

Town of Apex

History of Apex Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources

BEFORE FORMATION OF PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The first Town Hall, constructed in 1912, was the epicenter for residents and offered recreational amenities like silent movies and dances for the community of over 300 to enjoy. Before the Parks and Recreation department was established in 1987, the Town of Apex contracted a community member to organize youth athletics like football, basketball, and baseball on Saturdays at local schools including Apex High School, Apex Elementary School, and A.V. Baucom Elementary.



BOND REFERENDUM APPROVAL SHOWS RESIDENT SUPPORT FOR PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAMMING

In 1996, a six million dollar bond was approved by Apex voters. The bond funded construction and renovation of Apex Community Park, Jaycee Park, and other projects. The renovation of the Apex Community Park was a multiphase project which started with building additional fields near the Laura Duncan Road entrance. The bond served to enhance quality of life through new athletic and recreation opportunities via walking paths and more offerings in organized sports.



ADDITION OF "CULTURAL RESOURCES" TO DEPARTMENT NAME AND MISSION

In 1998, the Parks and Recreation Department changed its name to Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources. The name change spoke to the intention of the department, then and now, to create programming that mirrors the increased diversity of the Apex population over the years. The Cultural Resources piece of the department focuses on providing events, space, and programming for everyone and consistently seeks new ways to engage those that call Apex home.



COMMUNITY SHOWS SUPPORT FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

For over 25 years, two groups have been involved in community support and advocacy for the town's Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources efforts. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission consists of appointed Apex residents that review projects and policies. Citizens for Apex Parks (CAPS), is a 501(c)3 that promotes department projects to the community. Both groups contributed greatly to the voter approval of additional bond referendums in 2012 (\$12 million) and 2017 (\$48 million), further developing parks programming and construction.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PARKS PROJECTS

In 1999, Apex community members expressed a desire to create a unique playground for all ages and formed a committee of local neighborhood representatives to accomplish that goal. They worked with the Town to find a suitable site and, after many months of public engagement with residents and events at local schools, plans for an all-wood community-built playground at Kelly Road Park called Kidstowne were created.

Another community-inspired project, Rodgers Family Skate Plaza at Trackside, opened in 2015 to provide a safe and designated space for skaters and skateboarders. The amenity, located at Hunter Street Park, was the result of a collaborative effort between Apex youth, CAPS, Town officials, and Town staff.



LAND DEDICATIONS ASSIST IN PARK AND ADDITIONAL AMENITY DEVELOPMENT

Since 2001, parks, greenways, and indoor recreational amenities have often been developed through a land dedication ordinance. The ordinance is a special authorization enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly and grants the Town of Apex the ability to require residential developers to set aside land, pay a fee-in-lieu, or construct greenways or park facilities for public recreation. Fees paid are used to purchase land, develop park properties, and provide recreation and open space amenities for residents to enjoy.



FORMATION OF MASTER PLANS

In the early 2000s, the Town of Apex saw a need for long-range planning for Parks and Greenways, and dedicated staff time and resources to developing plans that would guide the next 10 years. The Town of Apex has adopted updated master plans to guide the focus and direction of the department, with substantial public input to identify areas of need and desired amenities.

