

Minutes - Draft

**PECS-Planning, Economic Development & Community Services
Committee**

Monday, May 2, 2022

2:00 PM

Special Called Meeting

This meeting will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Simultaneous public access to the meeting will be available

*(1) via live stream on DCTV's webpage,
(2) on DCTVChannel23.TV*

Meeting Started At: 2:01PM

Attendees: Commissioners Johnson, Davis Johnson, Rader, Bradshaw, Terry, Patrick

Present 3 - Commissioner Larry Johnson, Commissioner Jeff Rader, and
Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson

I. AGENDA ITEM

[2022-1190](#) Commission District(s): All
Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs 10-Year Master Plan
**This agenda item was recommended holding in
committee to the Board of Commissioners, due back on
5/10/2022 .**

-information provided by Director Ellis

-presentation provided by Will Hager of the American Planning Association

-Question LJ: regarding page 28, the proposed \$275M in investments to be made, do you have a scale we can put with this figure that discusses increasing quality of life, to connect the public to how these outcomes will increase wellness, etc. Also, will this \$275M bring us more in line with more an adventure park feel, or are we just replacing equipment? Will this bring us into the modern playground era?

-C Ellis: the master plan addressed a lot of that in terms of telling our story and using our facilities to do that. Regarding the \$275M, we do individual master plans for each park; we will be looking at a lot of modern trends to give that feel you are talking about. I think these things can be addressed and bring elements to our parks

-LJ: each district should have something distinct features that other smaller parks may not have that could be a destination or tourist location that draws families. Mr. Hager, regarding the top 5 list - did you go to any of the schools to talk to those folks on what they would like to see in the parks?

-W Hager: the age group I think you're referring to was there; they seemed more interested in mountain biking and modes like that

-LJ: if you get a chance let's get that group of Generation Z and 18 and younger to have things they could do that we are going for in the interim.

-Question JR: regarding the newly offered recommendations as a response to our input - now the plan does note the facility at Mason Mill is more of a community center. Does the plan now recognize that service area requires amenities recognized in the Mason Mill park master plan?

-W Hager: It's not currently in the plan; we will modify the current recommendations for Mason Mill to speak to those terms

-Question JR: it may not be feasible to place on that site based on intensity of use and funding secured on it - we'd like to demonstrate the service area for that facility and where it meets the needs of those using it; I want to ensure this is in line with the appropriation the BOC to locate a facility and have it referenced in the master plan.

-Question JR: regarding the overuse of the athletic facilities, we should develop an intensity of use assessment tool to determine whether facilities are overused, whether the host park is being impaired by that intensive use; I would like to operationalize a response to that observation, so that we could respond with management of the facilities there, or alternatively a strategy to develop other capacity within the same service area so the facility does not have overuse or negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood. Can that go into the master plan?

-W Hager: it may depend on each facility; youth facilities for instance may have changes in sport that overlaps with other needs; I will talk with Director Ellis and others on how to approach that. It may require more thought. This is the balance of how flexible or precise you want the document to be

-Question JR: How do we do a sustainability lens is another consideration

-Question JR: where are we on the stormwater plan contracts that ARP funding was dedicated for?

Z Williams: let me find out the latest; I've had conversations in the last 2 weeks on them moving forward through Purchasing

-JR: if you could send us a follow up email on that; whether that would be captured in the master plan we would need to know that

-Question TT: regarding the trails map in the presentation, I've heard from constituents that the more we connect our parks promotes the overall access and expansion. The Trust for Public Land has a 10 minute walk to a high quality park program; this map shows us create the landscape to eliminate park deserts. As we build out our parks, I want there to be consideration on how safety is incorporated. What is the strategy for lighting/video call boxes, and how does our community policing fit into this? Do we see a moment in the master plan where we have our trails connected, with addition of a bicycle/park patrol only? I would be interested to see what Director Ellis and Public Safety think about this. Regarding the top five suggestions for facilities, the small neighborhood parks are interesting - we have FEMA buyout parks. Atlanta and other jurisdictions had been implementing neighborhood stormwater parks that has elements of a park, where the intent is stormwater focused, but has a park element engrained. I would like us to think creatively about how we can democratize neighborhood parks. The system interesting to explore is a formula or a neighborhood special service district that would provide resources to the park it faces, while providing some sort of matching support between the County SPLOST dollars and neighborhoods, for example. I'm trying to think of how we can support neighborhoods without a lot of funds to support projects like this. How do we support small neighborhood parks in a sustainable and equitable way?

C Ellis: my recommendation would be to go sky-level on some of these issues, like the FEMA lots. We don't want to be too specific in this document - it can direct us to look at certain things because we don't want to get locked in to certain commitments

-TT: that makes sense; is there a way to discuss these small neighborhood parks and express the desire that we need a

practical way to fund these things

M Billups: We have use FEMA lots these things in the past to fund community gardens; not only small neighborhood parks but wetland areas

-Question TT: what is your perspective on when new development is created that creates a public park, but also has amenities that the broader community can access - do we capture where those are? Are there ever cases where we have to take over the maintenance?

C Ellis: if it's in our name we take care of it; if not we don't. there have been cases where we put requirements for developers to put in parks based on the need if it exists; there is a planning aspect taken into it in some cases

-TT: now that we have data on where the needs are, we can start to think about those other options in the greenspace category

-Question RP: one of the maps had a priority listing of trails - how do we look at the work that PATH has done regarding district specific work?

C Ellis: the trail master plan may address that better for you; this plan is specific to parks

-JR: perhaps you should put that notation in this plan; a note of the trail plan as implementing within this parks master plan

-Question RP: how does this plan interact with the 2050 plan?

C Ellis: the timing of the plans are a bit different. The comprehensive plan is much larger; each one is one for the other to follow

-JR: would it make sense to reference the comprehensive plan as a document for which this should be integrated?

-M Billups: There is language in the 2035 plan that includes some of the same recreational amenities here; it would behoove us to talk about the language that connects the plans

-JR: it would make sense to have some consistency; this will not reflect all the trails that are planned for development

-JR: what we could do - there are some areas that we discussed being added into the plan. If you all could incorporate these amendments being discussed into the final document; once completed please circulate one final time and ask the committee for adoption. In light of input today, please prepare a final draft for review and adoption by the PECS committee, and we will move forward to the commission with a recommendation

Meeting Ended At: 2:59PM

Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC