

**MINUTES**  
**CARBONDALE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**April 12, 2023**

Hollis Sutherland called the meeting of the Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission to order at 7:03 p.m. at Carbondale Town Hall on April 12, 2023.

**ROLL CALL**

The following members were present for roll call:

Members:	Hollis Sutherland, Chair Rose Rossello, Vice-Chair Susan Rhea, Member Drew Sorenson, Member Ashley Hejtmanek, Member Leslie Keery, Member John Williams, Member Brian Soby, Alternate Misha Logan, Youth Member
Town Staff Present:	Eric Brendlinger, Parks and Recreation Director Margaret Donnelly, Recreation Center and Programs Manager Kae McDonald, Boards & Commission Clerk
Guests:	Trevor Cannon, Roaring Fork Pickleball Association

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion Passed:** Susan Rhea *moved* to approve the minutes from the March 8, 2023, meeting. Ashley Hejtmanek *seconded* the motion, and it was *unanimously approved*.

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

There was no one present, not on the agenda, to address the Commission.

**ROARING FORK PICKLEBALL ASSOCIATION MOU REVIEW AND ADDITIONAL LAND REQUEST**

Eric referred to the meeting packet attachment regarding the Roaring Fork Pickleball member survey, pointing out the number of respondents willing to participate in a fundraiser for additional courts. He noted that Trevor Cannon, President of the Roaring Fork Pickleball Association Board of Directors, was present at tonight's meeting to provide an update on the organization's activities.

Trevor provided some background, noting that at the time RFPA was raising money for the first six pickleball courts at North Face Park, there were only 100 and 150 members, and they were able to raise all the funding needed. He related that the organization now has more than 360 members, and he anticipates that membership will continue to grow. Trevor reiterated Eric's point regarding the willingness of their membership to financially assist continued endeavors to provide more courts for play, and asked the Commission if they would approve adding three more courts at North Face Park. Referring commission members to the map in the meeting packet, he explained that he thought there was plenty of room to add three more courts between the parking lot and the existing courts; the group is also proposing to add a permanent shade structure that could also be utilized by other groups. Trevor thought that the cost would be approximately \$200,000.00.

Leslie asked if three courts would be sufficient. She also asked if the group would be willing to earmark some funding to expand the bathrooms at the park.

Trevor replied that play might still overflow onto the Darien tennis courts at peak times, but the additional courts would provide some relief. He thought the RFPA might be willing to help with the bathroom expansion, pointing out that there is a handicapped port-o-let close to the courts that players use.

Eric confirmed that with the increase in user numbers, per the Park's Master Plan an expansion of the bathrooms is necessary.

Hollis asked where the permanent shade structure would be located.

Trevor replied that the shade structure would be sandwiched between the existing and proposed courts. Trevor went on to explain that he has discussed the proposal with Eric – who related that that space was earmarked for other types of activities – but during the times that he has been at North Face Park, he hasn't seen anyone utilize that space.

John pointed out that that space was used by Little League for tryouts and warm-ups before games.

Eric commented that that space has also been used by the soccer club for practice when the game fields aren't ready for play and that the space has also been used by lacrosse teams and for bike polo tournaments, but pointed out that those uses are sporadic. He explained that there will still be some open space available for these uses, but the pickleball players represent the most consistent group of users in that area of the park. He added that pickleball continues to grow and one of his industry magazines cited that almost 19% of the United States adult population have played at least once; other statistics include the average of players is 34 years old and 70% of avid players are between 18 and 44 years old. Eric did point out that one of the drawbacks is that the sound of the pickleball hitting the paddle can reach 70 decibels and with the current and proposed multifamily residences in proximity to the park, sound mitigation will need to be addressed.

Trevor agreed that the sound issues could be a problem but explained that the industry is experimenting with ways to help mitigate it – one example is "Acoustiblok" which directs the sound upwards rather than laterally.

Hollis asked if there have been any complaints from residents.

Eric replied that there haven't been any noise complaints, but there have been complaints about parking and/or driving to the end of the block to turn around.

Trevor commented that the RFPA has communicated with their club members and has encouraged them to park in the parking lot.

Brian asked if they have projected maintenance costs and if that money could be included in the fundraising efforts.

Trevor replied that costs will be \$25,000.00 to refinish with a minimum use life of five years and a maximum of ten years and estimated that it could cost up to \$45,000.00 in six or seven years. He pointed out that, per their MOU with the Town, the Town is responsible for maintenance because they own the courts. He noted that the RFPA might consider raising extra money to set aside.

Eric commented that proposing a maintenance endowment would be a good selling point to the Board of Trustees.

Brian asked if Eric had a per acre cost for maintaining the open space.

Eric replied that he does have equations that can be used.

Drew asked if there were statistics on usage and wondered how the courts would be managed at Crown Mountain Park.

Trevor replied that Crown Mountain is proposing six courts in their Master Plan, but since there are no immediate plans to repurpose or share the existing tennis courts there is no pickleball use anticipated for a few years. He noted that the Crown Mountain Master Plan is still being finalized.

John commented that having courts at Crown Mountain would take pressure off the courts at North Face Park.

Trevor agreed but pointed out that the sport is still growing in popularity, so court usage is hard to predict.

Brian asked what the usage patterns currently were and if courts are added, how that might affect those patterns.

Trevor replied that summertime usage can begin as early as 7:30 am, slowing down between noon and 4:30 pm and then picking back up until dark. He thought that the play backlog typically occurred between 8:30 to 10 am and 5:30 to 7 pm and groups might have to wait ten minutes before gaining access to a court.

Ashley commented that, on paper, it seems like a logical request but noted that the original proposal for the six courts was contentious and the MOU limited the number of courts to six. She asked that the topic be revisited considering the limited flexibility of the park.

John agreed, noting that North Face is the only open space left for parks and if the additional courts are approved other proposed uses in the future might have to be denied. He pointed out that Crown Mountain has much more space and it isn't that far away. He referred to the RFPA poll that indicates only 1/3 of those that took the poll consider it a Carbondale organization.

Eric noted that during the Master Plan process, they laid out "set kits" for two futsal courts in that same space because that is how they envisioned utilizing that space, but with the availability of public futsal courts at the Carbondale Marketplace development there may be less demand at North Face.

Hollis asked if there was a timeline on a recommendation to the BOT.

Trevor replied that he wasn't expecting an answer at tonight's meeting, but rather wanted to highlight that the group is willing to raise the money if there is space for the courts. Trevor stated that with nine courts, the North Face Park pickleball court complex will be the best in the area and could have a significant economic benefit to Carbondale.

Brian thought that adding economic information would be very helpful in a cost/benefit analysis and, in fact, should be a principal part of the argument.

Leslie commented that three additional courts that the Town doesn't have to pay for would be a big benefit to the community and there would still be open space at North Face Park. She asked that, in exchange, one court be kept open for drop-in play—even during the times set aside for RFPA members.

Eric thought that request might be revisited as part of the MOU for the three additional courts.

Trevor pointed out that RFPA has designated a court ambassador to welcome and educate drop-in players.

Hollis noted that the topic will be added to May's meeting agenda for further discussion.

### **AQUATICS FACILITY UPDATE: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION FIRMS SELECTION: AQUATICS COORDINATOR RECRUITMENT**

Eric explained that the selection process for the Aquatic Facility Design and Construction teams was detailed in his memo included with the meeting packet. He commented that working with WEMBER really facilitated the selection process because their selection matrix was very detailed. He noted that the selection committee was unanimous in their choices and Land + Shelter was selected as the Design team and AD Miller was selected as construction manager at risk/construction manager general contractor. Eric added that Land + Shelter pulled together a great team with a lot of expertise with pools and they also addressed the sustainability question in their proposal; he was happy to see such talent at the local level. Eric pointed out that the local firm that submitted a proposal for the CMAR rescinded their proposal because they were awarded another job. Eric related that the selections were presented to the Board of Trustees for approval at Tuesday's meeting and because WEMBER pushes the process, they will meet with both teams on Monday.

Susan commented that the process was informational.

Eric reported that they invited an Aquatics Coordinator candidate to visit over last weekend and while the candidate would have been a great fit, their job offer was turned down because of the cost of living and relative isolation of Carbondale's rural environment. He noted that they will be interviewing three more candidates in the coming days.

Brian asked about the AIA contract model.

Eric replied that it was a common model for the types of services provided and the consultants will be paid the cost of pre-construction documents and a guaranteed maximum price.

### **CARBONDALE AQUATICS FACILITY FUNDRAISING DISCUSSION AND GRANT AVAILABILITY SPREADSHEET**

Eric explained that he had hoped to be able to create a spreadsheet to break out various grant opportunities but grant organizations don't project their timelines far enough for this project. He identified granting agencies including:

- GoCo: The aquatics facility project would fall under their community impact grants and would require a 15-25% match.
- FMLD: The Rifle pool was awarded a grant from this funding source. Eric related that they recently submitted a FMLD grant for the Chacos Park Master Plan, so they will need to see what the chances are for applying for an aquatics facility grant. These grants are funded twice per year – in the spring and in the fall.
- DOLA: Eric will need to spend time researching the many and varied funding opportunities.

Hollis reminded the group that Carbondale Age-Friendly Community Initiative has communicated about the possibility of age-friendly grants that might be available for the pool project.

Susan wondered how much money might be available from the DOLA grants.

Eric replied that there are more than 50 grants available, so he will need to commit more time to match Carbondale's pool funding needs with what might be offered. Eric also noted that they have sent the red-lined version of the Aspen Community Fund contract back to them for review.

Hollis asked the commission members if they might approve of a local fundraising effort that attaches fairy tinsel to hair.

Rose commented that the commission members should compile a list of items that can be "sold" as a donation. She added that she has experience with fundraising and is acquainted with other fundraisers in the area and volunteered to help but acknowledged that she can't take on the lead.

Margaret replied that WEMBER has such a list compiled and she can share that with the group.

Drew added he has a contact that has run a lot of capital campaigns and will connect that person with Eric and Margaret.

Susan pointed out that while net zero is possible and makes fiscal sense in the long run, it will require a capital-intensive outlay upfront. She suggested organizing the fundraiser around that piece of the project. She also noted that a capital fund manager will need to be compensated.

Hollis suggested researching each of these options and presenting them to the BOT for approval.

Ashley cautioned that the Commission should review the naming rights process and decide how to proceed – having a donor wall versus donor name plates on everything.

### **TOWN MANAGER MEMO REGARDING BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS UNIFORMITY**

Hollis explained that the Town Manager has been charged with bringing uniform structure to all of Carbondale's Boards and Commissions. She noted that with the recently approved changes to the Parks & Recreation Commission Ordinance, this group is ahead of the game. She asked for commission members responses to the following topics:

- Including Alternates as part of the Board/Commission: Consensus that alternates allow meetings to be conducted with a full quorum and the Parks & Recreation Commission would like to retain the two alternate positions they currently have.

- Attendance Requirement: There was some discussion regarding the process to remove a commission member (for example, would it require a recommendation from the Parks & Recreation Commission to the Board of Trustees or would it go straight to the Board of Trustees) and ensuring that it was spelled out in the guiding document.
- Appointments: There was a similar discussion regarding the process for appointments, although most commission members voiced approval for allowing the Board of Trustees control over appointments when there were more applicants than positions available.
- Virtual Meeting Attendance: There was a pointed discussion regarding the reliance on the virtual attendance option rather than attending in-person – especially for commission members that live outside Carbondale’s municipal boundaries. A request was made that guidelines regarding virtual meeting attendance (for example, virtual attendance should only be used to attend when commission members are ill or out-of-town) be included in the guiding document.

**BEE FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD INITIATIVE**

Eric explained that he has included Carbondale’s Environmental Board subcommittee “Bee Friendly Carbondale” powerpoint presentation that was given to the Board of Trustees, the Town Arborist, and Parks Staff. He noted that they are developing a seven-year plan to substitute native plants for turf. He commented that he did provide feedback that healthy turfgrass is the best barrier to the problem of invasive and/or noxious weeds but acknowledged that there is a water-wise piece for irrigation. He pointed out that they are planning to start small by working with the Town Arborist on the “Adopt-a-Garden” program and develop a multi-year project to transform the irrigated turf around Thompson House into a native pollinator habitat. He wasn’t sure how well the project at Thompson House would dovetail with possible long-term special event space at this location.

Eric related that a second piece to this agenda topic is that they have hired “Bee Happy Lands” to provide educational outreach and hands-on treatment of Canada Thistle and Yellow toadflax because of the outcry against using chemical intervention at the Nature Park. He explained that Bee Happy Lands holds municipal and federal contracts for organic weed mitigation and the demonstration on May 12<sup>th</sup> is open to the public. Eric asked if commission members are interested in participating to please let him know.

John Williams stated that the Carbondale Historical Society would like the Town to move the lawn sprinklers because the water is flooding the basement and exacerbating the foundation deterioration.

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

Eric Brendlinger, Parks and Recreation Director:

- Asked commission members to review the 30/60/90-day spreadsheet for projects.
- Spring madness has begun, and the Parks and Recreation Department is working to get the soccer and baseball fields and rodeo grounds ready for upcoming activities.

Margaret Donnelly, Recreation Programs and Facility Manager:

- Green is the New Black took place in March. Five Points is coming up next week; the Recreation Center will assist with the 5k on Saturday.
- First Friday and Find My Peeps took place last weekend, there were a total of 50 teams and 250 people registered.
- Registration for youth summer activities is available or will be soon; the last dodgeball class took place and April will be the last month for youth climbing until fall.
- A youth art program is being offered; it will be an ongoing program.
- The Senior Trip this month will be to Grand Junction for Beaconfest.
- The late winter weather delayed spring cleaning and field prep, but these activities are underway now.
- The pool will be drained on Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup> in anticipation of the asbestos testing required for the aquatic facility project.
- The Recreation Center will participate in May’s 1<sup>st</sup> Friday Family Block Party.
- The Recreation Center will host a Quincenera this month.
- A new Women’s Pickleball Ladder League is being offered for Mondays in May; registration for this programming is almost full.

- Windscreen installation at North Face Park is scheduled for next week.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The April 12, 2023, meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm. The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2023, at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kae McDonald