

**Matthews Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources  
Advisory Committee  
May, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

Committee Members Present: Howie Labiner, Harvey Boyd, Gretchen Reid, Sandi Lee  
Committee Members Absent: Matt Jones, Mary Ciminelli, John Estes, Bob Evans, Corey Villas  
Staff Members Present: Corey King, Michelle Savago  
Staff Members Absent: Colten Marble, Scott Rawls, Karla Thornhill, Ashley Warwick, Lee Anne Moore

Chairman Howie Labiner called the meeting to order at 6:43pm. April minutes were unanimously approved.

**Public Comment**

- Dianne Baker, Elizabeth McCollom, Katherine Hall- Members of the Matthews Monroe Road Advocates
  - They are interested in preserving a piece of land that is located at the corner of Monroe Road and Galleria Boulevard, and turning it into a park. As of right now, this piece of land is proposed to become a location for an apartment complex.
  - This piece of land contains Roseland Cemetery, a final resting place for emancipated slaves that date back to the 1800s.
  - A few factors that make purchasing the property difficult would be the cost of the initial purchase, upkeep, and staffing, as well as the priority of the space.
  - This group would have to present this motion to Planning and Zoning. Planning and Zoning would then take the motion to Town Council.

**Cultural Report- Colten Marble**

- Programs/Activities
  - New gallery display: En Plein Air Competition from the Matthews Artists Guild. (En Plein Air: Painting outdoors, reproducing the conditions at the time of painting...what you actually “see”)
  - June Show: FREEDOM Art Gallery – Works from our Arts for Veterans class and the Arts for Special Needs classes. Reception and Sale: June 5, 2pm – 4pm
- Matthews Ballet and Dance: Recital on May 21 and 22.
- Summer Camps: Our registration numbers are slightly behind last year’s pace (20 registrations behind)
- Matthews Playhouse: Next Mainstage Production: Oklahoma (June 10 – 26)

- Public Art
  - The “Book Mural” behind the library has not been installed, but should be completed very soon (Preview available digitally). The same company that installed the other murals in Town is also completing this project. The image contains approximately 25-30 books in a row, creating the look of a bookshelf in the parking lot. The library was consulted to reflect the “most read” books in Matthews by referring to their list of books most often checked-out.
  - Roof Renovation
    - The renovation continues. The project is progressing as scheduled. We still do not have operational HVAC units on the top floor, so visit my office or the Playhouse Office for a nice sauna experience. The expected completion date remains July 2016.
    - Corey will provide any additional update information.

#### **Athletics Report- Karla Thornhill**

- Activities/Programs
  - Adult Recess program beginning on Wednesday nights in May; Knockerball soccer, dodgeball, cornhole, table tennis and pickup basketball. Entrance is \$2/person, all equipment will be provided.
  - Staff is gearing up for summer camp, hiring new staff, ordering new equipment, inventorying crafts, and putting together the staff orientation.
  - Pickleball, Badminton, bridge, Karate, Zumba, Fencing, and Date Night Drop Off are all still doing well and increasing in popularity.
- Corey informed the Committee that Karla has accepted a job with Mecklenburg County. Her last day will be May 14.

#### **Parks Report- Scott Rawls**

- Kids In Nature Day and Earth Day were both very successful.
- Phillips Road Community Garden – Plots are moving fast! Only 23/48 remain.
  - Contact Scott Rawls about plot rentals – [srawls@matthewsnc.gov](mailto:srawls@matthewsnc.gov) – 704-708-1288
- Discovering: Migrating Birds – Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at the Matthews Community Center
  - Participants will learn about different birds in this area. Create a bird journal and walk on the Greenway to observe the different birds we see. \$2. Children ages 7+

### **Special Event Report- Lee Anne Moore**

- BeachFest is one week away, hoping for good weather.
  - Increased number of exhibitors/corporate vendors this year; if they have a positive experience, they spread the word.
- Food Truck Friday still going strong; rain has been a challenge this month. A new sponsor has agreed to participate for the remainder of the season (Charlotte Metro Credit Union).
- They are moving into downtown Matthews and wants to get involved in town events.
- Food Fight event will be on May 21. There will be 25+ food trucks, voting on best truck food, craft beer, music, etc.
- Summer Concert/Movie Series begins on May 28, staff is looking forward to that 9-week run.

### **Director's Report- Corey King**

- New Business
  - Properties to purchase
    - Mayor Jim Taylor made the suggestion of possibly issuing another bond for parks. There has been \$20,000.00 approved in the FY '16/'17 budget for pocket parks.
    - There is a piece of property at the intersection of Pleasant Plains Road & McKee Road that is being donated to the Town.
    - The property at Country Place will be updated with landscape work.
  - Questions/Comments
    - Howie suggested a pocket park in a residential area, as well as playground equipment installed at the future park on Pleasant Plains/McKee Rd.
    - Gretchen suggested a pocket park be placed in front of the Matthews Community Center where the drain is. Possibly with more seating with a gazebo and a boardwalk type style walkway.
    - Harvey expressed his ideas about putting a pocket park in the Crestdale community.
  - Monroe Road Park idea from public guests (from last meeting)
    - The Planning and Zoning Department expressed that the location wasn't ideal for a park.
    - Gretchen made the suggestion to subdivide the property and save at least some of it. Especially to preserve the cemetery.
      - Developers would want the larger amount of land to be able to fit more into it.
    - As of now, this land is under contract, so there is a chance it may or may not become available.
      - Corey suggested that if the committee wanted to be proactive, it may be time to go ahead and pitch the idea to the Mayor and Town Board under public comment at the Town Council meeting. The reasoning would be that this is an under-served area.
    - Howie would like to get more input from the Planning Department, possibly at the next Advisory meeting to figure out if there are options.

- The consensus of the Advisory Committee right now is to get more information before a final opinion is made.
- Outen Pottery
  - The task force that was working on the Outen Pottery property has since disassembled.
  - The issue with this being a pocket park is that it is fairly hidden in the middle of a neighborhood.
  - Gretchen suggested that a path be created for pedestrians and bring it out to Country Place, Plantation Estates, or Fullwood. Historic place markers could be put throughout the Town that would pull everything together; a “Historic Trail.”
  - Sandi suggested meeting with a historical group on this at a future Advisory meeting.
- The Library mural will be going up.
- Park facility visits by the Advisory Committee members will be back in affect beginning next meeting.
- Partners for Parks
  - A non-profit group that holds fundraising events to help fund park projects in Mecklenburg County & surrounding areas. All of the funds raised goes towards the projects; no funds are held by the group.
  - An agreement would be in place if the Town would like to work with the group. This can be a new event, or add a new element to an existing event to benefit the Town.
    - Example: A fundraising event at Pawsitively could help fund a new dog park.
  - The consensus is to work with Partners for Parks.
- Old Business
  - Budget
    - As mentioned above, \$20,000.00 has been requested in the FY ‘16/’17 budget for pocket parks, as well as funding for the heritage trail. Construction documents for construction of Phase 1 of the Rice Road Park were proposed, and proposed improvements to the Fullwood Theater have also been proposed in the upcoming FY17 budget.
  - Next meeting, a discussion will be held to analyze the cost of programs & events and how it affects the benefit of the community.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13pm.