

**Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs
Citizens Advisory Board
March 25, 2025**

Location: Gresham Recreation Center- 3113 Gresham Road, Atlanta, GA 30316

<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>GUEST</u>
Chris S. Hester (Patrick –D1) Sally Sears (Long Spears – D2) Dennis Allen (Davis Johnson – D5) Christina Rios (Terry- D6) Victoria D. Anglin (Bolton - D7) Whitney McGinniss (DeKalb County School Board) Melanie Hammet (DeKalb Municipal Association)	Priscilla Davenport Mavro Diamanti Keelan Bearden Tony Slaton Averie Adams David Flaherty (Staff) Maurice Coley (Staff)
<u>VACANT</u> CEO's Office Massiah – D3 Johnson – D4 DeKalb Legislative Delegation	
<u>STAFF:</u> Chuck O. Ellis, Director JeT'aime Bennett, Administrative Assistant Carol Underwood, Administrative Coordinator	

Citizens Advisory Board - CAB

Chair – Sally Sears

Vice Chair – Christina Rios

Secretary – Dennis Allen

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL: Chair, Sally Sears called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. and thanked Recreation District Administrator, Wannetter Terrell for providing refreshments.

This meeting was being filmed by Mavro Diamanti, Writer & Producer for a ***Gresham Documentary: Moment of Advocacy & Large Groups***

ROSTER: Attendance of members and staff noted above.

CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES: (January 28, 2025)

Dennis Allen made a motion to approve the minutes and Victoria Anglin seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – One Minute

No public comments.

NEW BUSINESS

David Flaherty, Division Manager (Special Facilities) gave an indepth update on Sugar Creek Golf and Tennis Center, Mystery Valley Golf Course and DeKalb Tennis Center (handouts were provided).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Update of vacancies – District 4 has contacted the office to appoint a representative; as well as Viola Davis has sent a letter to appoint a representative for the DeKalb Legislative Delegation. There has been no contact from District 7 or the CEO's office.

Dennis Allen has been reappointed until December 31, 2028.

Development Impact Fees- Christina Rios and Sally Sears met with Commissioner Spears (D2) and Jacob Vallo (CEO Chief Development Officer). Commissioner Spears is extremely interested in moving forward and has discretionary funds to have a study done. This will help with improvements that SPLOST cannot.

School playgrounds to Parks- Whitney McGinniss will continue to speak with representatives of the School District Administrators office.

Mural's update- Melanie Hammet stated that Commissioner Spears is starting an Arts Commission that will meet on Zoom next week.

Pine Lake is running a pilot program every Friday in March (Women's History).

Networking arts in the parks (with QR codes) is the overall goal.

PARK PRIDE REPORT – Written Report was submitted prior to the meeting. Lauren King Lambert (Community Services Associate) was present. The report can be emailed upon request.

Excerpt from Report:

In 2024, 45 DeKalb County parks and greenspaces had a registered Park Pride Friends of the Park group. Currently 43 parks and greenspaces have registration for 2025. Parks without a Registered Group in 2024 that Registered in 2025: Intrenchment Creek, Scott Circle, and White Oak - Parks with a Registered Group in 2024 but not yet in 2025: Belvedere, Brookside, Tobie Grant, Mason Mill and Michelle Obama

Intern Libya Elarbi joins the team! This spring, we're excited to welcome Libya Elarbi, a third-year English major at Georgia State University, to the Community Services team! With a passion for literature and poetry, Libya is bringing her creative talents to the Friends of the Park community by leading a poetry-writing workshop inspired by the beauty and significance of our local parks. This workshop offers a unique opportunity for Friends group members to explore creativity, reflect on nature, and connect with others through the power of words. Mark your calendars—the session will take place on the first Saturday morning in May (May 3rd).

DeKalb County Friends of the Park groups have documented 278 volunteer hours and 35 volunteer projects and events from January 1, 2025 – March 24, 2025. Volunteer totals are pulled from Park Beautification Application submissions, workdays listed on Park Pride's Hands on Atlanta account, and groups self-reporting to Park Pride. Variances in totals are due to unreported or delayed reporting of volunteer activities. *Volunteer hours thru March 2025 are still forthcoming.

Park Stewardship Academy 2025 is coming up! Visit Park Stewardship Academy to learn more and consider applying or nominating someone for the 2025 Cohort. Nominations are open annually in the month of May, with new cohorts selected in June of the same year.

Second Friday Walk in the Park: A series of free and casual gatherings across Park Pride service areas. Discover hidden gems as we stroll through parks with Friends groups, showcasing what makes each park special. Come enjoy relaxed outings and find your next favorite local park! Check out Park Pride's events calendar for upcoming dates and park locations for this program. We welcome park nominations for future walks in DeKalb, email Lauren@parkpride.org. Join us for our Second Friday Walk in the Park on April 25th, from 9 AM to 10 AM at Candler Park in the City of Atlanta.

Kayla Altland will be joining the South Creek Conservancy as the new Executive Director. Over 500 people attended the Park Pride Conference that was held at the Atlanta Botanical Garden on yesterday (March 24, 2025). Priscilla Davenport (NH Scott) won the Inspirational Award from DeKalb County.

The next Park Pride Conference is scheduled for March 23, 2026.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT/ UPCOMING SPECIAL ACTIVITIES/EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

An in-depth PowerPoint Presentation was sent to the Board prior to the meeting that is kept on file in Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs office and can be emailed or mailed.

Maurice Coley, Division Manager- Park Services introduced himself to the group (started February 3, 2025). His last employer was Georgia Southern University as a Grounds Operations Superintendent. He is working to fill vacancies and would like for anyone to reach out to him with questions or concerns.

Wannetter Terrell has been at Gresham Recreation center for the past 33 years and was recently promoted to Recreation District Administrator and will oversee 5 recreation centers.

Gresham has the largest youth basketball program, afterschool program (90), summer camp (200), track, senior game days, chess classes, drone classes, etc.

- Consideration to name Ellenwood Park to Dr. Alice White Bussey Legacy Park (background information will be sent to members)

Excerpt from PowerPoint:

- Father Daughter dance numbers exceeded last year.
- Track and field season has begun.
- Easter Egg Hunt will be held at Tobie Grant field (4-19-2025)

- N.H. Scott demolition is almost completed.
- Fees and charges will be presented to PECs committee (increase)

BOARD COMMENTS:

Chris Hester: Has the deputy director position been filled ?

Answer: The position has not been filled (currently interviewing)

Dennis Allen: Will the Easter Egg Hunt be held at the Old Tobie Grant Field?

Answer: The Easter Egg Hunt will be held at the old field.

Malanie Hammet: Extended an invitation for Friday night – (Pine Lake Beach House) – doors open at 7 p.m.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: Please submit items two weeks before the next scheduled meeting.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m. by the Chair. The next meeting will be May 27, 2025, at Midway Recreation Center, 3181 Midway Road, Decatur, GA 30032