

## MINUTES

**GRAHAM CREEK NATURE PRESERVE ADVISORY BOARD  
407 E. LAUREL AVENUE  
FOLEY, ALABAMA  
CONFERENCE ROOM  
MARCH 31, 2016  
5:30 P.M.**

### MEETING

Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Zana Price called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Members present: Tim Closson, Greg Knight, Tommy Patterson, Homer Singleton, and Chad Watkins. Absent: Phillip Hinesley. Others present: Vickey Southern, Jackie Trimble, Wayne Trawick and Vera Quaites.

### MINUTES

Approve Minutes of January 7, 2016

Mr. Knight made a motion to approve the minutes of January 7, 2016 and Mr. Patterson seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### ***Adopt Policy on Reservations***

Leslie reported she and Jackie are getting calls, emails, Facebook messages, and telephone calls on personal phones, 24/7 wanting to get the pavilion. It doesn't seem to be slowing down. We hope to have the Rental Policy and Rules official adopted prior to reserving the pavilion as of June 1, 2016. This gives us a date to officially say first come, first serve; if you pay for it we will put reservation signs up to ensure you have it reserved. The Rules will have to follow the City's other park pavilions rental rules. There are three picnic tables by the outdoor classroom that will be available for groups and three down by the canoe launch.

Mr. Singleton made a motion to approve the Policy on Reservations and Mr. Knight seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

#### ***Adopt Ordinance Amending the Rules and Regulations***

Leslie reported the ordinance has been on the books since 2010. It needs to be amended because they still have problems with Jeeps and golf carts riding across the Preserve. They aren't tearing anything up but it does set precedence. If it is spelled out at least it can be policed. There is an exclusion for invasive nuisance species hunting/trapping because there is a trap for a wild hog.

Under "F" fires needed to be addressed. The Boy Scouts camp out and have "leave no trace behind" camp fires. Two other group that follow the same "leave no trace behind" camp fire policy are: 1) Trail Life, which a Christian based organization, and 2) Venture, which a branch of the Boy Scouts that is a mix of boys and girls. When they do camp out they are required to do a service project at the Preserve, i.e. picking up trash, cleaning trails, trail maintenance. Under "G" Horses were taken out because they never developed horse trails.

Mr. Patterson reported when the Preserve was being developed area neighborhoods were assured there would be no RV's on the Preserve so that it wouldn't turn into a campground. The exception was the ASA Tournament, where he counted at least 14 at any one time, ranging from pop-ups to motor homes. Section 11.5-69 Rules of Preserve Usage E that it will be approved by the Preserve Manager. Mr. Patterson expressed his concerns about the next manager who might not have the same passion as the current manager. He would rather limit the RV's to having them there for security purposes only.

There was further discussion regarding the campers with some of them on Stan Mahoney Lane. Leslie will ensure next year that ASA's Director knows that she has to have a list and that it must be abided by. She had to tell some people driving RV's they couldn't park in the Preserve.

There was a Director with his registration materials; three motor homes that had their set ups in front of them. If they set up they want to be there the whole time and not leave their retail items. Then the food vender didn't trust leaving his trailer. What about the service organizations? Mr. Patterson reported he didn't have a problem with the scouts. Him problems are with the RV's. We are set up for them. Leslie reported they needed a RV park located near there.

Next year will be different because the Center will be completed and there will be 12 different pedestals and not on Stan Mahoney Lane. They are dotted along the outside of the building so that the shoppers on along the outside of the building so that the shoppers will all be in one location. There are only six pedestals that would handle the motor homes of that nature. Leslie will reword item "E" of the ordinance and send it back out for everyone's approval prior to it going to the Council for adoption.

Mr. Knight made a motion to table this item until it can be amended; sent out via email; and pending vote via email. Mr. Watkins seconded the motion and the vote passed unanimously.

### ***Closure of the Coastal Wildlife Rehabilitation and Rescue Center***

Leslie reported the Coastal Wildlife Rehabilitation and Rescue Center is officially closed. They found out the trailer was never officially donated by an authorized

official. The people just realized this when reviewing the books and then came to the Center and told them that they owed them, no back rent, rent plus utility bills they were struggling to pay. They just do not have the funds to pay so they decided to close and not take in any birds.

However, yesterday Janet Rip did take in three pelicans and attempted to capture an osprey when Janet fell out of the tree and broke her leg. She did finally capture the osprey and took it to Orange Beach and it is doing well. One of the three pelicans is being feed by hand by Janet and the other two are still at the Center. David is taking care of them until Orange Beach can come and get them.

In the City's Master Plan a bird center would be located in approximately the same area and Orange Beach had applied for a large BP grant through NIWIF. NIWIF said no to the funding because they had included wildlife on their request. Wildlife was not officially damaged during the BP oil spill so that negated the proposal. Unofficially the City decided to write a request for a bird center to build and fund it for two years. It would be very similar to what they had, and staff it for two year and then request other cities to partner. She was asked by Fish and Wildlife, as well as Aliska Morgan, who is one of the head of Restore Alabama, and State Lands have discussed this with her and they were all in support of this project. If they could do something what they had they would be in favor of it.

In the meantime they will be pulling the trailer out on Monday or Tuesday. They have asked them to leave the fence, aviaries, and pelican areas as is and we will dismantle, clean up, do what they need to do and may even leave the fence temporarily. If the City doesn't get a center in a year or two then the City will give it all to Orange Beach, which isn't a lot. In the meantime we will be talking with Orange Beach, but they refuse to take any birds from anywhere but Orange Beach. They won't take any outside the City limits of Orange Beach.

She and Jackie are going to a symposium tomorrow on what they will be doing. There will be other professionals at the symposium tomorrow so they are excited to see what to expect. There is no other facility permitted in the County once the center closes. Orange Beach still doesn't have a permit. Mr. Singleton reported they still don't have a permitted rescue manager, so without Janet the nearest one is Mobile County. If anyone asks they are closing due to lack of funding.

***Discussion of a Canoe/Kayak/Paddleboard Rental Business RFP at the Preserve***

Leslie handed out a revised RFP. They have received a request from a business that has been doing this but not through the preserve. They bring the canoes,

kayaks out and rent to people on line and meet them at the canoe launch. This has been discussed City-wide. This needed to be brought to the Board to see if there is any type of interest. Mr. Patterson stated he was against it. Leslie reported this would be for one year to test the water to see how it would really work.

Leslie reported they had been asked if they could store some of their equipment at the Preserve instead of towing it back and forth. Mr. Singleton reported he noticed that they had issues with not having enough equipment because they didn't have enough room on their trailer. I'm sure they would like to have some place to store their equipment. Leslie wasn't sure if there were any other businesses that would like to put in a RFP. The business that approached her is Alabama Power Sports. She felt that it needed to be a business and not a non-profit because it would need to be someone who already put the money into it. Leslie reported that sometimes during the year, especially during the summer months they have had a lot of calls for this and we are not supposed to make any recommendations. The RFP calls for their hours of operation.

There was a discussion regarding the difference between RFP's and bids. RFP's are more of a sales pitch selling the business and bids submit the particulars of an item. Basically the canoe/kayak business would be an amenity for the public.

Mr. Watkins made a motion to move forward with RFP and Mr. Singleton seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

## OLD BUSINESS

Updates on:

- A) Required burns – Leslie reported they burned three different times. Seventy five acres were burned and then two hundred acres were burned. The first burn they had five men from the Forestry Commission, helicopters, and all kinds of people that showed up. The swamp got really hot and one of the deer targets got burned up because it inadvertently was left behind. Since the swamp was so hot there were a lot of snakes coming out of the swamp too. There should be some nice plants coming up in a couple of weeks. The only thing that didn't burn was the east side of the road that splits the park up to where they did burn the first burn. There is one gap that will be really hot that will be done next year.
  
- B) Earth Day – Jackie reported the Earth Day Scramble will be held on April 16, 2016 and will have physical and mental challenges. It won't be as strenuous as the cross-country races have been because they want it to be a family oriented race for all ages. She has invited businesses (outdoor recreation or adventure guides to do an eco-

expo) and non-profit organizations, food growers, anyone within the area that has anything to do with the environment. A band will be playing at the outdoor classroom. The Foley Garden Club will help them paint flower pots and plant plants for them to take home similar to an "Explore and Observe Day for the small children. It will be a laid back event and highlighting all the people working in the environmental outdoor area of this industry. The race begins at 9:00 a.m. and the expo starts at 10:00 a.m. and the Observe and Explore will be from 10:30 until 11:30 a.m. The event should end around 1:00 p.m. Jackie has flyers to distribute for the event.

- C) Construction of Interpretive Center – Leslie reported three quarters of the roof is on; the front walls have been framed. Once the walls have been finished they will begin putting up the exterior walls. The opening date is June 23<sup>rd</sup> but not sure about it because of the weather as it continues to rain. Each time they go to pour the last bit of concrete it goes underwater and the winds have been terrible. The City will try to finish the roads within the next two weeks. The grounds should green up in three weeks.
- D) ASA Archery Tournament – Leslie reported they had more attendance than any tournament they have had in the past. They were extremely pleased and were very successful for a first time event. The archers are already calls for next year. We expect the numbers to stay up. The Council signed a five year contract with them. After talking with Don this will be the one big event they do at the Preserve. It takes a lot of people to put a production of this scale plus maintaining the archery lanes throughout the year. Wherever we have pitcher plants growing they will die back but we will have to cut back any shrubs that grow back.

Mr. Patterson reported the traffic wasn't bad at all. Councilman Trawick reported Philomene Holmes road wasn't open and they anticipate it being open next year and it will help relieve the congestion. They don't have a turn lane at the traffic light on the Foley Beach Express so it was backing up and they hope to work that out with the County when they go to repave County Road 12.

Councilman Trawick reported some of the restaurants did not get notified of the event. Their businesses did well but it caught it off guard because they eat well. Chairman Price reported they like to shop at Tanger too. Leslie reported one of the male and female archers are going to get married at the Preserve this fall. They will drive in because they felt it was their destination. Foley should get a lot of vacationers.

Mr. Singleton reported the lanes would be good for the birdwatchers. The wildlife loves the lanes too. Leslie reported some of the lanes went underwater so they will have to clear out some more to come up with the best of the best. David is looking for the best spots.

Next Meeting Date will be July 7, 2016 – This is just a suggested date because of the grand opening events.

Chairman Price thanked the board members for their attendance and participation.

VISITOR COMMENTS – There were no comments to report.

#### ADJOURN

Mr. Knight made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Watkins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

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Victoria Southern, MMC  
City Clerk/Recording Secretary