

**Recreation Advisory Commission**  
**March 11, 2026**

Call To Order:

A meeting of the Durham Recreation Advisory Commission was held on this day in person, March 11, 2026. In attendance: Girija Mahajan, Karthik Sundaramoorthy, Mike Johnston, Dale McKeel, Cedric Burke, Gabrielle Rivero, Mary Parsons, and Gregory Williams

- I. Adjustments to the Agenda/Special Announcements
  - a. Gregory is engaged!
  - b. Congratulations to Gabby on her election win
- II. Public Comment
  - a. No public comment
- III. RAC Community Engagement, Events & Committee Report
  - a. RAC Updates
    - i. Karthik attended the Wheels engagement event for the Outdoor Aquatic Center. Lots of families were in attendance.
    - ii. Gregory went to the EAB meeting with a group that is concerned with the runoff from Brenntag,
      1. Does RAC want to co-author a letter asking the City to escalate their response to Brenntag.
    - iii.
  - b. DOST
    - i. Dost met on Feb 18
    - ii. Adopted priorities and goals for 2026
    - iii. Discussed the redevelopment of the DAP, decided to not take a position at this time.
    - iv. Planning a trails tour in May, will go to a new County park off 98. The date will be determined by availability
    - v. This Saturday will be a tour of the Third Fork Creek Trail from 10am to 12pm.
    - vi. Voted on a new logo
  - c. Durham Parks Foundation
    - i. The Bull City Open was March 6-8. We had 198 registrations and 192 players. The tournament brought in \$12,000 for the Foundation
    - ii. Tomorrow night, the Foundation is hosting a FY27 Budget Advocacy Meeting at 6pm at Forest Hills Neighborhood Clubhouse. We have invited members of the tennis community, Forest Hills Neighborhood Association, Merrick-Moore CDC, Athletic facility users and anyone in the community who would like to learn about DPR's budget requests and how to advocate for them.
    - iii. The Mayor's Corporate Challenge is April 9, 9-12. We are looking for 25 businesses and organizations to come out and help improve our City Parks. Projects range from painting shelters to planting park entrance beds. All

supplies and staff guidance is provided. The day is sponsored by Burt's Bees and Enbridge Energy.

- IV. Approval of the February Meeting Minutes
  - a. Motion to approve February Minutes by Dale McKeel, seconded by Mary Parsons, motion passed unanimously.
- V. Approval of Fee Waivers
  - a. Motion to approve Fee Waivers as presented by staff by Mary Parsons, seconded by Dale McKeel, motion passed unanimously.
- VI. Old Business/New Business
  - a. Motion to open the floor for nominations for the offices of Chair and Vice Chair by Girija Mahajan, Seconded by Dale, motion passed unanimously.
    - i. Motion to amend the motion to elect the nominees for Chair and Vice Chair by Girija Mahajan, Seconded by Gregory Williams, motion passed unanimously.
  - b. Durham Outdoor Aquatic Center at Merrick-Moore Park Update – Denise Chaplick
    - i. Q: Will there be food at the Aquatic Center for people to purchase?
    - ii. A: Yes
    - iii. Q: In what case would the Festival Street be closed?
    - iv. A: Concerts, movies in the park, other events.
    - v. Q: Where is parking located on the site?
    - vi. A: Parking is located around the perimeter of the site. Parking for Wheels is being maintained and there are 200 spaces for the aquatics facility.
    - vii. Q: Have there been conversations with other City departments on the intersection of Hoover Rd and Cheek Rd?
    - viii. A: Transportation is well aware of the project and the planned increase in traffic.
    - ix. Q: What are the hours of operation?
    - x. A: We have not identified what the hours for the aquatic site will be.
    - xi. Q: Is the exterior splash pad free?
    - xii. A: Yes, the exterior splash pad will be free.
    - xiii. Q: Are there are no sidewalks currently along Hoover Rd?
    - xiv. A: There is currently a sidewalk in front of the Wheels property but is not ADA. We have submitted a CIP proposal to add sidewalks
    - xv. Q: How were the parking spaces calculated?
    - xvi. A: The designers use the City's code requirement to calculate required parking
    - xvii. Q: Is there overflow parking identified?
    - xviii. A: At this time we have not identified satellite parking for the site.
    - xix. Q: Will the pools be heated?
    - xx. A: No, the pools will not be heated.
    - xxi. Q: Will this facility be managed by the City or will there be an outside manager be used?
    - xxii. A: We are looking at several models for the operations of the facility.
    - xxiii. Q: Will there be inclusivity features incorporated?

xxiv. A: There is zero entry, there is a quiet room, and lift chairs for the lap pool

xxv. Gabby really appreciates the inclusion of the greenery

c.

## VII. Director's Report

- a. The Council has held two budget retreats and Monday, March 16 is the Budget Public Hearing at 7pm during the City Council Meeting.
- b. Participatory Budget results were announced which included the repair of the Downtown Skate Park, a new inclusive playground at Bethesda Park and a new public restroom in Downtown.
- c. Q: Any updates on an agreement on using DPS playgrounds near the PRLF parks?
- d. A: We are working with the schools to try to get them to notify the public that their playgrounds are available for public use outside of school hours.
- e. Q: How much do you consider the resident satisfaction survey and resident's satisfaction with different departments to inform funding priorities?
- f. A: We don't look at specific results for departments but City Council does look at how residents rate the importance of parks. The manager is talking about making the 10-year CIP plan more transparent for everyone.
- g. Q: Was there any follow-up on the public comment on pickleball court hours?
- h. A: We are keeping the new hours for a year before evaluating if any changes need to be made.
- i. Q: How did the presentation of the updated Land Acquisition and Acceptance Policy at the JCC Planning Meeting go?
- j. A: The presentation went really well and the group was very receptive to the proposed process.
  - i. DPR is developing templates for development review so that we can provide detailed rationale for why we would or would not accept a proffer.
- k. On March 21 we will have the first of our Party in the Park event series. C.R. Wood Park from 11am-2pm. A DJ, Free Food, Programming and Yard Games will be provided.
- l. The Grant Street Neighborhood along with DPR is hosting a park listening session on ideas for improvements at Grant Street North Park
- m. Little River is opening this weekend. Lake Michie is still in recovery from Chantal.
- n. The final soil shop will be Saturday at Communities in Partnership for East End.

Meeting Adjourned 9:03 am

Next RAC Meeting – Wednesday, April 8