

Donner Park Historical Background

Donner Park has been a part of the Atlantic Beach parks system for decades, beginning in the 1950's when E.H. Donner sold a roughly 1 acre parcel of land to the Town of Atlantic Beach to be used as a public park and/or recreational playground. During this time, E.H. Donner was a large landowner and influential resident in Atlantic Beach who owned and subdivided much of the land around the current sites of both Donner and Jordan Parks. In 1940, he dedicated a road to the Town of Atlantic Beach at the southern end of "Donner's Subdivision" that was then designated as "Donner's Road" by the Commission. In 1977, Roberts Mount Pisgah AME Church sold the City a roughly one half acre parcel of land adjacent to the original parcel obtained from Mr. Donner to also be used as a public playground. The remaining land that currently makes up Donner Park was acquired by the city in the early 1990s through several separate land purchases.

In 1996, after years of efforts, the Donner Park Community Center was completed to provide local children with after school and educational programs. Marcia Gail Baker was the activities director for the Donner Park Community Center at this time and, with the help of Atlantic Beach Director of Recreation Timmy Johnson, assisted in getting a community center at Donner Park. In May of 2014, the Donner Park Community Center was renamed the Gail Baker Community Center to commemorate Ms. Baker's years of service as the community center's director as well as her contributions to the local children in the community.

Large improvements to the park, including two tennis courts and sidewalks, were constructed in 2009 with funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. A few years later in 2012, the western parking lot was completed, also funded by the CDBG program.