



PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date:	16 March 2021	Location:	Zoom
Chair:	Joshua Dietz	Recorder:	Michael Clark
Call to Order:	5:30 p.m.	Adjourn:	7:13 p.m.

Section I - Attendees

Name	Position
Joshua Dietz	Board Chair
Lauren Hartman	Board Vice Chair
Chris Bryant	Board Member
Melanie Crovo	Board Member
Pete Eshelman	Board Member
Matthew Kelley	Board Member
William Modica	Board Member
Jared Rigby	Board Member
Jerome Stephens	Board Member
Sue Williams	Board Member
Michael Clark	Director
Patrick Boas	Recreation Manager
Cindy McFall	Parks Manager
Samantha Dickenson	Athletics Coordinator
Renee Powers	Trails and Greenways Coordinator
Members of the General Public	N/A

Section II - Standing Agenda Items

Item	Discussion
Call to Order	Joshua Dietz called the meeting to order.
Roll Call	Joshua Dietz called roll
Approval of Minutes (Action Required)	Pete Eshelman made a motion to approve February 2021 minutes. Motion seconded by Chris Bryant. February 2021 minutes approved by unanimous vote.
Public Comments	Deferred to Trails Plan and Youth Athletics Refresh agenda items
Member Comments	Deferred to Trails Plan and Youth Athletics Refresh agenda items
Director Comments	Deferred to Trails Plan and Youth Athletics Refresh agenda items

Section III - New Business Items

Item	Discussion
Mill Mountain Trails Plan	<p>Public comments: There were no public comments</p> <p>Member comments: Michael Clark stated the Mill Mountain Trails Plan will create 15 new trails. Some trails will be mountain bike oriented and others will be multi-use and hiking oriented. After the PRAB recommendation, the Mill Mountain Trails Plan will be presented to the planning commission for approval and then sent to city council for review.</p> <p>Joshua Dietz asked if the plan passes does that mean the trails will definitely be built.</p> <p>Michael Clark responded stating completion of the trails will be determined by available resources. Parks and Recreation rely on volunteers to assist with</p>

trail building and trail maintenance. Parks and Recreation will be working on increasing staff to assist with trail building and maintenance. There is currently no definitive time line for completing the trails. The Mill Mountain Trails Plan will be revisited periodically and reviewed. Adjustments will be made as needed.

Pete Eshelman asked how man made features, such as progressive ramps, are addressed in the Mill Mountain Trails Plan.

Renee Powers responded stating the Mill Mountain Trails plan does not specifically address bike ramps. Engineer designed equipment is welcomed as long as it is within the parameters of Risk Management.

Pete Eshelman stated he would like to see the Incline Trail included in the Mill Mountain Trails Plan.

Rene Powers responded stating the Incline Trail was evaluated. The issue with the Incline Trail is that it would deforest a sizable portion of the area that is located within the scenic protection area for the conservation easement.

Pete Eshelman asked would it be possible to go onto the AEP right of way.

Renee Powers responded stating that would be possible but it would require re-negotiation with AEP.

Michael Clark added that sustainability has to be taken into consideration. This would require additional maintenance by staff.

Chris Bryant stated the proposed Mill Mountain Trails Plan was an excellent proposal.

Sue Williams stated she liked the introduction of new trails without additional deforestation.

Joshua Dietz stated his concern was how well the Mill Mountain Trails can be connected to the Roanoke River Greenway. Mr. Dietz continued by asking why 9th street access can't be granted to the Mill Mountain trails.

Renee Powers explained that 9th street access was explored. A retaining wall would have to be built and this presented transportation and site line issues. Ms. Powers elaborated stating cost was also a factor.

Melanie Crovo asked if it would be possible to build a tunnel under Riverland to grant access to the Mill Mountain trails. Ms. Crovo elaborated stating this option would allow access without causing deforestation.

Michael Clark responded stating he would present the option.

Melanie Crovo asked how the Mill Mountain Trails Plan would impact the homeless camps.

Renee Powers responded stating there has been ongoing conversation with the RCPD and the Homeless Assistance Team to provide resources for the impacted homeless living on Mill Mountain.

Michael Clark asked the PRAB board to recommend approval of the recommendation of the Mill Mountain Trails Plan.

Chris Bryant made a motion to approve the recommendation. Bill Modica

	<p>seconded the motion. The motion to recommend the Mill Mountain Trails Plan received a unanimous vote.</p> <p>Public Comments:</p> <p>Jim Burtch stated he and his children have been involved with youth sports. Mr. Burtch added he has also coached youth sports. Mr. Burtch stated he is concerned that youth sports will become privatized and not be available to all youth. Mr. Burtch added youth athletics is important in combating obesity.</p> <p>Ed Sparrow, President of the Greater Southwest Athletic Association, asked what research was done prior to making the decision to have youth athletics managed by the recreation clubs.</p> <p>Joshua Dietz responded stating that it was recommended that the City of Roanoke review youth athletics.</p> <p>Ed Sparrow continued by saying there are issues with the currently proposed options. Mr. Sparrow elaborated stating the in-house option will not run efficiently because it will accept youth with talent as opposed to accepting all youth. The second option, the field athletic option, will create too much burden on the recreation clubs. The third option, if Parks and Recreation and the youth athletic clubs can work through differences, will become a strong partnership. Mr. Sparrow asked the PRAB committee to vote for the third option of a partnership between the City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation and the youth athletic clubs.</p> <p>Lou Moore stated the recreation clubs are working together to produce good athletes at a low cost. Mr. Moore continued by adding that youth athletics help youth prepare for middle school and high school sports. Mr. Moore emphasized the importance of prioritizing the youth.</p> <p>Member Comments:</p> <p>Lauren Hartman stated she grew up playing youth sports. Ms. Hartman reiterated the importance of making a decision that is in the best interest of the youth. Ms. Hartman stated she recommends a partnership between Parks and Recreation and the youth athletic clubs.</p> <p>Chris Bryant stated she is in favor of a partnership between Parks and Recreation and youth athletic clubs. Ms. Bryant recommended a system and/or committee be in place to address issues and complaints. Ms. Bryant asked what were the previous issues between Parks and Recreation and the youth athletic clubs.</p> <p>Ed Sparrow responded there were various issues and complaints. Mr. Sparrow continued by stating Parks and Recreation and youth athletic clubs need to accept accountability when issues develop. Previously, issues were addressed with the Youth Athletic Council but the issues were never resolved.</p> <p>Melanie Crovo asked if Parks and Recreation could have more oversight over the youth athletic clubs. Ms. Crovo suggested establishing clearly defined rules and provide a comprehensive advertising plan informing the public of what youth sport activities are available. Ms. Crovo added that, based on the survey results, there appears to be a disparity between what the public and recreation clubs view as identifiable problems.</p> <p>Pete Eshelman stated that inequities need to be addressed. Mr. Eshelman continued by adding there are inconsistencies ranging from how registration is set up to how uniforms and trophies are dispersed. Mr. Eshelman emphasized that the inconsistencies with the providers is negatively impacting some youth depending on where they live. Pete Eshelman suggested a hybrid</p>
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model moving forward.

Matthew Kelley stated he would like to see program inclusivity and an increase in customer service and quality instruction. Mr. Kelley stated he would be in favor of a hybrid collaboration between Parks and Recreation and the recreation clubs.

Luke Priddy stated he is in favor of option one which will have The City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation handle youth athletics in-house. Mr. Priddy stated that previous issues may resurface with the hybrid model. Mr. Priddy continued by adding that option two would not provide equal opportunities for youth.

Joshua Dietz asked Luke Priddy his opinion on the cost of option one.

Luke Priddy replied stating that he expects that COVID relief funds would be available to assist with funding.

Jared Rigby stated he has had a positive experience with youth athletics. Mr. Rigby stated he would like to see an equitable program. Mr. Rigby stated he believes the hybrid program is working as long as it reaches as many youth as possible. Mr. Rigby continued by stating in-house would probably reach more youth. Jared Rigby reiterated that reaching the most youth would be ideal.

Sue Williams stated her main concern is the involvement of families and children who are unable to get into youth athletics. Ms. Williams continued by stating she favors the third option. The third option is the hybrid option where Parks and Recreation and the recreation clubs will share youth athletic responsibilities.

Ed Sparrow responded to Sue Williams explaining that all sports are offered through all four recreation clubs. These sports include soccer, baseball, basketball, softball and football. In some areas there is not enough participation to fill teams. In some instances, when this happens, youth have to be moved to other recreation clubs. Mr. Sparrow added that volleyball was introduced last year shortly before COVID-19 but due to the pandemic volleyball did not start.

Pete Eshelman responded to Ed Sparrow emphasizing there are non-traditional sports that are not represented such as Youth Mountain Biking and rock climbing.

Melanie Crovo asked if there were provisions in the hybrid model that could address the equity problem. Ms. Crovo expanded by asking if there was a system in place to assist recreation clubs when they encounter problems; such as providing scholarships to youth in need.

Ed Sparrow responded to Melanie Crovo stating scholarships are provided as needed and in some cases the registration fee is waived.

Brent Robertson, Assistant City Manager for Community Development, stated he would like to see consistency and quality with youth athletics. Mr. Robertson continued by emphasizing the importance of accountability.

Joshua Dietz stated he has observed there is a lack of communication between Parks and Recreation and the youth athletic clubs. Joshua Dietz stated he is in favor of the hybrid model.

Jerome Stephens emphasized the decline in the number of recreation clubs from 2008 to 2021. Mr. Stephens stated that in 2008 there were 16 recreation clubs and presently there are 4. Mr. Stephens added that youth recreation will move to in-house management if the decline continues.

Director Comments:

Michael Clark stated jurisdictions identified as bench mark communities were studied. The research revealed that many communities incorporate the support of private providers. This support is often in the form of volunteer coaches and volunteer officials. Mr. Clark emphasized that accountability and communication will be key components in moving forward. Mr. Clark elaborated stating there is a need for an advisory board where concerns can be voiced.

Conclusion Statements:

Joshua Dietz summarized the available options being considered for the Youth Athletics Refresh Plan. The options include the following:

- (1) The City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation will handle youth athletics in-house.
- (2) The City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation will provide facilities only.
- (3) The City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation will provide a hybrid option sharing responsibilities with the recreation clubs.

Luke Priddy asked what would be the cost for options 1 and 3.

Michael Clark provided a cost summary for each option. They are as follows:

Option 1 (in-house option): This model would cost \$110,000 plus the cost of 2 entry level staff positions that handle registrations, equipment management and the scheduling of games and officials. The cost of uniforms and equipment for participants will be included. The \$260,000 is a net cost taking into account \$80,000 that is generated from registration fee revenue. Built in is \$30,000 in scholarships. This scholarship amount is based on current scholarship participation. Any participant who is below the 133% federal poverty rate receives scholarship funding.

Option 3 (collaborative option): \$110,000 would cover pay for officials, umpires, referees and part-time staff. The background screenings for coaches would be covered. The hiring of security.

Luke Priddy made a motion to approve option 1. No one seconded Luke Priddy's motion to approve option 1.

Luke Priddy followed by stating he would like to motion to approve option 3. Pete Eshelman seconded option 3.

Chris Bryant made a motion to approve option 3 with the stipulation that the formation of a Youth Athletic Advisory Board be expedited and communication remains consistent between the City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation and youth athletic clubs.

Pete Eshelman seconded Chris Bryant's motion to approve option 3 with the added stipulation.

Option 3 with the added stipulation was approved by a unanimous vote.

Section IV - Old Business Items

Item	Discussion
N/A	N/A

Section V - Other Business Items

Item	Discussion
N/A	N/A

Section VI Next Meeting

Title	Name	Position
Chair	TBD	Board Chair
Recorder	Michael Clark	Director

Date	Time	Location
20 April 2021	5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.	Zoom

