

Recreation and Parks Board

May 18, 2017; July 20, 2017 (no meeting in June)

This report combines the notes from both meetings.

International Friendship Bell Peace Pavilion (Alan Tatum): The bell project is moving along nicely. Bids for the project are due by August 14. Any bids meeting the project's budget will be presented to City Council for approval. Ground breaking is tentatively scheduled for September and completion of the project should be around the end of March. The UT landscape architects completed their conceptual designs for the gardens around the pavilion and made a presentation to the Friendship Bell Committee and Ziad Demian, the pavilion architect. Fundraising efforts continue; donations now total over \$700,000 and the goal is \$750,000. Contributions from individual citizens are welcome.

To donate **by check** make checks payable to "Oak Ridge Rotary Community Foundation" and put "Bell Project" on the memo line. Mail checks to:

Oak Ridge Rotary Community Fund

Attention: David Carr

P.O. Box 6331

Oak Ridge, TN 37831-3886

To donate **Online** go to <https://portal.icheckgateway.com/TheBellProject/>.

Trail Development (Ray Garrett, Brad Spears, Jon Hetrick): (1) The "Rails to Trails" project is finally showing positive progress. CSX is doing a new appraisal on the property, Jon received notice for preliminary engineering from TDOT, and, so far, about \$1.5 million are available for the project. (2) The second land owner whose property is crossed by the East Fork Poplar Creek trail has made changes in the easement agreement to address his concerns, but still has not signed, after four iterations of the agreement. (3) Ray and Larry Creech toured the North Ridge Trail and concluded that there is only one instance of the trail crossing private property. The trail will be rerouted in the fall, probably with the assistance of TCWP. (4) Work Day on the Haw Ridge Trail included rerouting the Pond Trail and acquiring lumber for a bridge railing. The Trash Race at Haw Ridge yielded 2 tons of trash from one trail near the river. The trash was deposited by the river rather than by trail users.

Explore Oak Ridge (Naomi Asher): (1) The former Convention and Visitors Bureau will sponsor six videos about Oak Ridge, focusing on different demographic groups. (2) Dan Robbins noted that the National Parks Service will sponsor eclipse viewing, and will provide parking areas and shuttle service for the different sites. (3) The Oak Ridge Blueprint organization has sponsored two events, requesting input from the public on proposed local projects. The Parks Board will screen the list of suggestions for those items that pertain to Recreation and Parks. (4) The National Park Visitors' Center will be located at East Tennessee Technology Park.

Events (Kevin Hoyt, Jon Hetrick): The following upcoming events were noted: the Velo Classic bicycle race (July); the Butterfly Festival at the Arboretum (July 29); a talk about the eclipse at the Arboretum (August 10); an ash borer workshop at the Arboretum (August 29); a fire prevention event at Bissell Park (October 7); and the Masters Regatta (August 16 to 20). The regatta is expected to have a positive impact on the city's economy.

Director's Report (Jon Hetrick): (1) Two public meetings on the preschool were held at the Scarboro Center, and two more meetings are planned for the near future. Studio 4 Design will present plans for the school. (Ed. note: these meetings have already been held and plans for the Preschool are proceeding.) (2) The City has hired a contractor from Georgia to repair the west section tennis courts at Oak Ridge High School. (3) The Recreation and Parks department has experienced several major changes recently, with staff leaving and others moving internally. (4) The Parks board will review the Capital Improvements and Maintenance priorities in the coming months.

Announcements (Dan Robbins): Fire ants have been reported on the Melton Lake and Emory Valley Greenways. Dan is concerned that fast-growing trees along Melton Lake Greenway may eventually obstruct views of the Lake. Jon Hetrick and his crew will selectively weed out some of the trees. An ORICL lecture on the eclipse is scheduled for July 31 at 7:00 p.m.

~Mary Lou Daugherty, Observer