



## MEETING MINUTES

### Huntersville Parks and Recreation Commission

Wednesday, May 15, 2019

Members Present: Deanna Baumgardner, Kent Curran, Magic Cypress-McNairy, John Mielke, John O'Neill, Edward Parks, Hank Stiene

Absent: Rich Lange, Kathy Jones

Guests: Thomas Finlay (Carolina Rapids); Lance Munger

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by John M., Vice-Chair, at 6:30 p.m.

#### II. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

John confirmed that a quorum of commissioners was present at the meeting.

#### III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Deanna moved to approve the minutes for the April meeting; Ed seconded the motion. All approved.

#### IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. We won the "Normy" award for "Best Summer Camp"!
- b. Hello Huntersville – The weather was hit or miss. Had to shut down around 5:00 p.m. due to lightning. There was a great turnout. Our first time at Veterans Park. Nice to have everything in one area. There were 65 vendors signed up; 45 showed up even though it rained during setup.
- c. Lake Norman Charter Elementary School Update – Hoping to be done in September or October. We will not start using the gym space until around January after the school gets settled in their new space.
- d. Cory Oddo was selected as Employee of the Quarter. He is a park repair tech - born and raised in Huntersville.
- e. Brandon from HYAA is working on a new project at Hambright Road and Mount Holly Huntersville Road. He is looking to build three baseball fields and an indoor facility. This is a private entity. I would like to meet with him to see what his goals are and find out if we can

work with him. There is definitely a demand for the fields, so we view this as a positive addition to Huntersville.

#### V. PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Deanna reported that she attended the Charlotte Talks live taping with town officials (Huntersville, Davidson and Cornelius). Jack Simoneau from Huntersville Planning was a panelist and mentioned that Huntersville Parks and Rec is the finest he has ever worked with. Right after Jack's comment, someone in the audience boisterously stood up and promoted the Jazz concert that was to take place at Veterans Park the Saturday after that meeting.

Hank mentioned that he asked Thomas Finlay from the Rapids to present at tonight's meeting to report on the merger of the Carolina Rapids, Lake Norman Soccer Club, and Discoveries Soccer Club with the Charlotte Independence.

John M. reported that he attended Hello Huntersville and had a great time. He commented that the water running on the sidewalks made it difficult to get around. Michael reported that Charlotte Water was responsible for this as they run water in that area for flushing out the main lines, which usually lasts one to two weeks. John also said that it would be nice in the future to have cross walks connecting Huntersville-Concord Road to the Park. Michael stated that there will be a traffic light going in on Main Street and a crosswalk will be added at that time - should be sometime next year.

#### VI. PROGRAMMING REPORT

- a. Grower's Market started this past Saturday. Will run until August 24<sup>th</sup>. Available 8:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. each Saturday.
- b. Jazz in the Park was cancelled this past Saturday due to rain. Will be rescheduled to another date.
- c. Artisan Market will be at Veterans Park on May 19<sup>th</sup> (12:00-6:00 p.m.) and October 13<sup>th</sup>. Will be 40+ vendors. Can shop for jewelry, pottery, wood art, etc.
- d. Memorial Day Ceremony – Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. – Veterans Park.
- e. Spider Lily Walk & View at Landsford Canal Street Park (Midlands, SC) – May 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- f. Lalacaboosa Series starts Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> – 6:30-9:00 p.m. at Veterans Park.
- g. Summer Camp – Still openings for preschool camp and sports camps.

#### VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS, REQUESTS, OR PRESENTATIONS

Thomas Finlay from the Carolina Rapids (the "Rapids") attended the meeting to discuss the merger of the Carolina Rapids, Lake Norman Soccer Club and Discoveries Soccer Club, which will form the Charlotte Independence club.

Thomas started his presentation by going over the history of the Rapids, which he has been the Executive Director of since 2006, and that the organization is a traditional non-profit. He tries to

connect with the PRC once a year to report on how the club is doing and talk about the challenges and victories they are experiencing.

Seven years ago, Thomas formed a partnership with the Colorado Rapids, doing business as the Carolina Rapids. Since that time, the club has expanded into other communities, however, their home base is in North Mecklenburg. Currently in the Lake Norman area, members include 1,800 in Huntersville, 900 in Cornelius, and approximately 600-700 in Davidson. There are approximately 5,000 members spread out thru other counties. As you can imagine, it is challenging to manage so many members and thus we saw the need to join up with some other clubs to properly manage this large membership base. We have been great partners with Huntersville and Cornelius over the years and would like to continue that partnership.

A press release recently went out about our merger with Charlotte Independence. We had been talking to the other two clubs about partnering with us so that we could provide a better pathway for kids to stay in the same club all the way from a young age up to a professional level.

Lake Norman Soccer Club covers the Mooresville area, and Discoveries Soccer Club covers the Rock Hill/For Mill area. These clubs have a lot of the same themes and values as we do. We all want to provide services to members and maintain the five “C’s”: Character, Commitment, Communication, Community, and Competition.

Numbers: We believe that numbers can influence thousands of kids nationally. We want to make sure that we do not lot in the shuffle in a large club. We will now have purchasing power and can offer savings for members.

This club is the only one in the country that has programs that range from young boys to adults. There are several levels all in one geographical area. The programs also allow local kids to stay in the area and be involved in a league that has more leverage with fields. Can offer better times – be done by noon on Saturdays instead of finishing in the afternoon. Due to the amount of people in the club, it will have a major impact on the size of future tournaments. Five tournaments out of the seven will be played between Huntersville and Mooresville. Kids won’t have to travel very far, which in turn saves everyone time.

This merger allows for the kids to move forward developmentally over a faster timeframe. Recreation kids will be able to participate in tournaments locally and not have to travel. The youth academy used to drive all the way to Winston Salem to play in tournaments. We will now be able to control where the tournaments are played. This will result most likely in a higher retention rate of members.

Due to the merger and the fact that our revenue will go up significantly, we are looking at committing \$250,000 a year to the Town of Huntersville for synthetic turf fields. This will benefit everyone. In addition, we want to in turn reinvest our profit in three other major areas:

- i. Fields and Facilities: Build a 30,000-40,000 square indoor facility with offices and meeting space;
- ii. Exceptional Coaching Staff: Retain certified, professional coaches that know how to teach children and who are trained and educated. Specifically, we will have a director of coaching methodology who will train the coaches properly; and

- iii. Customer Service: Focus on getting uniforms on time, communicating through emails, etc.

This is a true merger headed by great leadership.

Questions for Thomas:

- Where will the facility be located? Answer: Between Exits 25 and 31. We will continue to keep some satellite offices in this area. One of our goals is to have a club house but not own land and buildings. A long-term lease would be ideal.
- How many clubs are currently included? Answer: Five in the country. We have several kids that are headed to the pros.

After Thomas left the meeting, Deanna asked if they build fields and a facility, would that adversely affect us. Michael said that it would not. The more fields, the better. We will never be caught up with enough rectangular fields for soccer since we will continue to grow.

#### VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Parks and Recreation Master Plan Assignments. As discussed at last month's meeting, Michael requested that the commissioners assist in determining which subdivisions and neighborhoods in Huntersville have amenities. The Planning Department provided Michael with a list of communities under construction and the ones that have been recently completed. The list was divided into quadrants with each quadrant being represented by two or three commissioners. Michael updated the spreadsheet with the information provided by some of the commissioners so far. Michael asked if everyone else could provide their information to him before the next meeting and he will provide updated spreadsheets at next month's meeting.

#### IX. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Rapids Agreement. Michael intended to go over the new agreement between the Town and the Carolina Rapids, however, a draft of the agreement is not yet ready for review. The Town Attorney has more edits to make and a draft should be ready to present at next month's meeting. Michael also mentioned that we would like Mecklenburg County to review the agreement as well and confirm they are fine with it. Our goal is to start construction of the four synthetic turf fields at Barry Park next spring so that the fields are up and running for the 2020 fall season. This timeframe is best and would cause the least amount of disruption for the spring and fall soccer seasons.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm.