



Town of Holly Springs
Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
Thursday, February 13, 2025
7:00 pm
Town Hall – Council Chambers

MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Jason Guetgemann, Susan Smith, Sarah Larson, Melinda Walker, Daniel Fenton, Jodi Carey, Val Atkinson, Craig Kessler & Alise Caldwell (TRAC Ex-Officio)

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Adam Huffman, Kristen Denton, Chris Champion, Robert Sears, Allison Behrens

Council Members: Tim Forrest, Danielle Hewetteson, Annie Drees

Call to Order Time: 7:00pm

Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes for November: Sarah

Second: Val

Vote: Approved unanimous

Public Comment Period No public comment

Discussion/Action Items

Hunt Center Programs & Operations Update

Hunt Center Renovation

Hunt Center renovation is complete! New membership access will go live soon.

AIR Programs – Accessible Inclusive Recreation **A.I.R. where everyone can breathe.**

Estimated 1,511 children with *identified* disabilities and their families in Holly Springs. Wake County has an estimated 75k citizens with disabilities. Participants could have intellectual, developmental, physical disabilities, Autism, ADHD, rare genetic deletions, hearing/visual impairments, and EVERYTHING in between. All are welcome!

Community Comparison

Local municipalities with dedicated **Specialized** and **Inclusive** Recreation Programs & Staff: Raleigh, Cary, Apex, Chapel Hill, Durham, Wake Forest & others.

Specialized Recreation: Activities created specifically for participants with disabilities. Example: power wheelchair soccer.

Inclusive Recreation*: Universally designed activities where participants with and without disabilities can participate together as peers. Example: all abilities art class. Laying the Foundation for AIR

- **National Inclusion Project's Inclusive Recreation Specialist Course**

- Enrolled: Current HSPR Program Assistant, Robert Sears.
- Robert applied for free enrollment (\$600 value) and was approved!

- 16-weeks of online classes, activities, course work, discussion & networking opportunities, culminating in final capstone project to benefit HSPR AIR Program.
- Upon course completion, Robert will be recognized by NIP as an Inclusive Recreation Specialist.
- **Hunt Center Improvements:**
 - Accessibility Review with ADA Coordinator
 - Visual Communication Boards for program rooms. Designed by community member with a need!
 - Sensory Kits at front desk and in program rooms
 - Accessibility Statement on facility webpage
- A.I.R. activities will begin in May 2025.
 - Separate section in HURRAHS guide.
 - 14 new activities!
 - Accessibility and ADA Statement in front of HURRAHS.
 - Intentional focus on the emotional well-being of our participants.
- Experienced, well-trained instructors offering Yoga, Art, Music Therapy, Sword Fighting, Bingo, Sensory-friendly events, family education and more!
- Host local adaptive sports teams in our parks and facilities.
- Creating a culture of inclusion. Not just at the Hunt Center, not just in P&R, but across ALL areas and departments. **Please join us as an A.I.R. Advocate!**

Senior Programs

- Outreach Efforts
- Mayor's Chat – 15 attendees
- 2 Focus Groups – 75 attendees
- Survey – 197 responses
- NRPA Healthy Aging Framework supports active, social, and healthy aging through parks and recreation. Focuses on accessibility, physical and mental well-being, and equity. Community partnerships enhance resources for older adults. Encourages intergenerational programs and shared spaces to foster connections across age groups. Helps older adults stay engaged, active, and connected.
- Program Adjustment: Strengthened digital outreach with a dedicated monthly senior newsletter, *The Senior Spotlight*
- Expanded partnerships and collaborations with local health and wellness providers
- New and expanded programs including enhanced senior trips, involvement in Wake Co. Senior Games

TRAC Teen Rec Advisory Council is participating in a variety of volunteer service projects including working in the garden at the HS Food Cupboard.

CARE Program Cultivating Academic Support & Recreation Enrichment

- CARE by the numbers:
 - 7 schools serviced
 - Track Out: 26 kids per week
 - Before School: 16 kids per month
 - After School: 60 kids per month
 - Track Out takes daily field trips to local parks, bowling, Sky Zone, mini golf, etc.
- Challenges
 - Cost of field trips and supplies, Staffing

Hot Topics

PRAC Round Robin

- Sarah made a recommendation to add the following item to the 2025 PRAC Goals: Every member should bring a topic to share during the round robin discussion at PRAC meetings.
- Sarah shared that she attended a recent meeting of the Wake County Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee. She learned about the Crowder Park Master Plan and the connectivity between the County and the Town. She recommended that a liaison position be established with HS PRAC.
- Sarah shared about the Race Against the Sun, a 24 hour endurance race. She thanks P&R and acknowledged the support for the group in terms of accommodating requests such as permitting fires for the event.
- Susan expressed appreciation for the upcoming TAC tree pruning class.
- The committee has received positive feedback from the community about the new RecPass app.
- Feedback was shared that the bridge at Veterans Park has become slippery and would benefit from maintenance.
- Sarah shared that the open house for the Oak Hall/Ting greenway connection went well. Oakhall HOA has received no negative feedback from the homeowners.

Reports

Council Update – CM Forrest

AIR programs – TF asked for communication about these programs

CM Forrest pointed out to Chris that the No Food or Drink sign in the Hunt Center Sign gymnasium is blocked by a plant.

CM Forrest gave an update on the discussion during the Council Retreat including the following highlights.

Council participated in a design charrette for the downtown area and Mims development.

The Bass Lake spillway will be expanded to help reduce flooding.

Discussion on micro transit

TF referenced the Annex, Susan asked if it is going away

Council is in favor of establishing a social district for downtown HS. This will be up for council adoption at the next TC meeting.

In response to CM Forrest's updates, a question was asked about additional parking deck development for downtown. Council is supportive of another parking deck but will seek to pursue a private/public partnership. It was recommended reviewing existing parking garage partnerships in other jurisdictions to learn from the use cases.

It was also recommended additional recycling receptacles downtown to handle the increase in cups due to the social district.

CM Forrest presented Craig Kessler with a certificate of appreciation for his service to the committee.

TRAC Report – Alise

Lots of fun stuff lately with new teens in attendance including the Magic Yarn Project, Valentines Craft Night and the Food Cupboard volunteer work. TRAC is planning for the July 5th event and Clean Up the Park night in April.

Police Community Advisory Group –

Val shared that this group has a large meal for every meeting. Chief Liquorie gave a quarterly report on crime and trends and they had a report from Officer Nelson and the new Police Wellness Dog Kona.

Val acknowledged the presentation from staff on older adults and reinforced what Allison shared about ensuring that communication with seniors is done in ways they prefer.

During the PCAG meetings, people from specific neighborhoods come to share. Val would like to see more people attending PRAC meetings since attendance from the public is typically low. Other members of the Committee agreed and considered that the public are not aware that the meetings are open to the public.

Tree Advisory Committee Update – Mel

TAC has not had a meeting. There is a Litter Cleanup and Tree Pruning workshop coming up in the spring.

Project Updates – Adam

Oak Hall To Ting Greenway, 60% design, scheduled for a completion in Winter 2026

Jones Park Disc Golf Tee Pads Phase 2 to be completed this spring

Community Garden at Sugg Farm making progress, installing fencing. Expected completion in Summer 2025.

Womble Outdoor Basketball still in the planning phase. Expected completion in summer 2026.

Bass Lake Spillway expansion is expected to be approved by TC in March. Project is expected to be completed by fall of 2025.

New water fountain in 12 Oaks is expected to be completed soon, weather permitting.

Middle Creek Greenway is complete other than a small punch list of items. The ribbon cutting is scheduled for March 17.

The turf at the Ting Soccer fields will be replaced this summer, pending TC approval.

In response to Adam's updates, members of the Committee gave feedback that a campaign for trail etiquette education is needed for greenways and trails throughout the Town.

Director Report – None

Old Business

Finalize 2025 Focus Areas – Committee was supportive of approving the focus areas with the addition of the goal recommended by Sarah.

Motion to Approve: Susan

Second: Sarah

Vote: Approved unanimous

Announcements / Information Share

Committee Vacancies

Clarification was requested for the applications for vacancies to provide transparency on available terms limits and expectations for applicants.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: Sarah

Second: Daniel

Vote: Unanimous