



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 – July 20, 2021

Members Present: Richard Ashmore, Jeanne Barsanti, Melissa Hopkinson, Leslie Hunsinger, Dan Moore, Giles Moree, Wesley Scott, Kimberly Thomas

Members Absent: Jason Hewell

Staff: Lisa Davol, Whitney Sperlik,

Guests: Mike Luffler (Pickleball)

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. Jeanne Barsanti seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Motion approved unanimously.
3. Approve May 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Richard Ashmore made a motion to approve the minutes and Wesley Scott seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.
4. Firefly Trail – John Kissane Trail Development Coordinator and Ivette Bledsoe Board Member Kissane explained the Firefly Trail nonprofit organization advocates for trails and assists in securing funding. Kissane stated the project has built support over the last 6 years for a 39-mile trail from Athens-Clarke County (ACC) to Union Point. Kissane introduced Bledsoe, board member and Oconee resident. Aside from the Ticket to Ride fundraiser, ACC SPLOST and TSPLOST funding, Bledsoe said that they also used a crowdfunding campaign to build 3 model miles, 1 in ACC, 1 in Maxey and 1 in Union Point. Kissane stated that most of ACC was funded and efforts are focused on Oglethorpe and Greene County. The organization also secured funding from the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program. Kissane discussed the 5 local action committees developed to assist with supporting the initiative and evolving into help with maintenance and safety of the trail, similar to a trail ambassador program. Kissane also explained that the plan for the Athens Line trail concept was to go through Oconee County. Ashmore asked for an explanation of a multi-use trail and Leslie Hunsinger inquired about the trail width. Kissane and Bledsoe described the trails and multi-modal, though mostly bikes, runners and walkers with widths from 12 to 14 feet with average costs dependent on trail surface. Bledsoe added that any necessary bridges significantly increases the trail costs. Davol asked what was the first steps to establishing the group. Bledsoe said organizing an advocacy group, identifying the trail plan, as well as hosting annual events to promote the



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project. In addition, Bledsoe said that ACC owned most of the rail line which made the process easier. Giles mentioned that the Oconee railbed was abandoned years ago, although it is privately owned.

5. Program and Park Updates. Whitney Sperlik provided program updates to include summer sports camps, summer swim meets, fall program registration, new fall Trick or Treat Trail event, COTA adult state tournament at OVP and OCLL softball state tournament at OVP. In addition, Sperlik informed all that OCPRD now provides one-week priority registration for Oconee County residents, with registration opened to everyone the following week. Sperlik also stated that the Senior Center is utilizing OVP for their Senior Fit program during their building expansion project.

Davol shared park updates to include the park security camera project, athletic field maintenance, OVP quad water pressure issues, field light repairs needed, OVP gym HVAC unit and HCM Brannen Building HVAC repairs, scoreboard repairs, BSC maintenance shop completion, Heritage Park Central School house foundation work, SORBA replacement of 3 Heritage Park bike bridges, as well as other general park projects.

6. Other Business.
 - Sperlik asked any interested persons to stay after the meeting to discuss the Oconee Parks Foundation.
 - Richard Ashmore requested next RAC meeting be held at a different park.
 - Davol stated that RAC renewals are due by August 10.
 - Davol requested agenda items for future meetings.
7. Public Comment.
 - Mike Luffler (Pickleball) – Stated that pickleball has average 20-22 players this summer, saying that it is “going to hit a critical mass soon if we do not come up with something.” Luffler said that the ideal time to add pickleball courts would be when the additional SPLOST tennis courts are being build, and HCM courts could be converted to add pickleball courts.
8. Motion to adjourn made by Richard Ashmore. Motion seconded by Dan Moore. Motion passed unanimously.

Next RAC Committee Meeting:

Tuesday, September 21 at 5 p.m. outside at Heritage Park