

MINUTES

GRAHAM CREEK NATURE PRESERVE ADVISORY BOARD

407 E. LAUREL AVENUE

FOLEY, ALABAMA

CONFERENCE ROOM

MAY 7, 2015

5:30 P.M.

MEETING

Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Zana Price called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Board members present: Tommy Patterson, Tim Closson and Homer Singleton. Absent: Chad Watkins, and Phillip Hinesley. Others present: Leslie Gahagan, Jackie Trimbball, Katy Taylor and Wayne Trawick.

MINUTES

Approve Minutes of April 2, 2015

Mr. Patterson made a motion to approve the Minutes of April 2, 2015 and Mr. Singleton seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

GUESTS

Friends of Graham Creek – They were not present. Mrs. Gahagan reported that she has attempted to get in contact with Donna Turbeville but she felt that she must be out of town. The emails keep going to someone else.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Patterson asked what the pink flags indicated. Mrs. Gahagan reported it is where the Philomene Holmes route will eventually come through. They will have to move the entrance so that it will line up with the flags. The pear tree and the sweet gum will have to come out.

OLD BUSINESS

Continued Discussion regarding Rental Fees - Mrs. Gahagan reported there is a new tab "Rental Rates" towards the back of the book that contains the rental fees. We wanted to wait until further in the summer to approve the fees and will still need a final contract that needs to be tweaked. The rates were based on Five Rivers' rates, which are higher for weekends and nights. The day use rates will be moderately priced and a non-profit rate will also be implemented. The rate for the Interpretive Center will be for the entire room. Five Rivers does not charge their partners and they have contracts for entities that use their facilities on a monthly basis. These rates are a starting point and can be raised in the future. The evening use rates for the event area are comparable to the Foley Civic Center as their rates are \$350 per night for residents and \$450 for non-

residents. The difference is the Interpretive Center won't have the stage or the kitchen.

Mr. Singleton asked if there was anything in writing about what constitutes a partner. Mrs. Gahagan reported that a definition for a partner has not been done yet but it needs to be established. She felt that the Friends would be a partner. She did like the idea of how they handled the use of alcohol at events just because of the liability.

Mrs. Gahagan reported the pavilion rentals may change due to having smaller pavilions constructed in the next budget year. Those might be on a first come, first serve basis. People have been calling to reserve the larger pavilion and it is booked for June and July but there is not a fee.

Mr. Patterson asked if they have had problems with people having a picnic and didn't know to call to reserve the pavilion and just showed up at the pavilion when someone else has booked it. Mrs. Gahagan reported when they have had multiple groups she puts people at the outdoor classroom and moved a few picnic tables. They have had two groups under the pavilion at a time. They had people at the canoe launch, classroom and pavilion at the same time.

There was a discussion regarding garbage and Mrs. Gahagan reported the City has to pick up garbage and recyclables once a week. There has not been a noticeable amount of litter except with items that appear to be left behind on a post.

Mr. Greg Knight arrived at 5:44 p.m.

Mrs. Gahagan reported they are probably the only city that has not been charging for the pavilion. She has to find another supplier to build tables as Foley High School does not build them in their classes any more.

Mr. Knight made a motion to accept the preliminary rates. Mr. Singleton seconded the motion and the vote passed unanimously.

Mrs. Gahagan will get the contract ready for the next meeting so that the Board can review it.

Update on Interpretive Center – Mrs. Gahagan reported bids were received and they tried to value engineer it the maximum of ten (10%) percent. They came back with changes to value engineer the items but it only reached 8.5%. The items they omitted were some of the better features, and some items were ok because it was in the construction process. She and the City Administrator Mike Thompson met with the contractors and asked them if we shaved some footage

off the porches so that the side porches were 17' and the front porches were 18' would the percentage reach 10%. They are waiting on the contractor to see if it would make enough of an impact to not have to remove any of the things that were part of the center, i.e. the mural on the entrance way, take out the cabinets, etc.

Mr. Trawick reported the City can only negotiate down by ten percent and if it gets down more than 10% then they have to redo the drawings and rebid the project. Mrs. Gahagan reported that if they can reduce the porches by a smaller footprint and get the cost down by 10% it would be ideal. They will still be over budget by \$65,000 to \$70,000 by the time they purchase tables and chairs for the events area and that is because the designs and engineering was \$115,000. If they value engineer the project the cost is \$1,125,000. They did the basics to outfit the building and that was \$25,000. The budgeted amount for the project was \$1.2 million.

Philomene Holmes road is underway. It has been surveyed, staked, and had some geotechnical work done on the soils. Mrs. Gahagan still needs to look at the wetland footprint to see what the impact will be to make sure they stay where they wanted and report back to the Corp. They had to change from the original trail design to shift it north to avoid the pitcher plant area. There has to be a certain radius on the road to make it flow right to have enough curves so that people cannot travel very fast. The change actually minimized the wetland impact.

Mr. Patterson asked about the equipment someone saw in the Preserve and if any trees were going to be taken out. Mrs. Gahagan reported there is one oak tree by the road that is diseased and in bad shape that will be taken out.

Mr. Patterson asked if any of the information, i.e. the schematics of the interpretive center would be on the website, etc. Mrs. Gahagan reported she is still working on the website but it should be up on the City's website by Monday as she is working with the Marketing Department. The Master Plan is on social media with some excerpts.

Update on Earth Day – Mrs. Gahagan reported the rescheduled Earth Day event was ok. There were a few teams that participated and they had a great time. There was a lot of talk about the event but the low participation probably had a lot to do with rescheduling the event and the impending rain we were supposed to have for that day. The good thing about it is they had the neatest t-shirts but did not put a date on them so they can be used next year.

As far as the festival was concerned South Alabama students came in, had music under the pavilion, a nature tour, set ups with various items and there

were approximately several hundred people go through that morning. Both weekends had major festivals, i.e. St. Benedicts festival was this weekend.

They had two Boy Scout Troops (Elberta and Magnolia Springs) that camped out that weekend that were volunteers and participants. They worked the scramble, had a cleanup, and put in a tree trail. They are working on a tree trail brochure and put in some very nice wooden signs that identified some common trees in a 1.5 mile loop. The Scouts camped in the open area, had a tent city put up for the night, which turned out great Friday night, but a terrible storm came through Saturday evening and they got all the boys into the trucks just in time but the lost 8 to 12 tents. The rains weren't bad - it was just the winds came in too fast.

Update on Educational Programs – Mrs. Gahagan reported they have been doing educational programs in the summer for so long they didn't realize how many were on the books. The first week of June after the Observe & Explore they have three field trips with different grades from Orange Beach. The 8th through the 12th the Scouts pay \$100 for the Pavilion and they have the little scouts the Cubs and Webelos and they have their day camps. The 15th through the 18th will be the Explorers Camp from 8:00 until noon for ages 5 through 9. They will have crafts, environmental educational programs and some type of activity. Then the 22nd through the 24th they will have Pioneer Camp from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. for the 10 to 14 year olds. Both camps cost \$40 and it covers the cost of the t-shirts and supplies. The Summer School Programs will be attending, i.e. Magnolia School, YMCA, Snook Youth Club, Girl Scouts.

An archery camp will be held July 13th through the 17th 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. The Foley Elementary Archery Instructor will be teaching archery. The Recreation Department set the camp up so she doesn't know the cost. They do anticipate it being very popular.

The calendars will be on the website. The month of April was extremely busy with all the field trips. They probably had 400-500 children come through in April. They have two interns coming in for the summer to assist with the camps and are very qualified. David Eckman does a very good job on the farming and planting. It is good to have people with the various expertises to help out.

Mr. Singleton reported she would be hearing from the Alabama Water Watch 4-H program. They want to organize something on a regional basis (Foley, Orange Beach and Gulf Shores) but they are still having difficulties with the expanded approach that 4-H is using, which is for home schools.

Play Day was Wednesday and they ended up with one of the home school ladies putting Play Day as an event on Face Book and all the home school

children, ages 2-10 came up that they had not planned on. Ms. Trimble reported they found them some caterpillars that turn into Giant Swallowtail butterflies. They like to eat citrus leaves, especially Satsuma leaves with the bird pooh, and they smell really bad.

Ms. Trimble got permission from the Board of Education to send out information on the Camps but Magnolia School was the only one that responded with numbers. She will be following up with the others next week.

REMINDERS

Chairman Price reminded everyone that Art in the Park will be held this weekend from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and be sure to remember their wives and get them something nice for Mother's Day.

Chairman Price also reported they had over 750 luminaries in Heritage Park for Relay for Life in memory or in honor of someone. It was really beautiful with the clock tower, train and Rose trail. They made \$41,000 and had good participation.

The next meeting will be June 4, 2015

VISITOR COMMENTS

There were no visitor comments to report.

ADJOURN

Hearing no further comments Mr. Knight made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Singleton seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

/s/Katy Taylor
Acting Recording Secretary