

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF GUILFORD COUNTY
WORK SESSION**

Greensboro, North Carolina
October 16, 2025

PRESENT: Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston, presiding; Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster; Commissioners Kay Cashion, Brandon Gray-Hill, Mary Beth Murphy, Carly Cooke (via virtual communication), Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Pat Tillman, and Alan Perdue.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Victor Isler; County Attorney Andrea Leslie-Fite; Clerk to the Board Robin Keller; Chief Deputy Clerk to the Board Ariane Webb; Deputy Clerk to the Board T’ebony Rosa; Assistant County Manager Natalie Craver; Parks Department Director Dwight Godwin; Budget Director Toy Beeninga; Finance Director Don Warn; Integrated Data Services Director Alice Mahood; members of staff, media, and the public. Virtual participation was made available to members of the public and media partners.

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Alston welcomed those present and called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. He recognized County Manager Victor Isler.

County Manager Isler provided an overview of the afternoon’s agenda. He expressed excitement regarding the Parks Department’s work. He urged the Board to consider how the Budget and Finance Department leaders look at capital planning and future budget considerations. He spoke to a presentation from Integrated Data Services Director Alice Mahood and the \$10M American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding investments for a data management system. He shared a request from the Dolley Madison Club for a historical monument. He recognized Parks Department Director Dwight Godwin.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. REVIEW AND ADOPT PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks Director Godwin introduced the agenda item. He spoke to the theme of “From Survival to Success: Igniting Growth, Empowering Tomorrow.” He reviewed the objectives to include a park system overview, clarifying active and passive parks, key findings, analysis review, strategic direction, and funding and budgeting.

Parks Director Godwin highlighted the parks system unique aspects that differ from municipal parks and recreation systems to include (1) County park systems typically cover larger geographic area and encompass multiple municipalities and unincorporated areas, (2) County park systems serve more diverse and dispersed populations, as well as visitors from various regions, (3) County systems often require more complex planning and management strategies due to the diverse needs of the population served and larger scale operations, and (4) County park systems often engage in partnerships and collaborations with various stakeholders, including municipalities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and other government agencies, to enhance services and leverage resources.

Parks Director Godwin spoke to a passive versus an active system. He defined a passive park system as having characteristics of low intensity use areas focused on nature, open space, and unstructured activities like walking, picnicking, and wildlife viewing. He stated that these parks have minimal built amenities, such as trails, benches, and picnic tables, with a primary goal of preserving natural features and providing visitors with quiet enjoyment of the environment, distinguishing them from parks designed for structured, active recreation.

Parks Director Godwin defined an active parks system as one that supports and encourages physical activity through integrated infrastructure, such as parks, trails, and greenways, combined with community engagement, programming, and public awareness.

Parks Director Godwin provided a background history of the system and stated that at a 2014 Retreat, the Board, via a consensus vote, adopted the County Parks Model, with a focus on maintaining facilities, programming and programming staff would be contracted out using private entities and facilities would offer a minimal number of large-scale special events. He identified expanded facilities and amenities. Key takeaway is an active, community-focused system balancing expanded facilities, recreation programs, and operational capacity.

Parks Director Godwin displayed the P&R Commission members who unanimously approved the adoption of the draft plan.

Parks Director Godwin provided plan objectives to include (1) Increased awareness of, participation in, and attendance at Guilford County parks, (2) Address aging park infrastructure to prioritize projects and allocate resources effectively, (3) Establish a unified Guilford County Parks brand, (4) Create a work plan for department staff, (5) Create a legacy of parks and open space that reflect the community's aspirations and values, (6) Inform the County's trails and greenways program, policies, and network recommendations, (7) Diversify department leadership and staff for inclusive representation and perspectives, (8) Improve visibility among the public, stakeholders, and elected officials regarding the park system as a significant asset for Guilford County, and (9) Qualify for state and federal grant funding opportunities. He recognized Consultant Shweta Nanekar.

Commissioner Jones entered the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

Vice Chairwoman Foster entered the meeting at 4:14 p.m.

Consultant Nanekar, landscape architect, spoke to the McAdams Consulting Firm.

Commissioner Tillman entered meeting at 4:16 p.m.

Consultant Nanekar highlighted the county parks system. She spoke to a mix of recreational offerings, evolving community needs, engagement, and connecting with over 2000 in-person and an online opinion survey. She noted an intra-jurisdictional meeting with local agencies to continue collaborations and partnerships. She highlighted adaptive and specialized recreation.

Consultant Nanekar spoke to five guiding principles to include: (1) Transparency and Communication, (2) Accessibility, (3) Accountability, (4) Service Outcomes Excellence, and (5) Our People Matter.

Consultant Nanekar noted findings and key highlights, way-finder signage, comfort levels inside the park, and accessibility to all visitors. She reviewed the STARS assessment, what is appropriate for attracting large crowds, lakes as a regional attraction, and critical maintenance needs.

Consultant Nanekar described the park conditions assessment report, risk score, and remaining useful life. She shared the greenways assessment which includes 60 miles of countywide territory and 27.5 miles of county-maintained land. She noted a scientific survey, amenities, and recreation programs are important. She shared the priority investment ratings, which ranked outdoor concerts as a high priority.

Consultant Nanekar highlighted level of service and benchmarking and peer counties comparison to include passive recreation, spray grounds, camping, and data tracking. She noted that Guilford County excels in the number of acreage and operating expenditure, however the number of staff is less, and the county is trending less than other jurisdictions.

Consultant Nanekar explained the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis and noted key recommendations. She spoke to park-specific identified needs at each park:

- Bur Mil Park ~ \$2.6M investment to include: ADA accessibility at building and parking areas, Repairs to access road and localized repairs for sidewalks, Parking lot resurfacing, Playground replacements, Pool repairs – paint, filters, pump, etc., Buildings repairs
- Gibson Park ~ \$1.1M investment to include: Accessibility upgrades to pathways to amenities, Trail surfacing, Bridge repairs, Parking lot surfacing, Play structure replacement, Structural repairs of Deep River cabin, Building upgrades – roof, paint, etc., Upgrade restrooms (ADA compliant)
- Hagan Stone Park ~ \$1.4M investment to include: High priority electrical work, Cabin upgrades/repairs, Building systems, Roof, Gutters, Paint, Site drainage, Parking and road repairs, Playground safety surface, Pool repairs
- Northeast Park ~ \$2M investment to include: Building systems, Repair and protect historic buildings, Dehumidification system – community center, Fire and sprinkler system at community center, Restroom repairs and upgrades, Water heater and plumbing upgrades

- Southwest Park ~ \$1.6M investment to include: Accessibility upgrades to parking, amenities, Minor parking lot and sidewalk repairs, Playground structure replacement, Safety surfacing, Erosion and stormwater drainage, Exterior repairs to all site buildings, Plumbing upgrades

Consultant Nanekar noted that the plan is a roadmap to success, not the finish line but the beginning.

Parks Director Godwin highlighted the highest priorities. He noted the short-term priorities are staffing capacity increase, deferred maintenance – safety and code compliance, and regional collaboration for Bicentennial Greenway. He noted the mid-term priorities are continue staff additions, maintenance items – medium priority items, and continue to minimize greenway gaps. He noted the long-term priorities are complete comparable staffing model, low priority maintenance items and continue to track life cycle, and continue to track park system's role and accomplishments as an active system.

Parks Director Godwin shared capital expansion priorities to include a Paved Greenway, Surface Trail, Trail Head, Outdoor Amphitheatre & Band Shell, Challenge Adventure Course, and a Tree House. He noted that the request over the next 10 years is to meet the NRPA benchmark, with over 6000 acres of land, staffing, operations, and capital expansion with bonds and grants.

Parks Director Godwin explained the staffing model to add 24 additional positions over 10 years. He recognized Finance Department Director Don Warn and Budget Department Director Toy Beeninga.

County Manager Isler shared that there is a plan requiring capital and creating processes with structurally sound budget processes. He noted a FY27 understanding of diverse options such as debt service or available cash.

Budget Director Beeninga spoke to the guiding principles for the debt model to include (1) Address County current and future capital needs and deferred major maintenance in a timely manner to provide adequate public facilities and services. (2) Protect County's ability to provide and enhance other services for our residents. (3) Design a stable funding model that fits existing revenue sources as much as possible. (4) Reduce overall cost of infrastructure for our residents by incorporating a more fiscally conservative "Pay-as-You-Go" model for construction, renovation, and maintenance. (5) Limit change in property tax rate to provide predictability and stability for our residents and businesses.

Budget Director Beeninga noted FY26 baseline funding, \$1.5M countywide capital but none dedicated to P&R. He reviewed \$2 million included in the 2022 Two-Thirds Bond Program for Bryan Park and Hagan Stone Bathroom, \$189,500 is included in the FY26 Major Equipment Plan for equipment replacement, \$72,000 is included in the operating budget for routine maintenance, \$60,000 is included for Greenway Repairs, and \$6,000 is included for Pond Restoration.

Budget Director Beeninga outlined implementation and recommendations from the plan to include increasing staffing levels, routine and preventative maintenance, and capital renewal and

renovation. He shared routine and preventative maintenance, such as a \$2.8M, and setting aside additional recurring funds of \$200K for deferred maintenance. He noted benchmark data from peer jurisdictions Forsyth, Durham, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, and Wake.

Finance Director Warn recommended exploring a 2/3rds bond program aggregated by park location. He highlighted a list of deferred maintenance and plan recommendations.

Budget Director Beeninga explained that this is a similar structure to the school bond model. He provided next steps of adopting a master plan to include (1) Establishes a non-binding vision and direction (2) Reflects community input (3) Guides budgeting and capital investments with a focus on structural balance (4) Supports identification of future land acquisition (5) Strengthens grant eligibility.

Commissioner Murphy expressed appreciation to the P&R Board.

Commissioner Cashion spoke to slide 19 (Level of Service + Benchmarking) and questioned the operating expenditures comparison of \$855 in Guilford County versus \$3722 NRPA median and staffing level. He questioned the reflection of passive versus active parks.

Finance Director Warn confirmed multiple passive parks are unopened, with 2012 staffing levels not meeting in-house standards.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the low numbers compared to the national average. She opined the number of passive parks over the recession period.

Parks Director Godwin confirmed 11 parks.

Commissioner Cashion noted there is more housing and more activities, and questioned the transition from passive to active parks.

Parks Director Godwin spoke to a strategy and clear vision from the community to preserve natural passive trail areas and rivers.

Commissioner Cashion urged being proactive instead of trying to catch up. She voiced concern regarding continuing to be behind with our population increases due to economic development and enhancing the parks program. She took a point of personal privilege and recognized the P&R Advisory Committee members in the audience.

Commissioner Perdue thanked the P&R team, and questioned the active versus passive data.

Parks Director Godwin confirmed 7 regional active parks and 11 passive parks.

Commissioner Perdue questioned the urban and rural data collected.

Consultant Nanekar confirmed that based on 1000-2000 US communities and population data, there are three different categories and benchmark to measure. She noted that Guilford County is ranked on the low scale.

Commissioner Perdue shared how our large parks are impressive and requested a right-sized plan for the future. He noted a need to dive more into the numbers and identify passive and active facilities.

Commissioner Tillman questioned slide 34 (The Request – Need for the next 10 years) regarding \$12M and projections with 2/3rds bonds and grants. He applauded the P&R team for being more proactive. He furthered questioned the city/county obligation and any overlap.

Parks Director Godwin confirmed a regional collaboration, spoke to how greenways bring communities together, and to the roles of counties and municipalities. He shared that they speak to the City of Greensboro and incorporate some of its master plan.

Commissioner Perdue questioned contract service to keep parks going.

Parks Director Godwin confirmed there is no contract labor and that lifeguards are county employees. He noted that they focus on full-time employees (FTEs).

Commissioner Perdue emphasized that the plan should include part-time staff.

Vice Chairwoman Foster thanked staff and questioned the amphitheater location.

Parks Director Godwin confirmed that it was identified as a community priority, but there is no location determined.

Vice Chairwoman Foster questioned whether cabins were specific for P&R programming, rentals, or public use.

Parks Director Godwin confirmed programming needs.

Vice Chairwoman Foster spoke to upgrading the restrooms and having more amenities.

Motion made by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Kay Cashion, to adopt the Parks Master Plan, to include implementation as a Fiscal Year 2027 budget priority and direct staff to create a funding and sustainability plan as part of the Fiscal Year 2027 budget preparation.

Commissioner Perdue offered a friendly amendment regarding staff permission to make modifications.

Commissioner Murphy accepted the friendly amendment that staff can make adjustments regarding passive/active and full-time/part-time employees.

The updated motion:

Motion made by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Kay Cashion, to adopt the Parks Master Plan, to include implementation as a Fiscal Year 2027 budget priority and direct staff to create a funding and sustainability plan, and include permission for staff to make modifications, as part of the Fiscal Year 2027 budget preparation.

Commissioner Cooke thanked the P&R committee, as this plan is important to residents. She expressed gratitude in seeing the work going into this. She noted support of the motion.

Commissioner Perdue questioned ownership of Triad Park and Bryan Park.

Commissioner Murphy confirmed that joint park ownership was excluded in this plan.

Parks Director Godwin confirmed having discussions with sister park jurisdictions.

Chairman Alston requested distinguishing these parks between county-owned exclusive parks.

County Manager Isler spoke to interlocal agreements (ILAs) will be presented to the Board, as it is customary for Board consideration.

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Murphy clarified passive and active parks and any policy.

County Manager Isler noted that the FY27 budget planning can take this into consideration,

B. APPROVE CONTRACTS FOR INTEGRATED DATA SYSTEM AND CASE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Due to time constraints, this item was moved to the New Business Section on the Regular Agenda for Board consideration.

C. AUTHORIZE PLACEMENT OF HISTORICAL MONUMENT IN HONOR OF DOLLEY MADISON

County Manager Isler introduced the agenda item.

Commissioner Cashion requested to be recused due to a conflict of interest.

Motion made by Commissioner Alan Perdue, seconded by Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster, to recuse Commissioner Cashion from voting on the item.

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Pat Tillman, seconded by Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster, to authorize placement of a historical monument in front of the Old County Courthouse located at 301 W. Market St., Greensboro, NC honoring Dolley Payne Todd Madison's contributions to Guilford County, the state of North Carolina and the United States, and commemorating the United States' 250th Anniversary and the 50th Anniversary of the Dolley Madison Woman's Club of Greensboro. Direct staff to take any and all steps to complete the installation and execution of a community based organization contract, including any and all necessary budget transfers.

The motion passed unanimously.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business for this agenda.

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:28 p.m.

Melvin "Skip" Alston
Chairman

Robin Keller
Clerk