

A POLICY ON
PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES
CITY OF GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

The policy on parks and recreation facilities and on park land acquisition adopted as city policy by the City Council of Greensboro, North Carolina on March 17, 1959, was the outcome of a survey of over fifty cities regarding policies in other cities.

This information was gathered by a questionnaire sent out by the Director of Parks and Recreation. Results of the questionnaire were turned over to the Planning Department of the City of Greensboro. With help from the Parks and Recreation Department, plus garden clubs of the city, the Planning Department developed the policy on parks and recreation facilities that has proven of great value to the city in its plan to make Greensboro a beautiful city.

Preamble

The provision of park and recreation facilities and a recreation program for the use and convenience of the citizens of Greensboro is a public service rendered by the municipal corporation in response to a clear expression of the need from the people. This public service is essentially of equal significance with many of the other public services rendered by the City of Greensboro in response to the wishes and demands of the citizenry.

Traditionally a municipality renders those services which are demanded of it by the public. For example, there was a time when fire protection was furnished entirely through private organizations. Such private service was eventually found to be inadequate and, thereafter, local governmental units furnished fire protection almost exclusively. Only a relatively few years ago, the slaughtering of animals was accomplished in a city-owned and operated facility because convenient, sanitary slaughter houses were not available privately. That day is passed and the city no longer renders this service. Thus, we see that municipal services change with the times in response to the needs of the people.

In the field of recreation the provision of park and recreation areas and the operation of a recreation program by the City of Greensboro has proven to be the most economical and most convenient method of supplying these services to the public as a whole and need has grown rapidly in recent years. The citizens of Greensboro have repeatedly expressed their requests to the municipality in numerous proposals for the improvement of existing park lands and the acquisition of additional properties for this purpose. A clear mandate in favor of recreation was expressed in the election of July 25, 1950, when the use of tax money

for recreation purposes was approved and a tax levy of not less than 3¢ and not more than 10¢ was specifically authorized.

The importance of parks and recreation as public services has been definitely established throughout the country. Particularly is this true in larger urban centers where a fully developed recreation program has been found essential to the well being of all the citizens and in particular to those who are unable to afford large expenditures for private recreation facilities. Responsible industrial concerns seeking new locations frequently measure community spirit by the quality of the public recreation program and by the interest in beautification as expressed in the public park system. They have serious reservations about locating new plants in any city that does not provide an atmosphere of pleasant community living through a fully adequate park and recreation program.

In the past, when Greensboro was small and a recreation program was not definitely established, park lands in the City were acquired primarily through gifts from individuals or land developers. A considerable amount of land has actually been secured by this process, but the property so obtained can hardly be regarded as adequate for a modern park and recreation program. Certainly for the future, due to the growing population and the fuller requirements for these functions, it seems certain that haphazard gifts of residual parcels of land having no other economic use can hardly provide a comprehensive pattern of adequate sites for park and recreation purposes.

It is for these reasons that a strong, positive and continuing policy for the acquisition, improvement and management of park and recreation areas is essential. The underlying problem is one of site acquisition and one which deserves a definite policy for its alleviation in order that a comprehensive program of parks and recreation areas can be developed for the benefit of the public.

Acquisition of Park and Recreation Areas

In order to keep pace with the growth of the community and the fuller requirements of an adequate recreation program, the City of Greensboro will systematically seek the dedication and acquisition of properties for park and recreation purposes by all legal methods available to it. Any land acquired for park and recreation functions by whatever means shall be considered to be added to the total pool of properties for this purpose.

The gift of properties to the municipality for this purpose will be considered by the City Council after receiving the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The designation of land for park purposes in new subdivision developments upon the advice of the Parks and Recreation Commission shall be encouraged. Land in new subdivisions turned over to the City because of the existence of a storm drainage problem will be maintained to care for storm drainage primarily and thereafter may be designated for park and recreation purposes.

Park Acquisition Fund

To promote the orderly acquisition of property for park and recreation purposes, and in order to preserve the vested interest that the community has in such properties, there shall be established a special fund to be known as the Park Acquisition Fund. This fund may be used along with other resources for the purchase of needed park and recreation sites.

It may be augmented in the following ways:

1. By appropriation of tax money collected under the authorized levy for recreation purposes.
2. By proceeds from the sale of any property previously used for public park and recreation functions.
3. By transfer of money from other funds whenever park properties are reassigned to other city functions.
4. By contributions from developers made in lieu of providing parks or other open spaces under any requirement of the Subdivision Regulations.
5. By gifts or contributions from individuals and organizations favoring the expansion of park properties.
6. By appropriation of non-tax revenues.

Alienation or Changed Use of Park and Recreation Areas

It shall be the policy of the City of Greensboro to maintain, insofar as possible in perpetuity, areas for park and recreation purposes for the benefit of all the people. Properties now so devoted shall continue to be used in this manner until changing circumstances compel their reassignment to other uses.

Whenever park and recreation properties are required for other purposes, the City Council shall endeavor to provide equivalent properties for park purposes or make an appropriation to the Park Acquisition Fund. If an alienation of park and recreation properties is proposed, a public hearing on the subject shall be held by the Parks and Recreation Commission, which shall transmit its recommendation to the City Council.

Whenever existing park or recreation property is required for street purposes or other public or private uses, a sum of money equal to the fair market value of the property so alienated shall be credited to the Park Acquisition Fund in order that additional purchases may be made at appropriate locations and in order that the total amount of land devoted to park and recreation purposes shall not be diminished.

Development and Operation

The Parks and Recreation Commission and the Recreation Department shall prepare and maintain plans for the development, the landscaping and the physical improvement of park areas and recreation facilities on all lands dedicated or devoted to such uses subject to the approval of the Council. There shall be no construction on or development of park or recreation properties except in accordance with plans prepared by the Commission and the Department, and approved by the City Council.

The maintenance, supervision and operation of all city-owned parks and recreation areas shall be the duty of the Recreation Department, with the advice of the Parks and Recreation Commission, subject to the orders of the City Manager and policies established by the City Council.

In view of this assignment of maintenance supervision and operation to the Recreation Department and the Parks and Recreation Commission, there shall be no alteration of any city-owned parks or recreation properties beyond normal maintenance by any public or private agency including other departments of the City Government and there shall be no cutting of trees without soliciting the prior advice of the Department

and the Commission.

The Parks and Recreation Commission shall establish regulations for the trimming and removal of all shade trees, hedges and shrubs growing on the public streets of Greensboro and the planting of same upon such streets, and with the consent of the respective owners, shall have full and complete authority over the trimming and removal of all shade trees, hedges and shrubs overhanging the public streets, parks and parkways. These regulations are subject to the approval of the City Council.

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