

**MINUTES**  
**CARBONDALE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**March 10, 2021**

Hollis Sutherland called the virtual meeting of the Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on March 10, 2021.

**ROLL CALL**

The following members were present for roll call:

Members:	Hollis Sutherland, Chair Rose Rossello, Vice Chair John Williams, Member Kathleen Wanatowicz, Member Becky Moller, Member Ashley Hejtmanek, Member Tracy Wilson, Member Brian Soby, Alternate Celeste Fullerton, Youth Member
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Town Staff Present:	Jay Harrington, Town Manager Eric Brendlinger, Parks & Recreation Director Jessi Rochel, Recreation Center & Recreation Programs Manager Jamie Wall, Recreation Coordinator: Facility & Special Events Margaret Donnelly, Aquatics and Wellness Coordinator Will Tempest, Recreation Coordinator: Youth and Adult Athletics Richard Wells, Parks Maintenance Staff Luis Yllanes, Board of Trustees Liaison Kae McDonald, Boards & Commission Clerk
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**CONSENT AGENDA**

Tracy asked if an Aquatics Master Plan link could be added to the Parks & Recreation webpage. Eric confirmed that a link was available on both the Parks & Recreation webpage and under the “New Pool Info” tab on the Carbondale Recreation Center webpage.

**Motion Passed:** Tracy *moved* to approve the minutes from the February 10, 2021 meeting. John *seconded* the motion, and it was *unanimously approved*.

**ITEMS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA**

There were no items from citizens present but not on the agenda.

**CELEBRATING 2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS: RECOGNIZING PARKS & REC. STAFF**

Hollis set aside time during the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting to recognize and thank Town staff for everything they accomplished in 2020.

Eric gave shout-outs to Town staff:

- Russell Sissom, Jesus Ortiz, Mark Nersesian, and Richard Wells are fulltime Parks Department employees- they were able to bring a semblance of normalcy to the Town facilities during the shut-down prompted by the Covid pandemic. Eric views his staff as essential workers and noted that if maintenance had not continued, the visual references would have exacerbated the community’s mental health. There are 26 parks encompassing 123 acres to manage and Parks staff completes a variety of tasks among which include digging/covering graves, mowing, snow removal, daily inspection of 112 trash and recycling containers and 36 dog pots.

- The Recreation Department was hard hit by Covid and the numbers of users dropped from an average of 120 per day to 120 per week. Job duties shifted in response, and Recreation staff had to be creative in addressing the protocols.
  - Jessi took the Covid protocols seriously and had to reinvent how the Rec Center operated. She kept employees and facility users safe.
  - Margaret was able to operate the pool in a safe manner. She also worked with the fitness instructors to facilitate outdoor classes and then had to pivot and re-adapt during the Grizzly Creek fire.
  - As the Special Events Coordinator, Jamie had to adapt when many of the 101 scheduled events were cancelled over the last year. She also ran the Carbondale Farmers Market—which was considered an essential food service—and gracefully navigated the challenges presented by Covid protocols. She also oversaw the cleaning and disinfection of the Rec Center before it could reopen.
  - Because Covid Protocols eliminated most of the youth activities, Will faced some overwhelming challenges, but was able to figure out how to bring back some of the programming safely. Eric commended him for sticking with it through this very hard year.
- Derek Miller is the Facilities Maintenance Lead and was able to capitalize on the Covid social distancing protocols to complete deferred maintenance on park facilities including re-roofing four buildings and building the connector trail between the two parking lots at Red Hill.

Eric was appreciative of all the hard work his staff has put in throughout the pandemic.

Jessi thanked Eric for his leadership in navigating the required protocols through the last year.

Jay expressed appreciation for the Parks & Recreation Staff and Commission and noted that this time last year no one had any idea what was to come. He appreciated the Parks crew for the great solutions and flexibility they have exhibited, as well as the Recreation staff for providing support to the Carbondale Emergency Task Force by helping fill prescriptions and getting groceries for those in need. He also noted the fact that the Parks & Recreation Commission worked through the Aquatics Master Plan through the challenges of the last year. While anticipating some sense of normalcy evolving over the next few months, he is also proud of how everyone has responded.

Questions/Comments:

Tracy gave thanks to all and noted that through the uncertainty, moving forward was a huge mantra.

Luis also gave thanks and noted how amazing the staff was in bringing a sense of normalcy where they could.

Kathleen also thanked the staff and was impressed with the good attitude maintained by the Recreation Department.

Hollis also thanked the staff and appreciated all that they have done—even bringing beauty to even the mundane tasks they undertake. She added that it provides a baseline for the high quality of what you see in Carbondale and makes it a beautiful place to be.

Ashley was surprised by what staff has accomplished and views them all as incredible public servants.

Rose concurred with what everyone said and expressed her appreciation not only as a commission member but as a mom, as well.

### **REVISITING SECTION 7 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE FOR PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

Hollis opened the discussion by noting that one of her goals is to review the structure, process, and purpose of the Parks & Recreation Commission. As part of this process she had a phone conversation with Janet Buck regarding the Planning and Zoning Commission and met with Jay for advice and guidance. She noted that while the Planning and Zoning Commission is quasi-judicial and is somewhat different in how it is structured, Janet was able to clarify several questions Hollis had. She added that the purpose of this meeting's discussion was to review some of the discrepancies between what is outlined in Section 7 and how the commission is currently organized:

- Sec. 2-7-10 states that three voting members may be residents of the area served by the Recreation Department but need not reside within the Town limits. Hollis noted that because Brian, Tracy, and Ashley

- all live outside of Carbondale proper, that allowance is currently fulfilled.
- Sec. 2-7-10 also states that the commission shall consist of seven voting members and one alternate member. The paragraph further states that one of the members shall be a Youth Commissioner, under 18 years of age at the time of appointment, who shall serve a term of two years.
    - Hollis noted that, moving forward, Celeste should be voting on all decisions.
    - Based on the current number of Commission members, there is one more voting member than the code allows. Hollis noted that three terms expire this year including Becky, John and Tracy, Celeste's term expires in 2022, and the remainder of the terms expire in 2023.
    - The commission terms are three years, except for the youth position which is two years. Hollis also pointed out that the terms begin and end on August 31<sup>st</sup>, rather than follow a person's appointment.
  - Per Sec. 2-7-30, Hollis would like to firm up the procedure for the appointment process and proposed that the vacancy be advertised with the intent of opening the application process to community members at-large, rather than just re-appointing existing members. She also proposed that the application and interview process be formalized and suggested developing a uniform question format.
  - Hollis also noted that Sec. 2-7-40 allows for the appointment of a secretary, even if Town staff have been asked to maintain meeting minutes and records.

Questions/Comments:

Tracy remembered that the commission used to have a secretary, but they decided that because Town Staff was doing everything that position was eliminated (and she thought it was with BOT support).

Hollis asked Eric to clarify when the BOT reviews the code. Luis thought it was every two years. Eric noted that if the commission would like to make changes to the code, they can submit the revisions to the BOT for consideration. He added that the fee structure is what is reviewed every January.

Hollis wondered if there would ever be a time when there wasn't a Boards and Commissions Clerk and whether the secretary position was even needed. Eric responded that during the 2008-2010 recession, the duties of the Boards and Commissions Clerk reverted to fulltime staff. He added that it doesn't have to be memorialized in the code, especially considering the position hasn't been filled in many years.

Tracy agreed with Eric and thought the role was superfluous.

John thought a better solution than eliminating commission members would be to enlarge the Commission to nine members.

Kathleen was afraid that if enlarged, the Commission might suffer from paralysis by analysis.

Rose pointed out that because meetings are virtual due to Covid protocols, there has been increased attendance over the last year and she reminded the commission members of the occasional struggle to achieve a quorum at in-person meetings.

Brian asked for clarification if the code was specific to the number of voting members, or just the number of members.

Hollis confirmed that the code stated that there are seven voting members and one alternate, and one of the seven shall be a youth commissioner.

Brian suggested a change in language to two alternates and one of the seven may be a youth commissioner.

Tracy added that the youth commissioner position hasn't always been maintained and pointed out that it can be challenging to find the right student at the right time. She encouraged cultivating a relationship with the local high school to counselors to ensure more consistency.

Celeste volunteered to talk to the Capstone Director. She added that students must complete their Capstone project by March of their senior year.

Tracy wondered if a one-year term might be a better fit.

Eric asked Celeste if the youth commissioner position might be more attractive if it was molded around a Capstone project.

Celeste agreed that it was a good idea for those that want to pursue community work. She thought it was important to have them start early, because many students don't have an idea for their project.

Hollis reiterated Brian's suggestion of expanding the number of allowable alternates and re-phrasing that the youth commissioner may be a voting member. She suggested verbiage to give voting preference to the youth commissioner, but in the event the youth commissioner position was not filled, voting would revert to a regular member.

Becky questioned whether the code specifically states that the youth commissioner is a voting member.

Hollis responded that she read through all of Section 7 and her takeaway was that the youth commissioner was a voting member. She stressed the need to clarify the language in Section 7.

Hollis asked whether anyone had an opinion about increasing the number of commission members.

John reframed his suggestion have the youth commissioner as an alternate.

Hollis pointed out that the way Section 7 is written, the total number of commissioners is eight, so there would still be one too many if there are seven voting members, one alternate and one youth commissioner whether they are an alternate or not.

Becky agreed with Hollis that there should be a total of eight members. She pointed out that the commission by-laws and Section 7 should be identical and wondered why it was so confusing.

Eric reminded the commission members that the Parks & Recreation Commission was created in 1977--prior to Carbondale's transition to Home Rule, so there is a question about how the code works with the original charter. He added that Jay referred to the code, so that takes precedence. He also noted that the ordinance guiding the commission was changed in 1992 and then again in 2015. He would like to get additional information on the Capstone timing before making changes to the youth commissioner term.

Tracy thought the timing for commissioners to cycle on to and off the board could be staggered more efficiently.

Hollis reminded everyone that people come into a term and that it is not tied to the person.

#### **P & R COMMISSION 2021 WORKING MASTER CALENDAR. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES**

Eric noted that the Master Calendar is evolving and is a work in progress. He wanted to point out that he has added specific group relationships and outside group check-ins including:

- Hendricks Community Garden
- Demeter's Garden
- Thompson Park (MOU)
- Roaring Fork Pickleball Association (MOU).

He has also added timing to advertise for P & R Commission applications, and relationships with other advisory boards, amenity partnerships, and intergovernmental partnerships. He noted that he has yet to add the Friends of the Nature Park, Special Event Task Force, and CAFCI.

Eric asked that commission members interested in being a liaison to other groups let him know. He noted, for example, that John is a liaison to CAFCI/Senior Matters, the Mount Sopris Historical Society, and the RF Pickleball Association.

Questions/Comments:

Hollis asked if a liaison was necessary if there was an MOU.

Eric thought that it made the most sense to have one.

Becky asked if this would be required for membership on the Parks & Recreation Commission and what would be required of the liaison.

Eric pointed out that it was voluntary and would not be a requirement for membership on the commission. He added that the liaison would just need to touch base with the chairperson of the other groups when a shared topic came up and then pass this information along to the rest of the commission.

Rose volunteered to do the Special Events Task Force.

Kathleen noted that if there is a contractual relationship in place, it isn't appropriate for a Parks & Recreation Commission member to be a liaison.

Tracy suggested substituting the term "Point of Contact" for "Liaison."

Hollis asked Eric to update the list and asked commission members to consider whether they want to be a point of contact.

Luis said he is the liaison for the Carbondale Public Arts Commission and was willing to be the point of contact for that group.

#### **REPORT & UPDATES: STAFF AND COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Eric Brendlinger, Parks & Recreation Director: All current work is listed on the 30/60/90-day calendar and it is ramping up quickly. He noted that the annual Parks & Recreation Commission check-in with the BOT is scheduled for April 20th and encouraged all to attend. He added that the RVR Triangle Park tennis courts did not receive needed maintenance last summer because of Covid and they are now in bad shape. Therefore, they have been closed until short-term repairs can take place, with the more permanent repairs scheduled for June.

Jessi Rochel, Recreation Center & Recreation Programs Manager:

- The last Blood Drive was a success and the next one is scheduled for April 28th. Because of its success, they are going to schedule monthly drives,
- Youth climbing classes were full for the March session,
- Tae Kwan Do has continued to use the facility three times weekly,
- Mah Jongg will be added on Thursday afternoons,
- Where My Peeps Scavenger Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, April 3rd,
- Upcoming youth activities include Dinky Dunkers, skateboard lessons, and summer hikes,
- Carbondale Arts will be offering another free youth art class,
- The Rec Center is hiring a group fitness instructor, lifeguards, and WSI.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The March 10, 2021, regular meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kae McDonald