



Oconee County Parks & Recreation

Lisa Davol, Director

Board of Commissioners

John Daniell, Chairman
Mark Thomas, Post 1
Chuck Horton, Post 2
Amrey Harden, Post 3
Mark Saxon, Post 4

Citizens Advisory Committee on Recreation Affairs Meeting Minutes – March 16, 2021

Members Present: Richard Ashmore, Jeanne Barsanti (via conference call), Jason Hewell, Melissa Hopkinson, Leslie Hunsinger, Dan Moore, Wesley Scott, Kimberly Thomas

Members Absent: Giles Moree

Staff: Lisa Davol, Whitney Sperlik, Zach Churchill (Recreation Manager)

Guests: Kevin McHugh, David Lockman, Ed Novey, Mike Luffler, Nelda Van Schoick

BOC: None

Press: None

Minutes:

1. Call to Order. The Recreation Committee convened the regular meeting at Oconee Veterans Park. Leslie Hunsinger called the meeting to order.
2. Approve the Agenda. Richard Ashmore made a motion to approve the agenda. Dan Moore seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Motion approved unanimously.
3. Approve January 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Richard Ashmore made a motion to approve the minutes and Melissa Hopkinson seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.
4. Zach Churchill – Recreation Manager. Zach Churchill shared his educational and work experience background prior to starting with OCPRD. In addition, Churchill informed the group of his current responsibilities with the department. Leslie Hunsinger inquired about the transition of After School from the park to the school locations, as well as any COVID-19 challenges. Davol stated the transition to the schools for After School began in 2012 with all After School being offered in each elementary school in 2018. Churchill gave information regarding COVID protocols, program adaption such as “Don’t Touch a Truck”, ensuring flexibility to the changing guidelines and working with volunteers to assist in supporting the protocols. Davol reiterated the flexibility required by staff in order to staff up to date with all the revised guidelines. Davol also informed the committee that OCPRD would not be offering a Summer Day Camp this year based on several challenges, such as shared facilities with the public, inability to offer separate facilities for age groups and limited numbers permitted per facilities (campers and staff); all of which placed the OCPRD program in what CDC defines as an “even more risk” program. Kimberly Thomas stated that she supported our decision.
5. Program and Park Updates. Whitney Sperlik provided program updates to include spring registration has 1690 participants plus 1220 user group participants (OCLL, OFC, OYLA and COTA), upcoming “Don’t Touch a Truck” event at Heritage Park and staffing vacancies. Wesley Scott provided an update on OCLL opening ceremonies held on Saturday, March 13 for 880 participants.



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Davol communicated park updates to include spring field preparations, grounds maintenance conducted, park repairs (OVP Field 5 light wiring, in-house painting project, OVP water infiltration, dog park water line, BSC clogged restroom drain line, BSC roof replacements) and park improvements/maintenance (exterior light to HCM tennis, playground mulch, BSC septic tanks pumped, Heritage Park (HP) restroom lights to LED, brush cut along HP trail access, HP Central School House drainage addressed). Davol also stated that the HCM brown building men's restroom and dog park were vandalized. Jeanne Barsanti provided summary of the HP invasive plant volunteer workdays held. Davol informed all that the OVP back gate would start being shut at sunset, with the exception of nights when programmed when it will be shut at 8:30pm. Richard Ashmore asked about security cameras and if OCSO deputies routinely drove through that back area of the park. Davol answered OCPRD is currently working on adding additional security cameras and that OCSO does drive through the parks. Kimberly Thomas stated that GA Power has an escrow program for free energy assessments and also programs for schools to upgrade to LED lights. Ashmore questioned if the county was in a shortfall this year and Davol responded that the county prepared for any decreases last year and is in good financial condition. Davol reminded the committee that based on the BOC BOE Joint Use Agreement, the BOE would be charging Parks and Recreation 50% of their facility fee for park programs in the schools, primarily affecting tackle football and basketball and to a lesser extent soccer. Leslie Hunsinger asked if BOE uses park facilities and Davol stated yes but to a much smaller degree. Thomas questioned if BOC charges BOE for use of park facilities and Davol responded no. Thomas expressed concern that the BOE fee would continue to increase making it difficult for parks to grow programs. Hunsinger stated that parents are getting double charged.

6. Other Business.

- Whitney Sperlik provided an update on the citizen driven Oconee Park Foundation. Sperlik asked any interested persons to stay after the meeting to discuss.
- Richard Ashmore said that we still need to update the park master plan with work conducted by a professional contractor.
- Lisa Davol requested agenda items for future meetings.

7. Public Comment.

- Kevin McHugh – Stated HCM quickstart tennis courts are deteriorating and heard the contractor balked at repairing. Davol said contractor must repair courts for 5 years and has not avoided that responsibility.
- David Lockman – Requested consideration for pickleball courts for any new parks, possibly shared court usage.
- Ed Novey – Said he does not understand why Oconee County does not have more pickleball courts as the sport has increased in popularity.
- *RAC - Thomas stated the hurdle is financial. Hunsinger added that additional funding for pickleball lines has been included in recent years. Ashmore said the committee looks at the broad spectrum of park users, understanding pickleball desires but not able to ignore other needs, requiring a balanced view perspective since there are competing interests.*

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- Mike Luffler – Thanked Parks and Recreation for adding the kitchen lines on the HCM indoor courts and added that the court floor refinishing project was well done. He also stated that the HCM outdoor courts were an abomination.
 - Nelda Van Schoick – Introduced herself as the president of the Athens Clarke County pickleball association with approximately 250 members, many Oconee County citizens. Van Schoick said that tournaments would assist with financial support, stating that a tournament held in 2019 that generated \$20,000 in revenue with Athens Clarke County receiving \$600.
8. Motion to adjourn made by Richard Ashmore. Motion seconded by Wesley Scott. Motion passed unanimously.

Next RAC Committee Meeting:

Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 5 p.m. at Oconee Veterans Park - Community Center