

Minutes - Draft

**PECS-Planning, Economic Development & Community Services
Committee**

Monday, March 21, 2022

10:00 AM

Special Called Meeting

This meeting will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Simultaneous public access to the meeting will be available

*(1) via live stream on DCTV s webpage,
(2) on DCTVChannel23.TV*

Meeting Started At: 10:00AM

Attendees: Commissioners Johnson, Rader, Davis Johnson, Patrick, Bradshaw, Cochran-Johnson, Terry

Present 3 - Commissioner Larry Johnson, Commissioner Jeff Rader, and
Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson

I. AGENDA ITEM

[2022-1190](#) Commission District(s): All
Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs 10-Year Master Plan
**This agenda item was recommended holding in committee to
the Board of Commissioners due back on 3/22/2022 .**

-information provided by RPCA Director Chuck Ellis, Will Hager - American Planning Association (AICP) on the proposed Parks Master Plan

-Commissioner Johnson requests Director Ellis set up individual meetings with the commissioners to discuss these plans

-Question LCJ: regarding those that travel outside DEKALB for parks, were there conversations on what spurs that travel? W Hager: that's a great question and there's not a single answer. Sometimes there are perceived safety reasons; if it is youth-sports related, they may be looking for a more competitive league. Sometimes they may work in a nearby county, so they visit a park on their way home that happens to be their choice. There's not a one-size fits all reason there

-Question MDJ: in the south east part of the County, the public engagement list did not list Lucious Sanders, which is a recreational park in the 5th and 7th districts. That park is very competitive in their basketball - but the park is inadequate and the building is old. We put in funds to request a study. I would assume because of that facility in the southeast end, I wouldn't want my child to go there now. Regarding a 10 year study, and renovations, there's no opportunities in the south east end. Brown's Mill, that was later acquired by the City of Stonecrest, the citizens of Stonecrest were looking for a rec facility to put their children in this summer. But that's not available because it wasn't in the City's budget - therefore those people will look outside of their district or the County. These are some of the things I would hope that you consider. Why was Lucious Sanders not in the public engagement activities?

-W Hager: we worked with staff to identify centrally located places across the county. We couldn't reach every community center but we try to reach as many as possible that are accessible for most people in the County. Your point is correct, if a facility is not meeting the needs of the users they will more than likely choose the next best facility.

-Question LCJ: regarding ongoing CIP and facilities maintenance, do we have a plan in place for long-term and ongoing maintenance?

C Ellis: regarding CIP, each year we put in a CIP request based on priority. The last 4 years we've seen higher numbers of projects being funded by CIP. SPLOST dollars also make a big difference in our athletic and playgrounds; all of these efforts are making a huge difference

-Question LCJ: are you receiving any portion of the hotel/motel funds?

C Ellis: we've received hotel/motel as you all approve it. What was recently approved regarding Youth Farm and the Sugar Creek and Mystery Valley courses, as well as Arabia Mountain

-Question LCJ: I think we need more money on facilities maintenance regarding parks and recreation. Is that a correct assumption? Is there a projects allocated goal, and what would be an overall number for imperative projects?

C Ellis: at the end of this presentation you'll see a list of those priorities; in Parks there is certainly always to be done

-LJ: when the first bond referendum was passed, it was a set aside for capital improvements but also commissioners were set aside funds for improvements in their area. The funds were only around 20% so we could only do so much and we didn't previously keep up with population increases. Then came SPLOST, but when the law passed it didn't allow for new buildings -only existing. When the new SPLOST comes out we can start to add capital improvement projects in the budget. Overall we've always been playing catch-up. This master plan will show us at the end the type of plan to put this together

-Z Williams: I would only add that 5 or so years ago Facilities began a program of roof and HVAC repair. We have some of the items like that that have been funded through the Facilities department. The theory was that you must address roofing/HVAC, because if you don't other problems will occur.

-Question MDJ: regarding crime, have there been any consideration on installing cameras throughout different paths?

C Ellis: this year we had \$450,000 approved for county lights in our parks. You'll probably see more requests in the future on this. That amount was an estimate for what we thought we could do in 1 year

LJ: Director Ellis is the first director who said we need to have lights in parks. I'm glad he's putting the lights in. I think we need more lights and cameras on the trails as well as the parks

-Question LJ: regarding service gaps, we need to see what our accreditation is to ensure our rec centers match that accreditation. Are you making sure that you have that 30% of population that we're trying to meet, or are there age considerations in this?

W Hager: for this exercise, this is a spatial analysis - how far are people from their nearest parks?

LJ: right; I want to also look at gaps in terms of our services; additionally you have to ensure that the staff is trained in the direction we want to go - kinesiology, gerontology, yoga, DJ's for recording studios, etc. Rec centers are also prevention centers and we need to look at it from that approach as well.

-W Hager: those are great points; we'll cover some of that in the emergency trends section as well

-Question JR: in our previous parks master plan, there was more focus on the parks capacity on a per capita basis., District 2 has the least parks area per capita, and has the highest population per capita in the county. I think this analysis appears to not focus on the adequacy of the system on a per capita basis. There are mechanisms regarding acres/capita or a service area

that I've seen before. Many of the programs referenced in district 2 are overprogrammed, and inadequate land/facilities to meet the demand. There is an insufficiency of park land regarding service. When you discuss surplus, it doesn't reflect population, and the surpluses are not rolled up into regional levels as well. I think there's more work to be done on a granular level, and we need to identify the program of a sufficient recreation center. Your gap analysis isn't showing a need that is there based on population areas. On a land/facility basis, there is a great surplus of demand over supply for these areas in the county. Director Ellis I would encourage you to get more information on the granular details.

-Question RP: there are lots of maps in this document. Offline please provide me some the shape files, and particularly gap analysis that would be helpful in this

LJ: please send the whole file to the commissioners as well

-Question MDJ: in doing this research study, did you take into consideration areas of the county of the recreation services, like a YMCA or Boys and Girls Clubs? Private facilities that may exist in certain areas but may not exist in areas where citizens have other options?

W Hager: yes, we considered private as well as public facilities. One thing we heard from some is that there are some YMCA's out of reach for some families. If there are services that would be comparable to YMCA services that could be provided, that could be helpful

-Question JR: regarding the population densities slide, there are several categories for future parks. I wasn't able to identify those

W Hager: information on the future needs provided by Mr. Hager

-Question JR: is there any inventory in this plan of lands not developed?

W Hager: not at this time

JR: that would be useful so that we have an idea on what we want to do with them over time

-MDJ: as discussed this is a document in progress and Commissioner Rader has hit on some important points we should explore

-JR: we had several issues brought up during the presentation; we appreciate your consideration of that in the completed master plan. Mr. Ellis could you work with the consultant to complete that?

C Ellis: absolutely and today went as planned; once we provide those updates and discuss with the Administration we will look forward to having this approved

JR: It would be a good idea to bring back a matrix of the things brought up in this meeting, and how the master plan will address that ahead of an upcoming meeting

Meeting Ended At: 11:48AM

MOTION was made by Mereda Davis Johnson, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be adjourned meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Commissioner Rader, and Commissioner Davis Johnson

Not Present: 1 - Commissioner Johnson

Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC