
CITY OF RALEIGH

**Raleigh Parks, Recreation, & Greenway
Advisory Board**

March 19, 2026

<https://youtu.be/ThL9ZM1lXdc>

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
OVERVIEW	3
PUBLIC COMMENT	4
RALEIGH YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT	5
PRESENTATIONS	6
PARKS CAPITAL PROJECT PROCESS	6
FORESTVILLE ROAD PARK MASTER PLAN	9
Community Advisory Group Presentations	10
Master Plan Design Goals and Concept	11
Next Steps and Funding	13
Q&A	13
APPROVAL OF MINUTES	14
DIRECTOR'S REPORT	15
COMMITTEE REPORTS	16
Parks Committee.....	16
Greenway Committee	17
Sustainability, Wildlife, and Urban Trees Committee.....	17
Fred Fletcher Awards Committee	17
LIAISON REPORTS.....	18
Arts Commission (CORAC)	18
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC).....	18
Dix Park Leadership Committee	18
Historic Resources and Museum Advisory Board	18
Work Plan Committee	18
CHAIR REPORT.....	19
OTHER BUSINESS.....	19
PRGAB Bylaws Update.....	19
eBikes and eCycles on Trails and Greenways.....	19
ADJOURNMENT	20

OVERVIEW

The Parks, Recreation, and Greenway Advisory Board (PRGAB) meeting opened with two public comments from the Southeast Raleigh tennis community thanking the board for its February vote on Biltmore Hills and raising continued concerns about next steps, transparency, and the community's vision for a first-rate tennis facility. Staff clarified that the City Council took no action on the matter at its most recent meeting and that guidance from the City Manager is pending.

The board received two presentations. Shawsheen Baker, Senior Engineering Supervisor for Raleigh Parks, presented on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project process, walking the board through project phases from preliminary research through construction, dedication, and long-term maintenance. The presentation included an overview of the city's public participation framework, cost estimation practices, construction manager at risk delivery, and the new "steady state" bond approach the City Council is adopting for future referendums.

Lauryn Kabrich presented the Forestville Road Park Master Plan, developed entirely in-house in nine months. She was joined by three Community Advisory Group (CAG) members – Andrew Stevenson, Mikayla Posey, and Roger Montague – who spoke to the site's history, community engagement process, and natural resources. The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the master plan and forward it to City Council.

The Director's Report highlighted the Bailey Drive Gateway project at Walnut Creek Wetland Center, the City Council's endorsement of the Leaf Out resolution, the kickoff of public engagement for the Fred Fletcher Park / Wake County Public School System partnership, the LeadHERship conference hosted by Raleigh Parks, the 37th annual Black History Month program at Tarboro Road Community Center, and the Parks Bond and Beyond community open house scheduled for the following week. The meeting concluded with committee and liaison reports, an update on the bylaws review, work plan committee formation, and a discussion of eBike and eCycle use on natural surface trails and greenways.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Smith (Biltmore Hills resident and longtime tennis player): Spoke regarding the Biltmore Hills tennis complex.

- He provided historical context, noting that he played tennis at Biltmore Hills when the facility consisted of four red clay courts, which were later converted by the city to four hard courts and ultimately expanded to eight courts through community advocacy, a configuration that has remained for approximately 40 to 50 years.
- He thanked the board for listening to community concerns over the previous four to five months, for granting a vote on the issue, and for voting in February to forward the matter to the City Council for further consideration.
- He asked the board to identify next steps for moving the project forward and for building a facility the community can take pride in.
- He stated that when Raleigh voters approved nearly \$8 million in bond funding for the Biltmore Hills tennis center, they expected a first-rate facility, and that a third-rate facility would not reflect responsible stewardship of taxpayer and bond referendum funds.

Nicole Sullivan (Biltmore Hills Tennis Community): Spoke to follow up on the board's February vote and outline continued community concerns.

- She stated the community genuinely wants the project to move forward and has invested time and energy identifying outside expertise to support the planning process. She referenced two slide decks that had been circulated to the board covering tennis center options, landscape improvements, and a site stormwater assessment.
- She raised stormwater concerns regarding the topography of the site, noting that the lower courts sit at the bottom of a drainage path and that increasing impervious surface at the top of the site will likely worsen existing water issues affecting the lower courts.

- She stated the community's expectation, based on prior commitments, is that the facility would be comparable to Millbrook Exchange, and expressed concern that community input has not been meaningfully incorporated into the current scope.
- She noted that while focus groups and master plan meetings have been scheduled, the community is specifically requesting a dedicated meeting focused on the tennis center rather than broad master plan discussions, given the immediate funding and scope concerns.
- She raised transparency concerns regarding how the project will move forward and stated that, based on the current budget, adequate funding should be available to address the community's scope requests, including the stormwater and tennis needs the community has identified.
- She expressed concern that master planning cost estimates have not accounted for how rapidly the surrounding community has changed over the past 10 years and urged the city to address those changes in the planning process.

Staff Response: The Chair noted that a community focus group is scheduled at Biltmore Hills Community Center on April 6 at 4:00 p.m., but clarified that the focus group is specifically for master planning the Cross Link property and is not intended to address the tennis facility. Stephen Bentley advised that the City Council took no action on the Biltmore Hills matter at its Tuesday meeting and recommended that community members contact their district councilmember to continue engagement. The Chair acknowledged that the matter is now in the City Council's hands and expressed confidence that continued community engagement with councilmembers would result in a response.

RALEIGH YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT

Elsa Weiner, RYC Vice Chair, and Miles Frazier, RYC Chair, presented the committee report.

- **Past Community Service:** On March 11, the RYC partnered with Specialized Recreation and Inclusion Services and the Special Olympics to host Buddy Basketball at Chavis Park, combining shooting skills and a game format.
- **Past Meeting:** The March 9 meeting focused on resume building, with members working in groups to develop strong resumes based on their volunteer history and activities.

- **Upcoming Community Service:**
 - On March 26, RYC members will serve as ambassadors at the Lions Park Teen Egg Hunt (6:00 to 8:30 p.m.), promoting RYC and other teen program opportunities offered by the city.
 - On March 28, the RYC will host an egg hunt at Jaycee Park from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- **Past Conference:** The team building and leadership conference co-hosted with the Fuquay-Varina Teen Council was reported as a success, with attendance from Rocky Mount, Fayetteville, Cumberland, Hickory, Wilson, Winston-Salem, Salisbury, and Lake Norman, totaling 86 teens and 22 advisers.
- **Upcoming Conference:** The RYC will attend the State Youth Council Spring Convention the following month in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

PRESENTATIONS

PARKS CAPITAL PROJECT PROCESS

Shawsheen Baker, Senior Engineering Supervisor for Raleigh Parks, presented an overview of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project process.

- **CIP Overview:** The Capital Improvement Program is a funding program supporting real or physical asset development and improvement for Raleigh Parks. Typical CIP project categories include system-wide planning, subsystem planning, new park and greenway trail implementation, major renovation and expansion, minor renovation and upgrades (primarily supported by penny tax revenue), and public art fabrication and implementation.
- **Project Process Overview:** The overall CIP project process progresses from preliminary research (reviewing the strategic plan, comprehensive plan, park system plan, and subsystem plans), through budget development, land or easement acquisition (where needed), master planning, schematic design, technical design, construction, and long-term maintenance. Staff noted the process is not strictly linear – for example, greenway easement and land acquisition sometimes does not occur until after schematic design is confirmed and the alignment is finalized.

- **Public Engagement Framework:** Two primary resources guide public engagement: the citywide Public Participation Playbook (a resource and reference guide) and the Public Participation Policy for Park Planning (an adopted City Council policy, jointly developed by staff and parks board members in 2020). Both documents are available on raleighnc.gov and reference the IAP2 spectrum of public participation, which includes inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower. The Community Advisory Group (CAG) approach used for bond projects falls under the "collaborate" level.
- **Pre-Planning Phase:** Before concept development begins, staff assemble a cross-departmental project team, conduct a situation assessment to understand the social and physical context of the project, establish scope, budget, and rough timeline, brainstorm the public engagement approach, and hire a consultant.
- **Design Phases:** Once the consultant is onboarded, the team develops alternative concepts for public review, advances the schematic design, conducts cost estimation and budget reconciliation, and presents the proposed schematic design to boards, commissions, and the City Council for approval. Schematic design represents approximately the first 20 to 25 percent of the overall design effort. Technical design follows, with milestone deliverables and reviews to ensure consistency with the approved concept and budget. At the 90 percent level, documents are submitted for permit review, and comments are incorporated into the final 100 percent construction documents for bidding.
- **Construction Documents:** Baker displayed examples of 100 percent construction documents from the 2014 Chavis Park Phase 1 development to illustrate that technical construction drawings are almost entirely black and white and substantially more detailed than schematic design drawings.
- **Bidding and Construction:** Projects over \$500,000 go through the City Council for project award and contract execution. For some bond projects, a construction manager at risk (CMAR) is brought on earlier in the process, though subcontractor work is still competitively bid. The main construction contract is typically executed at the end of the bidding process. Construction concludes with certificate of occupancy, substantial completion, punch list resolution, final completion, and dedication and opening.
- **Ongoing Communication:** During design and construction, staff maintain project web pages on raleighnc.gov, release newsletters and press releases, provide City Council updates, engage with CAGs, and install branded construction signage at project sites.

- **Bond Reporting Dashboard:** A new dedicated data reporting dashboard for the 2022 Park Bond is available on raleighnc.gov. The dashboard displays project location, description, a link back to the project website, projected versus actual cash flow, and three spend indicators showing bond-allocated budget, other funding sources, and total spending. Data is fed live from the city's financial and project management systems and refreshes nightly.
- **"From Bond to Beyond" Community Open House:** Scheduled for one week from the meeting date, the event will showcase all 2022 bond projects with project managers available to facilitate conversations.
- A board member asked whether Baker's design phase percentages referred to time, budget, or effort. Baker clarified they refer to design effort across the overall project process.
- **Bob Edgerton** raised concerns about cost escalation of approximately 15 percent per year across multiyear bond project life cycles and asked how staff account for inflation while remaining honest in early estimates.
 - Shawsheen Baker explained that cost estimates are conducted at schematic design (20 to 25 percent), design development (50 percent), and the 90 percent technical design level, and that estimates include contingency and escalation projected annually out to the anticipated construction date. For larger bond projects, a CMAR is brought on early to provide constructability checks and independent cost estimates, which are reconciled against consultant cost estimates at every milestone.
 - Stephen Bentley added that for the 2022 bond, staff brought on cost estimators and architects before the referendum to verify council project requests, which is why the final bond totaled approximately \$275 million rather than the earlier \$150 million estimate, because escalation through mid-construction was built in.
 - Stephen Bentley also explained the city is adopting a new "steady state" approach to bond referendums: rather than large referendums every eight to ten years, the City Council will pursue multidisciplinary referendums every four years (covering parks, housing, and transportation) without a tax increase. In between referendums, an advanced planning budget will allow staff to take priority projects through approximately 50 percent design and near-permitting so that construction can begin immediately after voter approval.

- Stephen Bentley noted the city is also beginning to explore design-build delivery, which the North Carolina legislature approved for municipalities in approximately 2013 or 2014. Design-build brings the architect and contractor on at the same time, allowing for parallel design and construction activities that compress project timelines and improve cost efficiency.
- **Iain Burnett** asked whether penny tax revenue allows the department to front-load future-year revenue. Staff clarified that penny tax funds are restricted to maintenance work (roof repairs, fence repairs, boardwalks, and similar).
- **Kate Dixon** asked whether future city bonds, including a possible affordable housing bond, would use the steady-state model. Staff confirmed the City Council is considering a fiscal year 2026 bond of approximately \$200 million (split between \$100 million for housing and \$100 million for transportation) with no tax increase, following the same steady-state concept.
- **Kate Dixon** asked why Raleigh has not historically used design-build delivery. Staff explained the approach was not legally available to North Carolina municipalities until relatively recently and that prior city construction leadership may have been more risk-averse. Staff noted that market conditions have since expanded and that all project delivery types are now on the table.
- **Kate Dixon** asked how staff verify that projects are being constructed to specification. Staff explained that construction oversight is a combination of staff, consultants, and sometimes third-party testing companies to confirm materials and installation meet specifications.
- **Doug Johnston** observed that the Leaf Out initiative will require continuous attention to tree planting opportunities across projects and noted that the Leaf Out work will establish a more thorough, citywide lens for identifying non-native and historically invasive species, with every city department required to follow Leaf Out guidance going forward.
- **Iain Burnett** asked whether the Parks Department encourages time capsules from local communities. Stephen Bentley noted that he is only aware of one, located in Nash Square, and added that a previous time capsule opening revealed water damage and deteriorated contents.

FORESTVILLE ROAD PARK MASTER PLAN

Lauren Kabrich presented the Forestville Road Park Master Plan. She acknowledged the Parks Planning Team and Kimberly Siran, Greenway Project Manager, who served as the landscape architect for the project, noting that this is the first master plan in some time to be completed entirely in-house, which allowed the process to be completed in nine months.

Community Advisory Group Presentations

Three CAG members – Andrew Stevenson, Mikayla Posey, and Roger Montague – joined the presentation.

- **Andrew Stevenson (Bryson Village resident):** Provided background on the site and surrounding context.
 - The property consists of approximately 25 acres in northeast Raleigh (District B), near the intersection of Buffalo Road and Forestville Road.
 - Nearby park resources include the Buffalo Road Aquatic Center (approximately two to three miles away), Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve (approximately four miles away), and the Neuse River Greenway (approximately 1.5 miles away, though not easily accessible on foot due to I-540, the Neuse River, and a lack of sidewalks).
 - Approximately 1,800 new residential units are in development or in the planning and permitting phases around the park site, including apartments, single-family homes with ADUs, and townhomes.
 - Few of the surrounding neighborhoods other than Bryson Village currently have playgrounds, making the park a significant future resource for families with children.
- **Mikayla Posey (Bryson Village resident, CAG member):** Described the master planning process and community engagement.
 - The process included four phases: initial community input (ideation and dreaming), development of three alternative concepts with varying levels of intensity and amenity

combinations, consolidation into a single concept plan, and the current master plan adoption phase.

- Community engagement included CAG working meetings, three public meetings, three online surveys, a site visit, yard signs, flyers, and social media outreach through neighborhood Facebook groups and other channels.
- Over 450 direct participants contributed to the planning process.
- Posey emphasized the importance of the community engagement process and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate as a CAG member.
- **Roger Montague (CAG member, descendant of the original property owner):** Spoke to the site's unique history and natural resources.
 - Montague is the great-great-grandson of Kearney [phonetic] Church, who established the plantation that includes the Forestville Road Park property. His grandfather was the last person to farm the property, and his mother inherited the park parcel.
 - Montague's son, Preston Montague, was the artist in residence at Dix Park in 2025.
 - Montague donated five or six historic deeds – one dating back to 1836 – to the city's historic resources program, and referenced the minutes of the Wake Crossroads Baptist Church, which date back to 1789 and contain documentation of the family and property history.
 - He identified the property as extremely unique in Wake County for its combination of documented history and natural resources.
 - He praised the Parks staff for their professionalism and expressed that serving on the CAG was an absolute pleasure.
 - He highlighted the importance of preserving the mature pecan trees on the site, some of which may have diameters of four to five feet and are approximately 200 years old, as well as the forested resources that may be biologically unique due to their age and non-hybridized status.

- He emphasized the importance of protecting the stream that bisects the property, noting that the entire watershed is either developed or under development, making stormwater runoff and water quality management critical to the park's long-term function.
- He offered to personally lead board members on a site tour and indicated that he is currently working to locate the historic cotton gin on the property.

Master Plan Design Goals and Concept

Lauren Kabrich presented the design goals and concept plan.

- **Design Goals:** Honor history, foster community, conserve nature, and inspire play.
- **Site Organization:** The stream serves as a natural delineator. The east side of the park is designated as passive space with low-touch amenities, including a mixture of paved and natural surface trails with small pockets of amenity areas for picnics and respite. The west side of the park consolidates more active uses.
- **West Side Amenities:**
 - **Adventure Play Area:** A large play area designed with natural materials and a forested treehouse theme, reflecting the wooded character of the site.
 - **Pollinator Meadow:** Located in the one cleared area of the site (where old growth trees are absent), incorporating an amenity area for immersive experiences.
 - **Multi-Sport Court:** Specific uses to be determined during further engagement as the project advances into schematic design.
 - **Restroom Building and Picnic Shelter:** Co-located with the play area, incorporating a terrace plaza concept (modeled on Hill Street Park) to accommodate the grade change on site.
- **Historic Gathering Area (Northwest Corner):** Anchored by the historic pecan grove, this area will serve as a memorial and interpretive gathering space. It will honor the full breadth of the site's history, from indigenous use (evidenced by arrowheads found on site), through antebellum and plantation-era history, Wake County agrarian history, and present day. The area will include an art piece created

from repurposed materials from the historic log cabin found on the property by Montague's father in the early 1960s.

- **Trails:** The trail system is intentionally designed in loop configurations, with a mixture of paved and natural surface trails to accommodate both immersive natural experiences and accessibility for families with strollers, older visitors, and those needing more even surfaces. Trail design decisions were informed by community engagement feedback.
- **Greenway Connection:** The master plan designates a future small greenway corridor segment extending from the top of the site to connect the park to the broader greenway network, including a future pedestrian connection toward the Neuse River Trail. Pedestrian connections are also provided at multiple points around the park edges to serve surrounding and planned residential developments.
- **Sustainability:** The plan integrates green stormwater infrastructure (GSI), a pollinator meadow, and educational signage and interpretive art throughout the site.

Next Steps and Funding

- The master plan will be presented to the City Council the following month for formal adoption.
- Schematic design is anticipated to begin in earnest in early 2027. Advanced design, permitting, and construction timelines are to be determined based on funding availability.
- **Development Agreement Funding:** The project has \$600,000 available through a development agreement negotiated with an adjacent developer during rezoning. These funds will be used for site stabilization (including stabilizing the historic cabin, interim stormwater mitigation, and erosion control) and for advancing the project through schematic design and into construction drawings, positioning the project to move quickly when additional funding becomes available.

Q&A

- **Doug Johnston** asked whether the current project team would remain engaged through schematic design. Lauren Kabrich confirmed the core team would stay involved and that a consultant team would likely be brought on for more advanced engineering work due to capacity constraints. Community members will also remain engaged.

- **Kate Dixon** asked about the level of natural heritage inventory completed on the property. Lauren Kabrich responded that a full tree survey has been completed (identifying well over 1,400 trees), preliminary work has been done with the city's historic resources team and the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, and an archaeological study was completed in 2011. Dixon suggested contacting the Wake County natural heritage inventory team (previously led by George Hess of NC State) as an additional resource, and staff confirmed that bioblitzes have been conducted at other properties including Neuse River Park.
- **Kate Dixon** asked how decisions are made about whether a trail should be paved. Lauren Kabrich explained that the decision is driven by community engagement, and that the Forestville Road Park plan reflects a blend of trail types to serve both those who prefer immersive natural surfaces and those who need accessible paved surfaces.
- **Linda Pearsall** commended Parks staff for their knowledge and commitment to protecting the site's resources during her participation in a recent site visit. She emphasized the importance of balancing public access to the pecan grove with protecting the trees from damage due to foot traffic and construction activity.
- **Steve Brechbiel** commended the Parks staff for the quality of the work and asked whether this project illustrates the new pre-planning approach that allows projects to advance toward shovel-ready status before funding is identified. Stephen Bentley confirmed that the developer contribution was opportunistic and that the approach represents a small-scale example of the citywide steady-state planning model.
- **Iain Burnett** noted that the plan's designation of a future greenway corridor to the Neuse River Trail is a subtle but important element of the project, establishing a future route that will benefit the surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Doug Johnston** identified two additional strengths of the project: the value of the developer contribution as a model for how stakeholder groups (such as FRoG) might focus their own contributions, and the opportunity to create visual connections to adjacent properties through the tree planting program, supporting habitat and natural beauty objectives.
- Motion to approve the Forestville Road Park Master Plan and forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council. The motion passed unanimously.

- Following the vote, Roger Montague returned to the podium to commend the Parks staff, noting his 40 years of federal government experience and stating that staff conducted every meeting professionally, provided excellent information, and that board members should feel proud of the staff's work.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Approval of the February meeting minutes was deferred to the April meeting, as the draft minutes had not been uploaded in time for review.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Stephen Bentley, Director of Raleigh Parks, presented the Director's Report.

- **Bailey Drive Gateway (Walnut Creek Wetland Center):** The multi-year project was officially bid and awarded at the first City Council meeting in March. The project will deliver a new pavilion, public art, and a connection to the school and the Rochester Heights historic neighborhood, addressing a long-standing access issue where residents had to either drive or walk around the park to enter. The project is a partnership with the Conservation Fund and the Transportation Department, with additional grant funding from the National Park Service.
- **Leaf Out Initiative:** Stephen congratulated the board on the City Council's endorsement of the Leaf Out resolution.
- **Biltmore Hills:** Stephen stated he is awaiting guidance from the City Manager on next steps for the project, as the City Council took no action at its Tuesday meeting. He expects feedback from the Manager and council in the near term.
- **Fred Fletcher Park / WCPSS Partnership:** Public engagement for the Fred Fletcher Park partnership with the Wake County Public School System has officially launched. Staff will present to the Hillsborough CAC the following week, and a public meeting will be held April 1 at Jaycee Park.
- **LeadHERship Conference:** Raleigh Parks hosted the LeadHERship conference through NC State, which focuses on women in the parks and recreation profession. Approximately 150 women from

across North Carolina attended, participating in motivational sessions and skills workshops. The conference was led by a former Raleigh Parks employee who is now a professor and speaker at UNC. Feedback has been positive enough that Raleigh may host the conference again in the future.

- **37th Annual Black History Month Program:** Held at Tarboro Road Community Center on February 21 and hosted by Octavia Rainey, the event drew more than 100 attendees. Speakers included Bentley and Congresswoman Deborah Ross. Rainey recognized Raleigh Parks staff, who have hosted and contributed to the program for 37 years.
- **Adapted Archery Program:** A new adapted archery program has been launched through Specialized Recreation and Inclusion Services.
- **Rowing Season:** Dates, times, and locations for the Lake Wheeler Open and the ACC championships will be distributed to the board along with parking passes.
- **Prescribed Burn Video:** A drone video of a recent prescribed burn at Annie Louise Wilkerson Nature Preserve has been posted to YouTube.
- **Parks Bond and Beyond Community Open House:** Scheduled for the following Thursday. Staff are partnering with the Transportation Department on a "Pedal to Parks" campaign for Bike Month in April.
- **USA Today Best Parks Poll:** Dix Park has been nominated for both "Number One Park" and "Number One Playground" in the USA Today poll. Board members were encouraged to vote.
- **PRGAB Retreat:** The retreat will be held the afternoon of May 29 and the morning of May 30 at Biltmore Hills Community Center. Topics will include the work plan, the City Manager's proposed budget, and the draft board engagement guide Iain Burnett has been developing. A community walk is planned for Saturday of that weekend.
- **Kate Dixon** noted that at the City Council meeting for the Leaf Out presentation, she understood there was a request for Bentley to return to the council at a future meeting to share additional information. Bentley confirmed that the City Manager will provide follow-up guidance and that Councilmember Branch indicated the council needs more information, but that no specific direction has been received yet.

- **Linda Pearsall** asked for an update on the Leaf Out resolution the board had forwarded. Bentley confirmed the City Council officially endorsed the resolution, which directs the City Manager to consider it during budget development. He encouraged board members to maintain communication with their council members regarding budget priorities during the April budget development period.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Parks Committee

- The Parks Committee's recent work was summarized in the full presentation of the Forestville Road Park Master Plan, which the full board received and approved during this meeting.

Greenway Committee

- The Greenway Committee report was included in the meeting agenda and not read aloud.

Sustainability, Wildlife, and Urban Trees Committee

- The SWUT Committee did not meet in March.
- **Kate Dixon** reported on the Leaf Out presentation to City Council, noting that significant community outreach resulted in a strong turnout of supporters wearing green for the meeting. Claude Albastian, a former Parks Board member, spoke during the public comment period in support of the 24,000-tree campaign and asked supporters in the audience to stand, resulting in approximately 40 people identifying themselves as attending in support of trees rather than solely for St. Patrick's Day.
- Charles Craig and Zach Manor presented Leaf Out to the City Council. Dixon, who spoke on behalf of the board, noted the council had extensive questions during the staff presentation and that she adjusted her prepared remarks accordingly.
- The City Council voted to adopt the board's resolution as its own, which Dixon interpreted as a strong signal to the City Manager regarding council priorities.

- Councilmember Megan Patton asked whether staff could begin thinking about an RFP for partnering nonprofits to accept whatever tree planting funding is allocated in the budget, to avoid losing the planting season.
- Patton also responded positively to Leaf Out's sixth focus area (strengthening community partnerships and relationships with nonprofits on trees and natural resources), which Dixon described as modeled in concept on the Arts Council funding approach, but suggested concentrating first on the 24,000-tree initiative (focus area seven) before expanding into that broader funding model.

Fred Fletcher Awards Committee

- No report.

LIAISON REPORTS

Arts Commission (CORAC)

- The Arts Commission is scheduled to meet the following week. Steve Brechbiel is the new board liaison and will attend.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC)

- BPAC did not meet due to weather cancellation.

Dix Park Leadership Committee

- The Dix Park Leadership Committee report was included in the meeting agenda and not read aloud.
- **Chris Pereira** asked whether the memorandum of understanding currently being revised between Raleigh Parks and the Dix Park Conservancy could incorporate tree protection provisions. Bentley clarified that tree protection will be addressed through the Leaf Out program rather than through the MOU, which focuses on operational responsibilities between the two entities. Bentley noted that Leaf Out will include stronger no-go zone and tree protection provisions in the festival and event permitting process, informed by lessons learned from events such as Dreamville in 2025. Pereira expressed

concern that festival season is approaching before the Leaf Out policy is fully developed; Bentley indicated he would confirm the timeline with Charles Craig and Zach Manor.

Historic Resources and Museum Advisory Board

- The Historic Resources and Museum Advisory Board report was included in the meeting agenda and not read aloud.

Work Plan Committee

- **Iain Burnett** thanked Steve Brechbiel, Jeff Havener, Daniel, Douglas Johnston, and Stephen McGuinness for joining the 2026 Work Plan Committee. Burnett will schedule an initial meeting by the end of the month and will forward draft priorities from Bentley and the Parks Department to the standing committee chairs for discussion at their April meetings. The goal is to have the work plan completed by the May board retreat, with final approval in June.

CHAIR REPORT

- The Chair reminded the board that the retreat will be held May 29 and 30 at Biltmore Hills Community Center, and encouraged members to begin identifying topics they would like to explore in greater depth, including Biltmore Hills and other passion projects.
- The Chair congratulated Kate Dixon and the Sustainability, Wildlife, and Urban Trees Committee on the successful adoption of the Leaf Out resolution by the City Council, noting that the initiative originated as a board work plan item the prior year.

OTHER BUSINESS

PRGAB Bylaws Update

- The bylaws approved by the board have been submitted to the City Attorney's office and returned with no substantive changes. The bylaws will next go to Community Engagement and then to the City Council for final approval.

eBikes and eCycles on Trails and Greenways

- **Kate Dixon** raised concerns about the increasing use of heavier bikes, particularly eBikes, on natural surface trails at Windemere Beaver Dam Park. She noted that staff indicated there is currently no specific bike policy for natural surface trails and asked whether similar issues are occurring at other parks.
 - Stephen Bentley responded that feedback from staff primarily concerns eBike speed on greenways rather than wear and tear on natural surface trails, though similar discussions are ongoing regarding one-wheeled devices.
- **Chris Pereira** reported that Eastgate Park is experiencing issues with both eBikes and eCycles on informal paths, including the construction of unauthorized jumps. He noted that the broader issue extends to street takeovers by groups of riders on eBikes and eCycles in residential neighborhoods, which are difficult for Raleigh Police to enforce.
- **Daniel Gilligan** noted that the Greenway Committee has discussed eBikes every three to six months, highlighting the challenge posed by the multiple classifications of eBikes and the fact that Parks Department greenway speed limits are advisory rather than enforceable (Raleigh Police holds enforcement authority).
- Bentley added that some eBikes are now being sold without pedals, which technically removes them from the bicycle classification, and that the Raleigh Police Department is working to enforce pedal requirements for bikes operating on greenways.
- **Daniel Gilligan** offered to research how other cities are addressing eBike regulation on greenways and trails. Bentley noted that approaches vary widely nationally, with cities such as Boulder encouraging eBike use to reduce vehicle traffic while others pursue design-based mitigation strategies along long stretches of greenway. Spring "Share the Greenway" campaigns will continue to address user conflicts as trail use increases with warmer weather.
- **Bob Edgerton** reported that the trees planted at Mount Hope Cemetery three years ago are all doing well.

- The Chair closed the meeting by reminding members of the Parks Bond and Beyond community open house the following week (4:30 to 7:30 p.m.) at Dix Park.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned.