

## **Town of Stoneville - Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Date: January 20, 2026**

**Time: 10:00 AM**

**Location: Vera Holland Community Building – 203 E Main Street, Stoneville, NC**

Members Present – Chairman Curt Bennett, Bob Bailey, Jerry Smith, Charles Rakestraw.

Members Absent – Kasie Pruitt, Pastor Kenneth Moore, David Price, Chris Avis, Ed Brown.

Staff Present – Town Administrator Michael Sands and Town Clerk Deleia Hutcherson

**Call to Order and Welcome:** Chairman Curt Bennett called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Approval of Agenda:** A motion to approve the January 20, 2026 meeting agenda was made by Jerry Smith. Seconded by Charles Rakestraw. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the October 21, 2025 and November 18, 2025 meeting minutes was made by Charles Rakestraw. Seconded by Jerry Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Old Business**

**Update on Parks and Recreation Office Space:** Mr. Sands reported on his communication with the Rockingham County Manager regarding the Vera Holland Center property. Based on the original deed documentation, the property was transferred directly from the trust to Rockingham County and was never owned by the Town of Stoneville. Mr. Sands inquired whether the Town might utilize one of two currently unused office spaces within the building. The County Manager indicated openness to such an arrangement, particularly since the offices are not presently being used. While no formal agreement has been established, it was suggested that use of the space may involve little to no cost, provided scheduling conflicts with rentals are avoided. No formal action was taken. The Board acknowledged the update and expressed appreciation for the information.

**Spring Recreational Programs:** Discussion centered around the feasibility of offering spring baseball and t-ball programming. Chairman Bennett and Bob Bailey reported attending a regional recreation meeting that included representatives from Madison, Mayodan, Huntsville, Stokesdale, Bethany, Wentworth, and Eden. Registration for those programs began January 1 and concludes at the end of January, with possible extensions into mid-February.

Board members expressed concern about late timing in attempting to organize a program, lack of a designated program director, and the risk of negative public perception if sign-ups are opened but the Town cannot field teams.

The Board agreed it would be premature to attempt launching a spring program for 2026 without proper leadership and planning. Instead, families will be directed to Madison-Mayodan Recreation for this season. The Board will assess participation numbers of Stoneville residents to help inform future planning. No motion was formally made; consensus supported deferring local spring programming until appropriate staffing and structure are in place.

**Ballfield Usage Requests:** Staff reported that True Gospel Baptist School has requested use of the field March through early May for practices and home games. Two travel baseball teams have requested continued evening use. In previous years, no field rental fee was charged; only light usage fees were assessed. Teams provide certificates of insurance. Public Works maintains mowing; users handle field dragging when Town programs are not active.

The Board supports allowing continued use of the field under similar terms as last year (light usage fees and insurance requirements), with the understanding that field access may be modified if Town programs resume. The Board emphasized the importance of protecting field conditions and maintaining flexibility.

### **New Business**

**Parks and Recreation Consultant:** Discussion was held regarding the potential engagement of a Parks and Recreation consultant. Mr. Jerry Smith presented research regarding Berry Dunn, a national consulting firm specializing in parks, recreation, and municipal services. He highlighted the credentials of Ms. Lisa Wolff, a senior consultant with the firm, noting her experience as a Certified Park and Recreation Professional, her past leadership with the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Association, and her involvement with the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. Mr. Smith emphasized that professional guidance could position the Town to pursue grant funding opportunities, develop a modern recreation master plan, and implement sustainable long-term programming aligned with community growth trends.

Board discussion included the following:

- Benefits of professional strategic planning
- Assessment of ADA compliance and future recreation trends.
- Growing demand for walkable communities, trails, senior programming, and youth development.
- Option of contributing financially to Madison-Mayodan Recreation instead of building an independent program.
- Long-term investment value versus short-term expenditure concerns.

The Board continued discussion regarding the potential engagement of a Parks and Recreation consultant to assist the Town in evaluating, restructuring, and strategically planning its Parks and Recreation program.

The proposed cost for a full assessment and strategic planning engagement is approximately \$30,000. Board members discussed the potential return on investment, including improved eligibility for grant funding, structured program development, ADA compliance review, facility assessments, and long-term operational planning.

Concerns were raised regarding:

- The total cost and available budget within the current fiscal year.
- Whether the \$30,000 would be a one-time expense or structured over multiple phases.
- The specific deliverables included in the proposal.
- Whether other consulting firms or regional resources (such as PTRC) could provide similar services at a lower cost.
- The timeline and level of on-site involvement versus remote consultation.

It was acknowledged that additional clarification is needed before making a formal recommendation to Town Council.

To ensure an organized and efficient evaluation process, the Board agreed that Mr. Jerry Smith will serve as the designated point of contact for communication with the consultant. Board members were instructed to submit any questions, concerns, or requested clarifications directly to Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith will compile the submitted questions into a consolidated list and forward them to Ms. Wolff for response. Topics to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- Detailed scope of services included in the \$30,000 proposal
- Project timeline and phases of work
- Expected deliverables (e.g., master plan, facility assessments, organizational recommendations)
- Payment structure and schedule
- Level of on-site engagement versus remote consultation
- Measurable outcomes and benchmarks for success
- Experience with municipalities of similar size
- Potential grant funding guidance and assistance

Upon receipt of responses, Mr. Smith will report back to the Board with additional information to support informed decision-making and potential recommendation to Town Council. No motion was made at this time. The Board agreed to revisit the matter after receiving responses to the submitted questions.

### **General Discussion**

Members acknowledged:

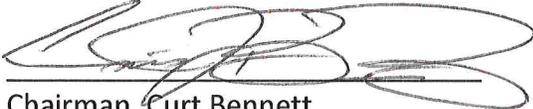
- The Town's limited administrative capacity.
- Increasing community expectations for recreation services.

- The need for a full-time or part-time Parks and Recreation Director.
- The importance of strategic planning rather than reactive programming.

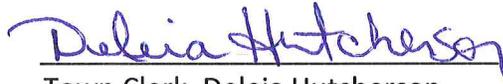
In closing, the Board agreed that sustainable recreation programming requires clear direction, leadership, and financial planning.

Chairman Bennett thanked all participants for their input and adjourned the meeting.

**Adjourned at 11:21 a.m.**



Chairman, Curt Bennett



Town Clerk, Deleia Hutcherson

