

**Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs
Citizen Advisory Board
July 25, 2023**

Location: Wade Walker YMCA, 5605 Rockbridge Road, SW; Stone Mountain, GA 30088

<p><u>PRESENT</u> Clara Burks-Jones (CEO's office) Sally Sears (Long Spears – D2) Jerrie Bason (Johnson – D3) Calvin Sims, Sr. (Bradshaw– D4) Dennis Allen (Davis Johnson – D5) Christina Rios (Terry- D6) Carolyn Taggart (DeKalb Legislative Delegation) Dijion B. DaCosta, Sr. (DeKalb County School Board)</p> <p><u>Staff:</u></p> <p>Chuck O. Ellis, Director Marvin F. Billups, Jr., Deputy Director Carol Underwood, Administrative Coordinator JeT'aime Bennett, Administrative Assistant</p>	<p><u>EXCUSED ABSENCE</u> Chris S. Hester (Patrick –D1)</p> <p><u>ABSENT</u> Vacant (Cochran-Johnson- D7)</p> <p><u>GUEST</u> 33 guests (sign-in sheet on file)</p>
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*Chair – Dijion B. DaCosta, Sr.
Vice Chair – Sally Sears
Secretary – Clara Burks-Jones*

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL: Chair, Dijion B. DaCosta, Sr. called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. He introduced and welcomed new member Christina Rios (District 6- Terry)!

ROSTER: Attendance of members and staff noted above.

CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES: (May 23, 2023)

There were no corrections to the minutes, and they were adopted by general consent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – One Minute

Some of the concerns *listed below* were addressed and the others will be given to the division managers to contact the speaker.

Wade Walker Park - Maintenance

Speaker: Myron Phillips

Question/Comment:

What is going to be done about the lake? (concerned about sewer)

Speaker: Dewayne Breedlove

Question/Comment:

There is a sinkhole at court 1 - At Court 3 – water is cutting across the court

Speaker: Catherine Geiger

Question/Comment:

When are the walking trails going to be maintained (broken glass, etc.) towards the lake? When were they installed?

Speaker: Sabrina Snyder

Question/Comment:

Tree roots are coming up on walking trail; bridge has hole – needs widening

Speaker: Roderick “Mickey” Wyatt

Question/Concern:

Several of the tennis courts are cracked, when is repair scheduled?

Speaker: Avril Bryant

Question/Concern:

Thank you for the bathrooms! What is the status of the timer and locks on the bathroom?

Bathroom near the children’s playground is in deplorable condition

Speaker: Marjorie Crowal

Question/Comment:

Wanted to get an update for the squeegees (tennis courts).

Wade Walker Park - Security

Speaker: Dianne Turner

Question/Comment:

Will more security cameras be added? (near the top)

Can numbers be posted to contact park rangers?

The chair requested an overall full scope of what is being done about security (from the Director).

Speaker: Catherine Geiger

Question/Comment:

Cars a parked overnight near trail

Speaker: Oscar Wild

Question/Comment:

Can there be increased police presence on the weekend?
Cars are driving on trail – can some type of barrier be installed?

Wade Walker Park - Other

Speaker: Anthony Roach

Question/Comment:

Why are there so many trucks with rocks and dirt, what is the purpose?

Speaker: Lawrence D. Carter

Question/Comment:

Thanked the department for the restrooms!!
Would like to see a practice wall installed to hit tennis balls

Speaker: Gil Garland

Question/Comment:

Would like to see a traffic light at the entrance of the park due to heavy traffic

Dottie Bridges- Flat Shoals (Maintenance)

Speaker: Diane Taylor

Question/Comment:

Thanked Parks and Recreation for their work on the courts!
What is the update of the building? (it would be helpful for seniors to have closer access to restrooms)

Hairston Park (Maintenance)

Speakers: Gwendolyn Stegall

Question/Comment:

Thanked staff for port-o-potties!
Would like to have an update on trails?

Speaker: Jan Costello

Question/Comment:

Thanked staff for the opening of East Central DeKalb Community & Senior Center!

How much is it going to cost for the path to be installed from the Elam Road facility to the park?

Additional Speakers (Administration/Recreation)

Speaker: Rochelle Callender

Question/Concern:

Thanked the department for opening of East Central DeKalb Community and Senior Center!

Regarding BOC Agenda Item 2023-0844 (page 15) – why would funds be reallocated and is this holding up the grant order process?

Speaker: Eric Jackson – founder of Major Love Tennis Foundation

Question/Concern:

Would like to offer afterschool tennis programs for at-risk youth in DeKalb County – how can he partner?

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Bylaws Review Committee Presentation (Dennis Allen – appointed to chair in January)

This item was sent to members in March; however, it was tabled at the meeting in May to be voted on at the July 25, 2023 meeting. Dennis Allen read the revisions to the bylaws and Sally Sears made a motion to accept the recommendations and Clara Burks-Jones second the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

PARK PRIDE REPORT – Written Report was submitted prior to the meeting

Michael Halicki (Executive Director) and Ellen Bruenderman (Director of Community Services)

- Park Pride has been working with DeKalb County since 2010
- Received a proclamation today from Board of Commissioners
- 501c3 non-profit to help communities get involved in making a difference to parks
- 37 Friend Groups have registered in 2023
- Wade Walker Friends Group has been reactivated

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 Cultural Affairs office and can be emailed or mailed.

Excerpt from PowerPoint:

- Recreation Division served 68,845
- 177 athletes qualified for the State Championship meet
- Aquatics opened 6 pools and 1 splash pad
- Hamilton Park – parents' night out
- Father Daughter Dance (72 -participants)
- Grand opening for East Central DeKalb Senior Community Center – first heated indoor saltwater pool in DeKalb County
- NH Scott pool has made it through permitting
- Bransby office facilities and greenhouse has been completed
- CHARM recycling center – permit approved
- Intrenchment Creek – design underway
- Glen Emerald Lake and Dam ribbon cutting

Questions:

Calvin Sims, Sr. – What is the timeline for N.H. Scott?

Director: Soon as procurement is approved through the State, we will be able to start

Is design being worked on for Hairston Park?

Director: CDBG funded the design and is going through the process

Sally Sears – Impressive numbers from the Directors report for Recreation Division. Serving 68,845 people. How does that compare to before COVID?

Director: About 70-80% of prior numbers

BOARD COMMENTS:

Calvin Sims, Sr. – Could there funding set aside for parks (no matter what district) to have improvements made?

Jerrie Bason – Thanked staff for groundbreaking of Ellenwood and ribbon cutting of Glen Emerald.

Clara Burks-Jones – Thanked citizens for coming out and sharing their input and concerns.

- Acknowledged the wonderful ribbon cutting of the East Central DeKalb Community and Senior Center

Dennis Allen – he will assist Wade Walker Friends group in their reactivation

- Offered to assist Mr. Eric Jackson with the at-risk venture
- Would like to see Redan and Hamilton project to see how it may affect programming

Carolyn Taggart – Thanked citizens for coming out and sharing their input and concerns

- Attended a meeting yesterday with Friends of Shoal Creek III and the playground looks wonderful and she is looking forward to the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Christina Rios – Involved with Friends of Needham Park; wanted to know how it is determined which parks are selected

- Mr. Halicki stated that Park Pride takes (5) to the County – based on the merit of the project

Sally Sears – Funding from SPLOST II for RPCA. What is the best estimate of what our parks need? Director says \$179 million needed for safety alone. Repairing required, or the county being forced to close parks.

Which projects is RPCA naming as priorities of the department for this specific funding? Director says the list is compiled and in the hands of the CEO's office.

Asked Clara Burks-Jones (CEO's office representative) to share once CEO distributes.

Dijon DaCosta, Sr. – Thanked the members, citizens and Parks and Recreation Staff

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

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m. by the Chair. The next meeting will be September 26, 2023 at 1950 West Exchange Place, Tucker, GA 30084.