

Winchester Parks and Recreation  
Park Advisory Board Meeting  
Combined November & December  
Monday, December 8, 2014  
6:30pm

Meeting Location: Lord Fairfax Room, War Memorial Building

**Present:** John Bentley (Chairman), Shelly Lee (Vice-Chairman), Jules Bacha, Rosie Schiavone, Matt Mintschenko, Kyle Homan and Hector Robertson.

**Absent:** Brian Wigley

**City Staff:** Jennifer Jones, Lisa Hamaker and Tyler Schenck, Interim Economic Development Director

**Media:** Derek Gomes

**Guests:** Harold Hawks and SU Sports Governance Class students; Daniel Schultz, Kellam Maxey, Jack Greaney, Howie Lumsden and Austin.

John Bentley called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

**Approval of October 27, 2014 Minutes:**

A motion was made by Jules Bacha to approve the October 27, 2014, minutes as presented; Matt Mintschencko seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

**Public Comments: Harold Hawks**

Mr. Hawks made his second appearance before the Park Advisory Board requesting a change be made in the current swim schedule that would allow working adults an earlier evening lap swim time. The current schedule allows adult lap swim starting at 7:30pm from the previous swim time of 6:00pm. His concern is that the designated time is too late for most working adults and currently with the Winter 2014 schedule he stated Fridays are no longer an option since High School Swim Teams are utilizing the pool. He also asked for better communications, in advance, for closings and cancellations of pool swim time. He is asking the staff and Advisory Board to change the current schedule and allow one lane for adult lap swim during 6-7pm on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays.

Lisa Hamaker told Mr. Hawks that the one Friday evening he mentions lap swimmers lost was a scheduling error and it had been corrected so it would not be an issue in the future.

Jennifer Jones noted that the # 3 interest in the Needs Assessment Survey results was the need for another aquatics facility and the current change to the Indoor Pool schedule allows approximately 100 more children time to learn to swim.

**Skate Pavilion Winter Closing Discussion/Vote**

Jennifer Jones reported over the course of 4 weeks (19 days) the department implemented a plan to open the Skate Pavilion at 3pm and close at dusk. Since no money had been allocated to monitor the facility, the department used seasonal part time maintenance funds to open and close the facility. The facility averaged 3.2 skaters/bikers per day. Of the potential 63 participants over 19 days, 48 would not wear helmets and were turned away so 75% of the time potential skaters were turned away for refusing to wear helmets. Department staff had, at most; on any given day were 2 participants wearing helmets. The police were called 3 times as skaters refused to leave and the staff was threatened twice. The thought was that it was not truly worth using all of the seasonal labor funds to help monitor the Skate Pavilion to open and

close for and average of 2 skaters per day. At least once, skaters/bikers scaled the fence after hours and threw bikes and boards over the fence into the pavilion area. The Director, after consulting with the Police Department about the matter, had Park staff cut the lights to deter use after hours. Jennifer Jones recommends closing the facility for the winter (since her department does not have the staff to open and close the facility and participants are refusing to comply with the helmet required rule) with the option to re-visit the facilities operational plan in the Spring 2015 once funding for the Fiscal Year can be determined.

Shelly Lee commented she was upset that participants may have vandalized their own facility after all of the efforts that were put in place to make the Skate Pavilion a reality.

Jones commented that 2/3 facilities nationally are helmet recommended and the height pushes the requirement.

Matt Mintshcencko asked how monitoring would be handled over holiday breaks and if that would be a trespassing notice.

John Bentley asked for a vote of support to the Director's recommendation to close the facility for winter (from December 8 to March 21); the vote 7-0 supported the recommendation.

### **MCCormac Amphitheatre Feasibility Study Review**

Shenandoah University MGT-611, Fall 2014 Capstone students in collaboration with Winchester Parks and Recreation conducted a feasibility study to determine the need for an entertainment venue such as the McCormac Amphitheatre. SU Capstone Group students presented their executive summary on Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 6pm in the Halpin-Harrison Hall at Shenandoah University.

#### **Summary Conclusion:**

- The current market conditions in the Winchester Frederick Metropolitan Statistical Area are suitable for an entertainment venue such as the Winchester McCormac Amphitheatre (WMCA). The growing population and overall prosperity will continue the trend of increased consumer spending.
- The overall spending in entertainment and recreation currently exceeds the national average which shows that there is a gap that can be satisfied by the WMCA.
- Assuming Winchester Parks and Recreation (WPR) decides to revitalize the amphitheater; there would be no physical issues that would obstruct the construction or operation.
- Major concerns for the operation of this project are marketing and advertising. WPR will have to invest in a professional promoter and/or Marketing and Events Coordinator.
- WPR should form a marketing alliance with businesses in Old Town Winchester. This cooperative agreement will highlight the symbiotic monetary benefits of attracting new visitors to the community.
- City Council should consider a policy modification to permit adult beverages at certain concerts and theater events at WMCA. As noted, competitor venues offer adult beverages. Having this available at certain events could enhance marketability of the WMCA.
- Finally, the current funding available for the project is not sufficient to produce an economically sound investment.
  - Considering the fact that the proposed events will not require overnight stays, there may not be sufficient tax revenue (hotel/motel) to supplement income from out-of-town visitors.
  - As long as there is reliance on interest-bearing debt, the Net Present Value will always be negative.
  - Furthermore, the Capstone group does not recommend renovating the WMCA unless WPR embark on a major Capital Campaign Drive to augment the cost of construction and/or allow other tax revenue to subsidize operations.
  - Securing funds to cover the cost of construction will insure positive returns and make the WMCA an economically sustainable entertainment venue.

Based on 11 events annually at approximately \$13.00 per person per event for 3000 seated capacity it would take approximately 57 years to pay for the construction of the facility. Shelly Lee inquired about concerts at the Bridgeforth Stadium and the seating capacity at the field.

Jennifer Jones commented that although concerts work well at the stadium the concept of adult beverages would have to be re-visited and Matt Mintschencko mentioned so would parking.

The McCormac Amphitheatre was tabled unless the Park Advisory Board is asked for a recommendation from City Council.

### **Chairman Comments: John Bentley**

#### **Director's Report: Jennifer Jones**

##### **• Needs Assessment Final Stages**

GreenPlay, LLC will present their final survey result findings to the Needs Assessment Project Team on Tuesday, December 16 from 1-5pm. 164 surveys out of 3000 mailed and 267 responses from open link were returned and analyzed.

Jennifer Jones will provide the Park Advisory Board with the information before the next board meeting.

The final report should be ready to present to City Council by the end of January.

##### **• Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve Marsh Restoration Project Winter Pause**

In one week the Lower Marsh will be completed. Depending on funds restoration to the Meadow Branch Marsh may be started in the spring.

The restoration process is in alignment with the Management Plan set forth for the Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve.

Jennifer Jones attended a DCR (Department of Conservation & Recreation) grant meeting in Charlottesville, VA regarding the potential to receive funding to help with restoration costs; but the funds are only allocated to private lands and our wetlands are public land.

All of the 5"+ greater diameter trees will need to be professionally removed.

##### **• Shawnee Springs Trail Complete**

The trail is complete with the exception of adding a few more solar lights. Jennifer Jones has learned the area is in a 100 year flood plain therefore; no structures, yoga mounds or a communal swing can be constructed.

The department has plans to place a communal swing at the Firemen's Pavilion in Jim Barnett Park.

##### **• Park Projects**

- 1) Scoreboard- The installation of the new scoreboard at Bridgeforth Field will soon be completed.
- 2) Wilkins Lake Fountain- The new fountain is now operational with lights.
- 3) Revitalization of Family land- Jennifer Jones has plans to renovate the miniature golf course area and Park Maintenance Staff feel they may be able to lay the new carpeting in-house during the late winter.
- 4) Jennifer Jones met with a Horticulturalist to plan and design several flower bed areas in Jim Barnett Park. She also hopes to re-design the Family land area in a Dr. Seuss theme near the miniature golf course

She asked the Park Advisory Board to send her any ideas or thoughts they may have to revitalizing the area.

- 5) Signage- The dual sided Jim Barnett Park sign prepared for 612 Millwood Avenue is being relocated to the Park entrance on Bridgeforth Drive. The sign was removed from the Tennis Court location due to a line of sight issue. A banner will be installed temporarily at the Potts Basketball area until a new sign can be purchased. Jennifer Jones will send the Park Advisory Board the pictures from the line of sight issue.

- **Virginia Tech Turf Grass Seminar**

Winchester Parks and Recreation partnered with Virginia Tech and the Virginia Extension Coop. to present the Virginia Tech Turf Grass Seminar in the War Memorial Building's Social Hall in Jim Barnett Park on Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. The presentation was very successful and approximately 95 people registered. The Parks and Recreation Maintenance Division were presenters on Field Improvements (including turf upgrades) within Jim Barnett Park and they were able to showcase all of their new field equipment.

- **2016 Budget Construction**

Several key items are being considered for the FY16 Parks and Recreation Budget construction process such as the Needs Assessment Raw Data, City Council Strategic Plan Goals, the Citizen Satisfaction Survey results and department initiatives. CIP (Capital Improvement Plans) have already been established.

- **South End Signage Update**

For now; a banner has been installed. The back of the new sign will be changed slightly and the sign should be able to be purchased at the beginning of the new Fiscal year.

- **Crumb Rubber Concerns**

Jennifer Jones presented the Park Advisory Board with information about the potential link between crumb-rubber (in Artificial Turf) and cancer. She will send the Advisory Board various links stating the concerns. The question that presents itself is if the Parks and Recreation Department wants to proceed with the artificial turf project proposed for Bridgeforth Field. A sub-committee of John Bentley and Jules Bacha was formed to review all of the information. Matt Mintschenko did question if there is a difference between the black rubber and the green rubber product.

Jennifer Jones will develop a recommendation and send it to the City Manager and copy the Park Advisory Board.

- **General Comments**

Jennifer Jones congratulated Lisa Hamaker, Assistant Director, on her recent CPRP certification.

### **Assistant Director's Report- Lisa Hamaker**

- **Programs-**

#### **Highlights for December**

- 1) Parent's Night Out
- 2) Swimming with Santa

#### **Upcoming Programs/Events**

- 1) Pickle Ball
- 2) Marshall Arts/Self Defense
- 3) Intermediate I-Phone classes

- 4) Winter Jamfest
- 5) Swim Classes starting January 12
- 6) Area High School Swim Team meets start in approximately 2 weeks

The Park staff is currently working on the "Spring 2015 Program Guide".

• **Facilities-**

- 1) Starting December 8, Leslie Bowery, Recreation Coordinator-Special Events, will be acting as the Facilities Coordinator. This is part of succession planning training internally for the department.
- 2) Shower dividers in the locker rooms have been installed.

• **Special Events-**

- 1) Little Turkey Treats- good participation
- 2) Santa Letters- in progress
- 3) Christmas Parade- 50 units participated and the parade went well
- 4) Santa's Headquarters- Selected Parks and Rec staff helped with the event in Old Town
- 5) Swimming with Santa- coming up Saturday, Dec 13.

**Board Comments and Idea Sharing:**

Shelly Lee commented Ice Skating is one idea people express an interest in. Jennifer Jones is getting an estimate on a temporary ice rink.

Kyle Homan, Matt Mintschenko and Brian Wigley's terms on the Park Advisory Board will expire next spring.

**Advisory Board Meeting Dates:**

**Advisory Board Meeting:** Monday, January 26, 2015 @ 6:30pm

**Adjournment:** With no further business to discuss John Bentley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting; Kyle Homan made the motion and it was seconded by Matt Mintschenko. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted; Jennifer Stotler; Park Administrative Coordinator