Athens Recreation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
November 17th, 5:30 pm
Athens City Council Chambers

I. **Call to Order-** Katherine Ann Jordan, Director of the Arts Parks and Recreation Department, called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.
   - **In attendance-** Daniel Brown, Ash Allanson, Greg Lavelle, Andrea Lewis, Rebecca Dillon, councilman Alan Swank, and Director Katherine Ann Jordan.
   - Quorum was established.

II. **Election of Temporary Chair and a Temporary Secretary**- Director Jordan explained the necessity to have a temporary chair and secretary in place to move forward the agenda for this meeting and for the nomination and election process. Daniel Brown made a motion to volunteer to serve as temporary chair, Andrea Lewis volunteered to serve as, secretary. Greg Lavelle seconded the motion, motion passed by voice vote.

III. **Approval of the Agenda –** Daniel Brown asked if there were any additions or changes to the agenda.

IV. **Approval of Minutes –** Andrea Lewis noted that the minutes were received via email an hour or so prior to the meeting, and made a motion to approve the minutes at the December meeting to give members time to review them. Alan Swank, interjected that only members present at the meeting could approve the minutes from the previous month. Daniel Brown seconded the motion, motion approved by voice vote.

V. **New Business**
   - **Board Officers/New Member Discussion:** Members discussed the process and timeline. Greg Lavelle, stated that we should be discussing in the community that there are vacancies to create a pool of potential members. He added, if his appointment is not renewed may be off the board in January, and there are 2 vacancies currently. Andrea asked if the same process would be followed, with a questionnaire submitted to show interest.

     Alan interjected that there is a pool of individuals who filled out prior interest forms that the group may want to review. He also stated there was a standing practice that a member of the Athens City School District (ACSD), always had a member on the board, and respectfully asked that it be considered to have an ACSD member be included in the 7 board members.

     Andrea asked if there is a December meeting. Director Jordan confirmed that there was. She stated that she would reach out to the mayor to get the list of prior nominees and will distribute to the board so they can be discussed at the meeting.

Andrea asked if anyone wanted to put forth a motion at this time, Greg stated that the list of names should be reviewed before any recommendation was put forth.

Alan Swank noted that the questionnaire did not include time commitment. The Rec Advisory boards are codified with a set meeting time and date of third Thursday of each month at 5:30, and additionally asked that individuals should be familiar with the department, its facilities, and programs as well as have a deep circle of contacts or community so that they represent a wide variety people. He also asked if minutes were required to be taken, Director Jordan clarified that every board and commission must take and be responsible for their own minutes. Past recordings will be transcribed by the city intern, out of necessity, since the Rec advisory board did not have a secretary in place, but will not be practice moving forward.

Andrea made a motion that the RAB would like to review the list of prior nominees and a copy of the questionnaire. and reach out to individual contacts to have a discussion in December. Greg stated that we should constantly be recruiting. Greg Lavelle, seconded the motion, approved by voice vote

* * Director Jordan clarified that the prior discussion was for new members, but the board still needed to discuss officers. Andrea stated that since there were a few vacancies, and those were nearly half the board, election of permanent officers should continue at a future meeting, if there were no objections to that.Greg agreed. Rebecca, stated if Daniel was comfortable continuing as temporary chair, that she agrees it would be good to wait. Daniel agreed it was ok to wait. Daniel made a motion that we can discuss in December election of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary. Greg Lavelle seconded the motion, approved by voice vote.

- **Land Lab at MOGO**- Daniel Brown provided background on the land lab located at Morrison Gordon Elementary and expressed desire to have it resurrected for an improved space for recreation and access for students at the school, and wanted to see if there were ways that the Rec Advisory Board, and city recreation department could be involved in to improve it. Daniel himself has offered to put in effort to get an initiative to collaborate with the City Rec department. His love of the outdoors is the motivation for this. Director Jordan, responded that she would need to see who owned the land that it was located on and determine if it was within the purview of the city to be involved and that it has potential to be an interesting collaboration.
  Greg Lavelle asked if it would be a collaborative effort between the city and the city school district. Director Jordan, stated that, yes it could be an opportunity for a collaboration. Daniel was asked if there were other land labs within the ACSD. He stated there is a Land Lab at AHS as well, his area of focus at the moment is MOGO, not intended to be exclusive but a starting point.

Director Jordan mentioned the Riparian area that the city is working on, and a tree planting occurred this past weekend. This is an opportunity for child programming in the area- we do to have an immersive outdoor rec experience- would like to see guidance on utilization of that area. She asked what is the definition of a Land Lab? For clarification.

Councilman Swank- asked Daniel if he would you like to make an introduction to Dr. Gibbs? Daniel will reach out.

- **Athens Farmers Market (AFM)** - Director Jordan provided an update on the relocation of the Athens Farmer's market. The first Wed/Sat of November they were at the Community Center. From feedback she received, the transition is going well. The weather was very favorable and a great opportunity to see what it "could" be. This is an opportunity for the Rec Advisory board to ask any questions about how it is going, or any questions for the rec department.

  Greg asked it the "arts" portion were paying a separate rental fee? Director Jordan responded that they are not, they pay the AFM directly. Greg followed with the current ordinance language states that "only agricultural products" can be sold there are you aware of that? Director Jordan stated that the ordinance states that we would give/provide a space, and that there are plenty of other events that vend. Greg followed asking if there was concern that the AFM was not following the city ordinance and that they are not collecting sales tax, is the concern only that they are paying their rent? Director Jordan responded that is not how they view the AFM relationship and that she would relay any specific questions to the Mayor. Are you concerned about code? Greg responded that he was concerned about code, because as it is written it is stated specifically for agricultural products and there are many vendors that do not sell agricultural products. So the original code, as it is written, is being violated. He is aware that council is working on resolving that, but as it is written now, he is concerned as it is written now they are not following the ordinance. He raised additional concerns about income tax and sales tax. Director Jordan stated that was a question for AFM and how they handle their business operations, she stated that there may be a misconception about the purpose of the ordinance. The intent was that the city, would do its best to hold a space for the AFM in/near the east campus. Specific questions about code, need to be directed to the code office, and specific question about how the AFM handles their income needs to be directed to the AFM. Greg continued to ask, if as the director of the space the Athens Farmers Market rents if she (Director Jordan) had concerns. Director Jordan offered to connect anyone with the Code office, Law Director, or Farmers Market for their questions. Her goal is to help our community experience and have access to the Athens Farmers Market. Her understanding is that the AFM was looking to move for the health of their organization. Councilman Swank added to the discussion, that those were legitimate questions, but they should have been asked 3 (or so) months ago, but is concerned that the input of the Rec Advisory Board was not sought on the proposed move. He noted that it was disconcerting to here about the move 11 days prior to its occurrence. He asked how the fee was set, and it does not seem to be consistent with the published rates.

Director Jordan responded with her methodology for coming up with a fee structure. Director Jordan used the non-profit inside space rate, Alan interrupted that this was not a non-profit entity. Andrea clarified that the AFM is a registered non-profit, and they are the renter. Alan also brought up concerns about process and communication, including the rec advisory board, Athens Far East Side Neighborhood Assoc, and city council.

Director Jordan further explained the methodology for the rental charge, using existing pricing for other space lease/use. The original cost was higher than the current rate of $15,000, during negotiations they asked to remove staff costs for extra support, and which was done, so they are responsible for some site prep (cordoning off space etc. that the rec staff would have normally included in the rate) We do what we can to make the facility available to parties that want to rent the space, there is nothing being given away for permanent use, and would be treated as any other user who wanted to use the space.

Alan brought up concerns of neighborhood impact, noise and safety. Director Jordan asked if there were any additional questions. Andrea asked if there were any plans for signage directing market guests to use crosswalks when crossing East State Street to avoid any accidents. She will bring it to the attention of the AFM as feedback.

Greg asked if the timing of the traffic light could be changed. Director Jordan has spoken to Jessica Adine and her office regarding collecting data and placement of traffic counters. A discussion continued about how are they counting the potential flow and bottleneck issues. Director Jordan will clarify with Jessica how the research is done, and referenced a study from 2016-2017 and changes that were made at that time. And will get with her to discuss it.

Ash asked about feedback from the general public of the farmers market. Director Jordan responded with a story about families pulling up to the bike racks to access the market, and have better access, and has received positive feedback. Daniel added as a bike commuter that (crossing) east state street is a barrier so it is nice to have it on that side of the road.

VI. Old Business

Tennis and Pickleball- Director Jordan referenced the quote that was passed out prior to the meeting from Total Tennis ($653,515) for 2 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts. She said that in conversations there were some areas of cost savings without compromising the quality of the playi8ng surfaces. It was suggested to considered a different surface (less cushion- for savings of ~$40K) additionally some changes to lighting could reduce the cost as well as fencing. This is still over the 10% threshold so how do we move forward and still provide something for our community.

Do we move to 2 courts without lights would be around 300K with lights 350K? Director Jordan has been working with the street crew and Director of EPW to crack seal the area behind the community center to determine if a workable solution can be met with a Sport Court product.

The Current funds sitting in wait is $300K, since these funds are associated with a project the funds will still be available in 2023. This is an opportunity for the board to discuss options on how we move forward to have a successful project and address the issue. She is working on a grant to help get the project funded.

Ash asked what the current level of interest is there from the local community? Will improvements increase interest and usage of the facility? Director Jordan replied that Interest is there and usage is there- feedback from pickle ballers, and tennis players gave feedback of some suggested improvements that would improve their experience on our site. She feels the pressure of the lack of attention of our courts- because she would like our community to have a playable surface. Lights are important and increase the times of usage, but understand that they could be cost prohibitive, and at the moment the ideal solution is out of reach. I think not doing something is harmful.

Daniel asked Director Jordan to reiterate the cost difference between a lighted and non-lighted court. She stated $350K vs $375K, but the vendor would have a better idea of price after Thanksgiving.

Rebecca asked what maintenance will look like and how would that be budgeted for if it was not taken care of currently? Director Jordan responded that depending on the materials the maintenance schedule would be determined- it would become a part of the current rec department budget. Greg gave some background information on the current courts, their lifespan, and the maintenance. He encouraged consideration of keeping cushioned courts because of their lifespan and the benefits to aging individuals. His wants to understand what it will take to get a project to be a priority of the city so that funds are allocated until they are completed, considering the length of time that the tennis courts have needed attention.

Daniel excused himself from the meeting and Katherine Ann Jordan has taken over the meeting until it is adjourned.

Greg continued stating that if the project, as it was intended cannot be done, it is a waste of time, and keep setting aside funds or finding monies to make it happen the right way. Director Jordan will clarify with the auditor if the funds “expire”

Director Jordan asked that the board provide guidance on what and how to move forward. Director Jordan spoke to her current budget and her goal and purpose is to spread it out the rec budget is spread out as equitable as possible. She understands the community needs a playable surface. Greg reiterated that the original project was the ideal situation for our community, and alternatives posed now are not ideal.

Councilman Swank interjected that when the original project was approved (2 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts) Council in good faith passed the ordinance to fund the project, that was grossly underestimated by the architect. Andrea asked what the path-forward was to address the underestimation, and reallocate funds to make this project happen? He explained it would require another ordinance, and he is willing to work with council to make it happen. Director Jordan, stated the rec department would be the ones to ask for funds from the line item- but other things may suffer. Andrea clarified that the request would not be to reallocate

Recommendation to mayor*-Andrea made a motion to request the that the mayor identifies sources of funding outside of the rec that could be infused into this project to make it happen as originally proposed, or significantly reduce the grant burden, due to the significant number of years of deferred maintenance, and the necessity to do it correctly to meet the community needs as well as lifespan and future maintenance of the courts. Ash seconded the motion, passed by voice vote.*

VII. **Roof Replacement**-Director Jordan reported that the roof replacement is moving forward and the project was sent out to bidreplacement accepted and sent out an offer to bid- moving forward. Received a bid $425K back up bid $521K this is within the 10% that can be spent. The funds are coming from the old community center fund line- from the original build- clearing out the funds and will clear out the 273 fund as well.

VIII. **Arts, Parks, & Rec Report**-Director Jordan did ot prepare a printed report but provided an update on the following items. The dept received the ODNR NatureWorks grant allocated to the skate park. These funds (~$18K) will go towards replacing the dome at the park and Skate Jam is donating funds to fulfill the project budget of $25,000, which will add an additional feature to the park. This was a stipulation of the NatureWorks Grant which would provide 75% of the project cost.

Director Jordan reported that Halloween in Athens was a great event- and the department is excited to do it again next year with the family activities uptown.

The community has a full schedule in addition to the AFM, youth futsal has started and pickle ball clinics. The staff is piloting a program in December with hopes to launch it in January. This "mileage challenge" is intended to drive people to get active through the winter.

She reported that the community center will be OPENING ON SUNDAY!!! Starting Dec 4: 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Greg asked if it would be possible to have pickleball time on Saturdays. Director Jordan instructed Greg to speak with Erin for facility use and to

coordinates activities because the usage would be handled similar to how they handle fitness classes.
Ash spoke about the potential of utilizing college resources to do student clinics and provided instructors that need practicum hours the potential to generate income for the community center. He indicated that he would love to see branching out to provide more educational opportunities to a larger number of sports.

Councilman Swank announced that during city council committee meetings- a recommendation was made to allocate 1% of the city income tax to increase the rec budget it would equate to approximately $100K – $150K.

Director Jordan reported that the revenue budget at the end of October is nearly at 100% which is good news.

Greg Lavelle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:56pm Rebecca Seconded the motion, approved by voice vote.

Next meeting is December 15, 2022
Submitted by Andrea Lewis, acting secretary