

City of Ellijay, Georgia, Harrison Park Advisory Board Roles and Responsibilities

History

Harrison Park is a 25.94-acre municipal park located within the confines of the city of Ellijay, Georgia. The land is the former Pinson family farm, complete with a circa-1940 barn and corn crib on the property. It was purchased by the Albert E. Harrison Foundation and is leased to the City of Ellijay, Georgia, for \$1.00 USD per year on a perpetually renewable twenty-five (25) year lease.

The specific use of the land, as stated in the lease document, is *“for the purpose of conducting in and on such premises any lawful activity in furtherance of its mission of providing a park for the citizens of the City of Ellijay, Gilmer County, Georgia and the State of Georgia that is in memory and honor of those who have served in the armed forces for the United States of America from Gilmer County, Georgia, said use being for the public benefit.”*

Governance

Harrison Park is funded, governed, and maintained by the City of Ellijay, with control vested in the Mayor and the City Council. The Mayor and City Council are jointly responsible for investment (capital improvements) and operational (ongoing maintenance, park events) decisions pertaining to the park, including, but not limited to, the engagement of other governmental agencies, consultants, contractors, architects, and/or engineers.

Park activities are governed by Chapter 54 ('Parks and Recreation') of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Ellijay, Georgia, and Section 66, Article VI ('Parades and Assemblies'), Chapter 66 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Ellijay, Georgia. Activities at the Park requiring Special Events permits are to be approved by the City prior to any advertising, announcement, or engagement of these activities.

Harrison Park Advisory Board mission

The citizen advisory board (Harrison Park Advisory Board) is charged with advising the Mayor and City Council on fiscal and operational considerations for the Park, including recommendations and planning for capital expenditures and long-term needs.

If duly authorized by the Mayor and City Council on a project-by-project basis, the Harrison Park Advisory Board will actively participate in funding pursuits (mainly Federal and state grant identification and application), design efforts (structure design, landscape planning), and maintenance activities (e.g.; Pinson barn rehabilitation).

The Harrison Park Advisory Board functions solely in an advisory capacity, with no independent ability to bind the City of Ellijay to any agreement or contract or represent material facts on behalf of the City. Additionally, the Harrison Park Advisory Board has no discretionary funds and cannot obligate the City of Ellijay to any purchase or in any financial transaction in any manner whatsoever.

Harrison Park Advisory Board constitution

The Harrison Park Advisory Board (HPAB) is constituted of private Gilmer County citizens with an interest in and commitment to enhancing and improving Harrison Park to the betterment of the residents of the City of Ellijay and Gilmer County. Board members are appointed by and report to the Ellijay Mayor and Ellijay City Council.

One Board seat is reserved for a sitting Ellijay City Council member to act as a liaison between the Board and the City governing body.

The number of Harrison Park Advisory Board members is currently established at five (5), but may be expanded or reduced at the discretion of the Ellijay City Council.

Board member terms are for two (2) years. Vacant Board member positions are filled by a majority vote of the City Council. Members may be reappointed for an unlimited number of additional terms at the discretion of the Ellijay City Council. The terms of the four private-citizen members of the Board are staggered, with the term of two members expiring in even-numbered years and the remaining two members expiring in odd-numbered years.

Harrison Park Advisory Board responsibilities

- Each member of the Harrison Park Advisory Board (HPAB) shall represent and advocate for the best interests of the Park as a whole, putting aside personal or special interests.
- The HPAB will inform the City elected officials of ongoing Park-related matters on a regular basis (e.g.; as a standing agenda item at scheduled Ellijay City Council meetings)
- The HPAB will prepare a comprehensive capital improvement plan focused on a 1-5 year planning horizon. It will be reviewed and updated annually.
- The HPAB will help identify funding sources for Park capital improvement initiatives.
- The HPAB will assist the City and adjunct civic organizations (e.g.; the Friends of Harrison Park, Inc.) with the preparation of grant applications for specifically designated projects.
- The HPAB will provide a forum for citizen comments, recommendations, and suggestions regarding Park direction and priorities.
- The HPAB will organize volunteers for sanctioned projects and workdays.
- The HPAB will recommend a system of reasonable fees and charges for the use of Park facilities.
- The HPAB will share its meeting agendas with the Mayor and City Council prior to all meetings.
- The HPAB will file a copy of all meeting minutes with Ellijay City Hall as required by the Official Code Annotated of Georgia (O.G.C.A.) 50-14-1(e)(1)(2).