

## CARRBORO RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING



**August 9, 2021**

**7:00PM – ZOOM**

### **Call the Meeting to Order** 7:02pm

**Attendees:** Brian Payst, Chris Colvin, Debby Filer Makeda Ma’at, Jeff Laufenberg, Jacquelyn Gist, Anita Jones-McNair.

### **Approval of the Minutes** 7:04pm

Filer moved, Laufenberg seconded. Unanimously approved.

### **New Business** 7:06pm

Spray park in one of the town parks - Payst

Has the town ever explored? Is it a possibility? Are people interested? Durham has one. Wake County has one. Chapel Hill doesn’t have one.

McNair: It was in the original master plan for Dr. MLK Jr Park, financial backing was not there.

When master plan was re-visited, spray park was mentioned briefly, but was not an amenity that reached the design phase that was approved by the council. That’s the only time I’m aware it was brought up.

Gist confirmed. They are “not inexpensive.” There was also some kind of liability issue. Insurance and/or risk management seems to have been resolved for other jurisdiction. Maybe possible for Twin Creeks Park?

McNair: Not only nextdoor, also a petition. When we’ve received such feedback, I’ve shared it with the planning consultant for Carrboro Connects. It might come out through the comprehensive plan. I’ll also share with Scott tomorrow.

Laufenberg: How much interest?

McNair: Petition had ~800, they were aiming for 1,000. Different options to deal with water use/conservation issues. Needed for the community on hot days.

Makeda: Anderson Park would be good, too.

Gist: Good for children/ADA accessibility.

McNair: Racial equity tool will also apply to discussions like this.

Colvin: What was the rationale expressed in the petition/nextdoor? Add petition and next door to notes (<https://www.change.org/p/chapel-hill-town-council-build-a-splash-pad-in-chapel-hill>, [https://nextdoor.com/news\\_feed/?post=189213647](https://nextdoor.com/news_feed/?post=189213647)). See below. Any temporary cooling stations in the past? Yes. Southern village has spray park? No.

Gist: Misting tents have been purchased—have been put up—helpful for people experiencing homelessness.

McNair: Rec and Parks has a couple and can rent more and deploy them, typically for events, and can do for heat emergencies, too. Pride and Juneteenth. Easy to set up but not really a play feature for kids.

Gist: Sun shelter in dog parks. Friends of Carrboro Rec and Parks funded dog park.

McNair: Commons one cost ~\$15K (middle of the road) 3 or 4 years ago. Friends helped raise money for that one, too.

Filer: Dog park needs water too.

McNair: Got that done this spring! A well was put in.

Payst: Dog water fountain at Dr. MLK Jr Park is great.

McNair: May be some other locations that need sun shades, too. Baldwin park, for instance. No benches either. Just ordered a shade.

Payst: How will decisions be prioritized? Equity tool?

McNair: Using the racial equity tool, liability, etc. Maybe commission could help with prioritization. Friends group would go to council to say what they'd like to raise \$ for. Usually we like to be involved in discussion of the options.

Payst: Is it cheaper to do a pavilion (more permanent) rather than a sun shade?

McNair: Should we invite Parks Project to an upcoming meeting?

Colvin: We've had prior discussion about wanting a general discussion with the Parks Project, so could do that or a specific conversation about shade structures and/or spray park.

Filer: Dog Park is really on accessible by car. Durham has four spraygrounds. Maybe someone from their parks and rec could talk with us?

Payst: Maybe could be a staff to staff discussion?

McNair: They are a lot cheaper than pools. No lifeguards necessary. I will reach out to Susan Stone, Parks Project.

### **Old Business** 7:20 pm

Trails follow-up discussion – Colvin

Colvin: What does the commission want to do on trails?

McNair: Remember that trails are mentioned in the draft comprehensive plan.

Colvin: See Strategy 3.2 (a) specifically: "Support planning and development of a linear park and rustic trail system that preserves much of the natural state while still advancing connectivity goals."

Payst: Town social media was recently promoting trails.

Gist: This commission can take leadership on that. The plan will have hundreds of good ideas. You can push that one.

Payst: Big opportunity for trails is Twin Creeks Park.

Colvin: Do folks want this commission to stay involved in this topic?

Members: Yes.

McNair: Do you all want me to add to the plan that this commission is interested in helping lead?

Colvin: Yes, jointly interested, with the Greenways Commission (if they're also interested).

Comprehensive Plan Goals and Strategies for Recreation and Parks – Jones-McNair

McNair: At our last meeting, we went line by line. I wanted you all to see what I turned in (see meeting notes). Any comments?

### **Reports** 7:50pm

Comprehensive Plan Update - Funkhouser

Editing begins Sept/Oct.

Department – Jones-McNair

Really good summer, indoor activities have been resuming, but starting to wrap up summer programs. Parks are heavily used this summer. Party trailer is getting used. Music festival is next event coming up. I recommend we continue zoom meetings. Play it month to month.

Agenda items for next meeting: Carrboro Parks Project, Greene Tract

### **Adjournment** 8:09pm

Laufenberg moved, Filer seconded. Unanimous.

3 Jun

water playground, splash pad, splash fountain?

Hello, I was wondering if there was ever a plan from the Town of Chapel Hill or Town of Carrboro to install a water playground or splash pad in the Carrboro/Chapel Hill area? There are some in the Triangle, for example four in Durham, but none close by. Our only public outdoor pool in Chapel Hill is one simple pool with a tiny baby pool on the side, no slides or other features. A splash ground, even a small one, could be used by young and old to cool down in the hot summer months and would improve our community a lot.

Posted in

**General**

to

**88 neighborhoods**

35 Comments

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I haven't seen a plan but agree with you! I'd also love to see a skate park with it in Carrboro, similar to what downtown Durham has

3 Jun

Not sure what you mean, you don't like Chapel Hill skate park? Or you want skateboarders to go through water obstacles?

3 Jun

I'd like a skate park in Carrboro that's better quality (ie concrete) than the CH one and accessible to Carrboro communities. Next to a pool /splash pad would be fun!

3 Jun

Bring your thoughts to both towns' parks depts. Reality is that most of the population uses a private pool. That could be one in their housing community or a private club eg the Exchange Pool, YMCA, UNC club, or the tennis club. Chapel Hill's first pool is the one you refer to and at the time slides, splash pads and such didn't exist. The two indoor swimming facilities are newer and built for swimming, not an afternoon's entertainment. With regard to a water park or splash pad specifically, I believe that these need some form of supervision. Putting one in any outdoor park could invite vandalism or worse. But that's only MHO. Also, there's a question of insurance cost on water parks. The entry fees are high because the liability insurance is high. A public water park is an expensive thing. Look what happened to hot tubs in housing communities in NC.(edited)

9w

A splash pad is not a liability and is a really great idea for the community! 😊

3 Jun

I don't know what these look like. I assumed they were similar to the ones in water parks. Those are slippery.

4 Jun

They're not slippery & not a liability. They are in public parks all over the greater Boston, MA area and are great! In it's simplest form we're talking about a concrete square with recessed water spouts on a 7-10 min timer and a start button away from the water spray. There are many more creative designs, but the simple one works just fine.

4 Jun

Perfect timing! You can let the Town know you would like a splash pad during Carrboro Connects Pop-Ups in 5 different nearby locations from Thursday, June 8 - Saturday, June 10. Popsicles available for all who share their ideas. Here's the flyer with times and locations:

<https://www.townofcarrboro.org/DocumentCenter/View/9188/Around-Carrboro-Pop-Ups-June-2021>

7 Jun

Thanks! I'll try to make it. I already mentioned Carrboro Connect below.

7 Jun

Did you ever use a splash pad on a hot summer day? There are some in Durham, Raleigh, Cary, Greensboro, all over NC. I can highly recommend you to try one. Splash grounds, water playgrounds or spraygrounds are free and open to the public. Sometimes they are attached to parks, playgrounds or public pools. Examples in the Triangle: <https://www.carolinaparent.com/spraygrounds-and-splash-pads-for-kids-in-the-triangle/> Just some input: <https://rrs.cnr.ncsu.edu/key-considerations-when-building-a-splash-pad/> For all the private pools you need to be part of a community, pay a membership or live there. Chapel Hill and Carrboro are having a growing population and need more recreation places accessible to everyone. Sports like swimming can be a good "afternoon's entertainment", fun for all ages - and are important for staying active and healthy. Playing with or in the water is a good start for toddlers, but can be enjoyed in every stage of live. This an example for a combination of "fun" and sport In Raleigh: <https://raleighnc.gov/places/buffaloe-road-aquatic-center> They have lower prices for residents and higher ones for non-residents. I like the skater park idea for Carrboro. The new pump track at MLK Jr. is very popular, so why not a skate park, too.

4 Jun

I'm pretty sure a splash pad was just built in Pittsboro. Probably a better bet than traveling to one in Durham. I've never heard of Carrboro planning one.... there isn't even a pool here, anymore.

4 Jun

No, I have not seen one of these. I assumed these were similar to the ones in water parks. I'm old. My kids are adults. I also don't use the public pools during open swim time so I don't know how crowded those are. When my kids were young we belonged to the YMCA and we spent most Sunday afternoons in the pool. Just a plain indoor pool. I certainly agree that swimming is healthy for all ages. As to outdoors, when I was a child and when mine were young we set up sprinklers outdoors on hot days. Water the lawn and kid play in one. I also had a variety of water slides in the yard. Not as pretty as they

have now but the kids could play all day in water with their friends. Just saying that the idea of water play isn't new, just the form. And it continues, last year I saw some parents with water slides set up in an apt complex in CH. The town pools are accessible to all. I believe the entry fee is about \$2. Some of the private pools have sliding scale fees for membership. Express your wishes to the town. I certainly have. Everyone should. They then know what people want.

4 Jun

Thank you for your input. Yes, watering the lawn and letting them play in it is great, and simple, but I know that a lot of people in this area don't have a lawn or space to set up something. I still think an accessible splash pad, water playground, or a water ground fountain would benefit the whole community. Even a small water feature at one of our already existing playgrounds would be an improvement. It could also be a part of one of the new construction projects in Chapel Hill or Carrboro. And make a lot of people happy.

4 Jun

I just remember during the before-Covid-time when the swimming classes from the Town of Chapel Hill at Homestead Aquatic Center were fully booked with waiting lists 10 minutes after they opened up the sign up. And that was every season at least in the last four, five years. But that is a different topic.

4 Jun

Isabel Bubel Yes, Another topic. For years those swimming lessons have been sold out. Certainly every kid should learn how to swim. I assume the town can't open more sections due to other demands on pool time. It seems to me that the solution is to put pressure on all those housing development and private pools to do their own lessons. Some of them do have lap lanes, could hire teachers and teach kids at their pool in their own pool. Maybe some do. But I'm sure it would help if more did.

5 Jun

We used the YMCA until we had one put in our backyard.

4 Jun

Great idea, Isabel! I'm going to share your idea with the Director of Recreation and Parks for Carrboro, Anita Jones-McNair. I'll let you know what I find out.

4 Jun

Thank you, that would be great.

4 Jun

Is there any update on what the community could do next to make this happen?

13 Jul

I think it's a great idea, and would be a huge benefit to the community. I'd put it at MLK park. I believe there were discussions during the planning, but it didn't get enough support. It's hard to get support for projects like this, and you need a lot of buy in - but yes it would be fantastic.

4 Jun

Thanks. I recognized the planning of the MLK Jr. Park took long with the input of so many people. But it turned out great. In our friends/school bubble a lot of people are agreeing that a water feature is missing in Carrboro/CH since years. The "real" advertising and planning it- instead of just talking about it - will be not an easy path.

4 Jun

Lets not be too harsh on the town - there's only one public outdoor pool, but good (Community Center) and great (Homestead) public indoor pools.

4 Jun

I think suggestions and ideas for improvements are never harsh. Especially if they would improve the whole community.(edited)

9w

I'm on the town's Parks and Recreation Commission and I'll ask about this. If there's enough community interest it's something we could pursue with the town.

4 Jun

Downtown Asheville has a really nice one.

6 Jun

Charlotte, too.

7 Jun

The Commission is not meeting again until August (summer break), but I'll keep this on the list.

7 Jun

Thank you!

7 Jun

A splash pad would be fantastic. I had brought it up to the town years ago during the MLK planning. My inlaws live outside Toronto are there are splash pads everywhere- even one that looks like pirate ship!

13 Jun

Everyone needs to contribute their interest in something so the town can judge the "level of interest.". Contact the rec dept personally.

5 Jun

I might do that, but it's good to know if there is already interest or if something in this direction was planned before. Carrboro Connect has a lot of opportunities to address ideas. And finally several in person events this weekend <https://www.carrboroconnects.org/>

7 Jun

A Splash Pad might get a little pushback if the annual average use of water is 3.3 Million gallons of fresh drinking water. Can't recirculate the water because children will be drinking from the spray heads. I'll save you the effort, I'm being a wet blanket.

7 Jun

Where do your numbers come from? <https://rrs.cnr.ncsu.edu/key-considerations-when-building-a-splash-pad/>

13 Jun

<https://www.startribune.com/splish-splash-and-squander-popular-splash-pads-scorned-by-some-for-wasting-water/321146911/> about 5 million gallons and the one below over 3.3 million gallons  
<https://www.ellsworthamerican.com/featured/splash-pad-uses-millions-of-gallons-of-water-annually/>  
<https://bangordailynews.com/2018/10/19/news/ellsworth-splash-pad-water-usage-in-2018-declined-by-230000-gallons/>

13 Jun

It depends on the size and system you are using. I'm sure the towns would look for the most cost and water effective solution. Also they can get ideas from the experience that other communities in NC have. Still a growing region like Chapel Hill and Carrboro with over 82000 people is sharing one small outdoor pool. Another way would be an outdoor extension from one of the already existing indoor pools, but that's a different topic.

16 Jul



# Build a Splash Pad in Chapel Hill



[Kate Sayre](#) started this petition to Chapel Hill Town Council and

There are splash pads and parks all around the Triangle as families, particularly those with young kids, love them. They help us beat the heat, are safer than a pool and accessible by many. Currently, we have to travel to Burlington, Pittsboro and Durham for this summer fun (and let's be honest-in NC, it could be a 3 season activity). It's about time we build a splash pad in Chapel Hill/Carrboro.

We know land is at a premium. Luckily we have many playgrounds and parks and can add this attraction there. How about Legion Park, the Community Center, Cedar Falls Park, Anderson Park or the new MLK park?

To be a family-friendly town, we need to invest in attractions for families. There are towns and cities around the country that are working on their infrastructure to support full lives for families. We have great schools-how about now we focus on extracurriculars? We see many multi-use large structures going up, with the latest approved on MLK/Estes. We don't need more tall buildings-we need places to safely gather to build community from birth through college and beyond.

Having a local splash pad will draw families to our area. This supports the town and local businesses. It will also keep local families here to play, live and work.

## Reasons for signing

See why other supporters are signing, why this petition is important to them, and share your reason for signing (this will mean a lot to the starter of the petition).

[5 days ago](#)

It should have been added in the first place as planned.

[3 weeks ago](#)

I recently enjoyed a splash pad in Clarksville, TN with my best friend and her kids. We all had such a great time! And we met some new neighbors of hers!

[3 weeks ago](#)

Yes! having parks with amenities like splash pads (and shaded trees) in the hot NC summer months is much needed in the growing communities of NC.

[3 weeks ago](#)

Yes!

[3 weeks ago](#)

I'm signing because more things should be done for families here

[3 weeks ago](#)

I was a kid once. This sounds like good clean fun.

[3 weeks ago](#)

Yes! This would be a valuable addition for families.

[3 weeks ago](#)

I support this initiative! I was involved in the Splash Pad that was built in Alamance Co. a few years ago and it's been a great success (other than during COVID). I highly recommend it!

[3 weeks ago](#)

We definitely need splash pads in several parks throughout the city. . .children in all neighborhoods should have access, Chapel Hill has long hot summers in which such an amenity would be greatly used. Don't let another summer go by without such a welcomed resource!

[3 weeks ago](#)

We have so few FUN community services within Chapel Hill.

[3 weeks ago](#)

There were plans drawn up years ago to add a splash pad (among other renovations) to Cedar Falls Park. What's the holdup?!

[4 weeks ago](#)

Completely agree with this! For being a "family friendly" town, Chapel Hill doesn't really support families by building and enhancing places for families to congregate (without spending large sums of money)

[4 weeks ago](#)

These are great fun

[4 weeks ago](#)

hot summers and a way for all of our kids to cool down and have fun. what more can our kids ask for?

[4 weeks ago](#)

My family would love this. :)

[4 weeks ago](#)

I have said this for years! We pay the highest taxes in the state are crawling with kiddos and yet have the least interesting playgrounds and parks and recreational outdoor spaces. I drive my kids to Burlington, Cary, raleigh and even rural towns all the time for splash pads or playgrounds... Read more

[4 weeks ago](#)

Great idea! We need this, more green space, more athletic fields, and a variety of parks for our community and families!

[4 weeks ago](#)

lets take care of the kids in this diverse community and keep cool!

[4 weeks ago](#)

I am signing this petition because our children deserve more fun in a safety place we have.

[4 weeks ago](#)

Chapel Hill needs to be more kid friendly!

[4 weeks ago](#)

It's time!

[4 weeks ago](#)

I don't want to drive 30 minutes to a splash pad - please build one here!

[4 weeks ago](#)

Been wishing for this for YEARS!!

[4 weeks ago](#)

Our town is at its best when we serve all ages! A splash pad would add vitality to our community.

[4 weeks ago](#)

For a cool place for our kids to cool down!

[4 weeks ago](#)

It's an injustice to ask for young families and parents to be a support to elected officials- and get a marginalised budget for parks and rec! There is a ton of space and no excuse! we are loud and mobilise votes accordingly!

[4 weeks ago](#)

I'm signing because our town needs more affordable, family-friendly fun.