 - h. Some courses encourage community gatherings in mornings or evenings in designated areas for various activities like family gatherings, cornhole tourney's, music concerts, yoga and more
 - i. Lodging – example tree houses
 - j. Basketball court
 - k. Playground
 - l. Add a "vita Parcours" fitness circuit
 - m. Open air chapel – some courses have plaques, plant trees (similar to Flowering Bridge's bricks) or even doing burials and services / ceremonies that celebrate life like christenings, nuptials etc.
 - n. Current parcel is 109 acres. While one school of thought is to leave a Donald Ross design "as is" there is another that moves holes around to pave way for expansion. For example, two holes (#8 & #9) on clubhouse side of road could be moved to new holes along 1,3,4 or along 5,6 thus clearing the way for additional uses.
4. Identify new partnerships to assist Lake Lure Golf & Recreation Center in more utilization
 - a. Example: Developing partnership with Rutherford County Government (Steve Garrison) fully engage Hickory Nut Gorge and Chamber of Commerce (Laura Doster) and TDA (Don Cason). We have 3 9-hole and 4 18-hole courses in Rutherford County Consider a Golf Consortium For Rutherford County, a co-op that amplifies buying power and contains an effective marketing toolkit.
 - i. Met and toured with owner of Dogwood Valley on 6/23 which is one of our 7 public courses in Rutherford County
 - b. Example: Teaming up with LLCA for golf team, cross country, fundraisers etc
5. Town resorts back to previous model of self operation/management thus eliminating subsidy as would be under departmental expenditures.
 - a. Example: Forest City
6. Opportunities for Investors: most carefree, purposeful golf model.
 - a. Example: Congaree Golf – conceived in SC by 2 billionaires to attract investors they built a very exclusive 18 hole course. They match members to under privileged persons as mentorships during summer and school breaks. This course is so well thought of it was selected and hosted a PGA Tournament in June after only 4 years in existence when the scheduled Canadian Open was cancelled.
 - b. Example: Brights Creek – 3 members recently purchased their golf course.

- i. **ACTION:** contact owner Frank Blythe to determine interest in possibly investing in our course. **Completed:** currently hands full but recommended a possible interest via White Development Partners (mentioned above).
7. Close golf course – if must, may only “save” half as still must be maintained. Don’t have to keep up greens but do need to keep up general mowing and miscellaneous maintenance.
8. Consultant: Byon Morrissey
 - a. She has been an LPGA professional for 23 years and is still actively teaching.
 - b. She is a North Carolina native and played golf for Appalachian State University.
 - c. She has extensive knowledge of our regional golf courses, how various municipalities govern and manage them as well as various golf course management firms.
 - d. Byon is extremely engaged, met with Mayor Pritchett and Councilman Bryant in May and on their recommendation, subsequently presented some interesting ideas to the Parks And Recreation Board in June. She is not seeking compensation but rather, sees it as her “Thank You” to residents of Rutherford County for supporting her golf career during the past 40 years! In ‘81-’82 the Rutherford County’s Superintendent of Schools proposed cutting elementary PE reasoning elementary PE had the least impact on the academic development compared to Art, Music and Guidance. Byon helped fight that and won and has lifelong gratitude for the enormous public involvement. We sincerely appreciate her sharing her knowledge.
9. Golf in General:
 - a. Golf is multi-generational. A 19 year old woman just won the US Open while a 50 year old man just won the PGA Championship.
 - b. Golf overall has seen an upswing during the past 10 yrs and especially in 2020 due to “covid bump” and Lake Lure is no exception. The Lake Lure Golf Course had an all-time high 9002 rounds played in 2020 (includes foot golf, disc golf and a special Olympics tourney). While municipal golf courses saw increased play by 20% in 2020, Lake Lure’s was up 31%. To date thru May 2021, Lake Lure Golf course is up another 15% and is in top condition. Affordable public golf means keeping fees within a tight range and results in an increase in the number and diversity of golfers and the frequency of their rounds played.
 - c. Example: Callaway Golf CEO Chip Brewer in a June 10 interview stated golf long term trends are up including play, equipment and fun (equipment sales up 26% and ball sales up 50% over previous year). Callaway bought Top Golf which has 70 venues in 5 countries and each is profitable from day 1. Top Golf is an inexpensive way to get exposed to “fun” golf and 50% who play Top Golf state they plan to play “real”.
10. Miscellaneous Thoughts:
 - a. Might be nice to have drawing(s) of potential multiple use ideas. Architect David Wolf may be willing
 - b. Should we, could we, have a better online presence regarding the Golf Course?