

**Winchester Parks & Recreation  
Parks & Recreation Advisory Board - Minutes  
November 16, 2020  
Virtual - WebEx  
6:30 PM**

**1. Welcome & Call to Order** – President Bill Stewart

**2. Attendance Roll Call**

**Present:** Bill Stewart (President), Cal Allen, Regina Coates, James Lowe, Casey Stine, and Chris Way

**Absent:** Mike Miller (Vice President), Scott Jenkins, and Andy Gail (submitted resignation letter)

**City Staff:** Lynn Miller, Samantha Crisman, Sarah Acuff Chapman, Dan Hoffman (City Manager)

**Press:** None

The COVID-19 pandemic and the federal, state, and local declarations of emergency have created a temporary medical condition that prevent all Board members from physically attending the meeting in a central location, and each Board member participated in the meeting by electronic communication means via WebEx.

**3. Approval Minutes**

**3.1** A motion to approve October 26, 2020 meeting minutes was made by Casey Stine and seconded by Cal Allen. No discussion. All were in favor; the minutes were approved unanimously, 6/0.

**4. Introductions & Presentations**

**4.1** Advisory Board 2021 Proposed Meeting Schedule – President Stewart stated that there was one update to the schedule as presented. The November 22 meeting to be held on November 15 instead due to Thanksgiving week. Amend the schedule to reflect November 15<sup>th</sup>. A motion to approve next year's Meeting Schedule was made by Cal Allen and seconded by Casey Stine. No discussion. The motion was approved unanimously, 6/0.

**5. Public Comments** – None received.

**5.1 Electronic Participation.** President Stewart stated pursuant to and in accordance with the Continuity of Government Ordinance recently adopted by Council pursuant to Va. Code § 15.2-1413 and under the recently adopted amendment to the Budget Bill - HB 29 2019, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting Order of the Governor to stay home and social distance, the Winchester Parks & Recreation Advisory Board is meeting virtually by electronic communications means via WebEx. Notice has been provided to the public and arrangements have been made for public access and public comment through electronic communication means.

## **6. President's Report**

No report, however, President Stewart welcomed Sarah Acuff Chapman.

## **7. Board Member Comments - None**

## **8. Report – Projects & Programs Committee**

### **8.1 Report of Cal Allen**

Met November 16<sup>th</sup> with Lynn and Sam. Reviewed ordinance and several hundred groups that exist and partner groups that the Park has. Result of the meeting is in the report distributed to board members. Will have two meetings a year, in March and September, open as public forums. A November meeting to meet with partner organizations, Winchester school board. A July meeting to review City capital improvement plans as well as current operational Parks & Rec planning documents. Proposal is a motion from the P&P committee. Seconded by Chris Way. Discussion involved reiteration of the meeting dates. The motion was approved unanimously, 6/0.

## **9. City Manager Comments**

Dan Hoffman introduced himself and said that he would attend meetings as his schedule allows. Excited to be here with the City. He is very supportive of Parks & Rec and oversaw Parks & Rec in Gainesville and where they built and renovated a lot of parks. He will continue to look for ways to enhance our park system here in Winchester. Dan thanked the members for serving on the board and will take advice seriously when planning the budget. He is happy to answer any questions the Board may have. President Stewart welcomed Dan on behalf of the board and expressed appreciation for him being supportive.

## **10. Director's Report**

### **10.1 Administration**

Renovation of Bodie Grim and Henkel Fields continues within the scope of the project and Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Winchester and Shenandoah University. The improvement project is on schedule to be completed by early March 2021 facilitating the use of the fields for Handley Baseball, Softball and Shenandoah Softball.

### **10.2 Virginia High School League (VHSL)**

Will start December 14<sup>th</sup>. A plan for High School Swim is being developed in a coordinated effort by Parks & Recreation Staff, and the Athletic Directors and Coaches of the various high schools. The plan to conduct high school practices and the local swim meets has been approved by the City Manager and are in the final stages of approval by the high school Athletic Directors and Swim Coaches. Due to the Social Distancing criteria associated with the Corona virus the overall operation of the swim meets will differ greatly from prior years to ensure the

safety of the athletes, officials and staff. Spectators will not be permitted on deck and social distancing will be required of all athletes and officials as much as possible. All individuals will be required to wear face coverings/masks unless engaged in swimming. Each school has been provided with the option of establishing video equipment in the pool area in order to live stream the meet.

As the meet schedule is finalized additional information will be provided to the Board.

### **10.3 Possible Trail/Park Facility North Kent Street**

Although it is too early to confirm the creation of a recreation facility along the west side of North Kent Street it may be a possibility. The department has initiated discussions with the Public Services and Planning & Zoning Departments to establish a multi-purpose trail in this area. The Public Services Department plans to establish a storm water retention facility in this area, and such may lend itself to the establishment of a recreational facility. Unfortunately, when we met with representatives of the Public Services Dept. it was determined this project would be several years in the future if at all. However, we will continue to have open dialogue.

### **10.4 Potential Neighborhood Park – Linden Drive**

The department has initiated discussions with the Planning & Zoning Department who has subsequently opened discussions with HD Partners owners of the former Frederick County Middle School relating to the development of a neighborhood park at 441 Linden Drive. At one time there was a small neighborhood park at this location, and such was apparently located on property owned and operated by Frederick County Schools. For some reason the park was abandoned, playground equipment removed leaving only a small pavilion and table. Additionally, the maintenance of the site was discontinued by the P & R Department. It appears the developer has interest in partnering with the City and establishing a neighborhood park at this location. Discussions are continuing including perhaps from small athletic fields as well.

### **10.5 Maintenance**

Mowing Operations are slowing due to the cool weather and winter projects are being reviewed for completion during the winter season.

The Lions Club Sensory Trail is nearing completion. The scheduling and completion of this project has been extremely lengthy due to many factors. All the posts have been installed and are ready for the installation of the cable which will guide individuals with sight deficiencies along the trail. Robbie has indicated the installation of the cable will be installed no later than the first week of December. Possibility of an early spring dedication ceremony.

Wilkins Lake and Surrounding Area - Maintenance Program is continuing as staff and scheduling is available.

The Maintenance Division is concentrating efforts in a coordinated manner with the Community Recreation/Special Events Division to install decorative lighting in the shelter area of the park where the “Holiday Lane Lighting” will be

displayed. This is a new program for the department and originated due the inability to sponsor a Holiday Parade in the downtown business area. The display will be viewed from vehicles driving through the display area during the evening hours of 5:00 PM -8:30 PM beginning on the evening of November 30th and continuing until December 20th. This display is planned to be the beginning of a new holiday tradition in Jim Barnett Park and is FREE to all. Samantha will provide additional information. Partner organizations were contacted for assistance. Nothing confirmed yet. Santa will be at the event on Friday and Saturday nights.

## **10.6 Facilities**

Parks continuing to Host City Council Meetings in Social Hall until further notice. December 8th meeting will be in Council Chambers. January through March meetings will most likely be at the park.

The domestic water lines located in the roof/ceiling system of the Active Living Center have been repaired and moisture mitigation has been completed. We are now awaiting word from the general contractor relating to the initiation of repairs.

## **10.7 INSIGHT Academy**

The INSIGHT Academy which is organized by the City's Communications Department and conducted during the winter and early spring started in early 2020 and was discontinued due the Corona virus. The Communications Department has decided to complete the academy and has scheduled those departments that have not yet presented. The Parks & Recreation Department is scheduled for Wednesday, December 9th in the Social Hall beginning at 6:00 PM. The presentation will differ from those presented previously but will provide an overview of the department and the Divisions. All members of the Advisory Board are invited and encouraged to attend. Estimate twenty participants.

## **10.8 Field Re-naming**

A staff member has received a verbal inquiry requesting Henkel Harris Field be renamed in memory of the individual who was the victim of a homicide in the 500 Block of Adams Drive on the evening of October 28th. The victim participated in the Kickball League sponsored by the department and played on Henkel Harris Field.

This is intended as an informational item for the Board at this time but the naming of park entities and the consulting and advising of Council is included in the City Code, Section 18.3 General Powers and Duties of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

## **10.7 Staffing – Hiring Freeze – Vacancy Status**

### **Administration:**

Administrative Assistant – It gives me pleasure to introduce Sarah Acuff Chapman as the new Administrative Assistant. Sarah was offered the position and accepted with her first day being Monday, November 9th. She comes to us from the City's Economic Development Department

which gives her a good foundation for various processes in the department and City.

## **Community Recreation & Special Events**

Comm. Rec. & Special Events Specialist - Vacant

### **Aquatics**

Aquatics Specialist – Two full time Aquatics Specialist positions are vacant. One position has been posted and applications are being received.

Part time Lifeguard Positions – 1 Employed – Shelly Lee. Shelly is a previous board member.

### **Maintenance**

Superintendent - Robert Garrett has been serving as the Superintendent in an interim capacity for 8 months. He has been offered the Superintendent's position on a permanent basis and has accepted. The effective date of the promotion was November 9<sup>th</sup>. Robbie has sixteen years of experience with the park.

Seasonal – No Interviews Conducted

### **Facilities**

1 Part-time Custodian vacant

Front Desk Staff – Down 2 – 3 Part time Positions

### **Child Care**

Several Part Time Positions

## **11. Assistant Director Report**

### **11.1 Special Events**

Holiday Lane Lights in the Park – 11/30-12/20, 5-8:30pm

There's a new show in town! Holiday Lane will run 11/30-12/20 and feature lighted pavilions, dog park, and holiday scenes beginning at the intersection of Maple and Oak Dr and ending at the War Memorial Building parking lot. Santa will make an appearance on Friday and Saturday nights for the run of the event. The best part is, it's FREE! We are hopeful this will bring some holiday joy to the community and start a new tradition in the City of Winchester. Sam noted that staff has put in a lot of extra work with the event and is very proud of results.

Tree Lighting – The customary tree lighting is being deferred in lieu of a virtual tree lighting ceremony. This will provide the opportunity for view the tree lighting and the shenanigans of Elves in the safety and comfort of the individual's home. The tree lighting will be shared on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Comcast Channel 6 and the City's e-newsletter. The release date is currently being determined by the City's Communications department.

Santa's Workshop – Santa's Workshop will not be happening this year due to the criteria associated with social distancing. Hope to bring this event back next year.

Letters from Santa – Continues to be a go. Letters can be turned in from November 21<sup>st</sup> through December 4<sup>th</sup> at the War Memorial Building, City Hall, and the Winchester-Frederick County Visitor Center.

## **11.2 Athletics**

Winchester Baseball – Late season concluding in the next week.

Volleyball League – Began 11/2/2020. Games will start Wednesday. Trying new live stream for viewing. No live spectators.

## **11.3 Community Recreation**

Private Music Lessons – Registering for second session. Session started today with increased enrollment from last session.

Community Yoga and Veterans Yoga – Began 11/2/2020. Have a maximum capacity, but participants and instructor happy to be back and good attendance thus far.

Staff is Developing a Plan for Safe Return to Community Recreation Programming. Have not introduced some typical programs yet.

## **11.4 Child Care**

School Year – We are now offering programming based on the hybrid schedule as well as after school on days the children are in school. Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade now 4 days/week in school and those students will be bussed over to the HIVE after care as well as siblings. Still limited in capacity, but program has bloomed.

## **11.5 Upgrade RecTrac Software**

Upgrade will be different, but staff is excited. Virtual resources and training manual available. Hopefully early next year to start.

## **12. Additional Items -**

### **12.1 Ash Tree Removal/Replacement Program**

Under a grant basis with the Virginia Department of Forestry, work was initiated by Sky View Tree Experts to remove the dead and standing Ash trees starting last week. Completion delayed due to rain but will be done. The planting of 14 new trees may not take place until early spring. Very pleased to have received a grant to remove the trees, grind stumps, and replace those trees.

### **12.2 Board Membership Status**

Regina Coates – Eligible for Re-appointment. Awaiting Confirmation.

Chris Way – Appointed July 14<sup>th</sup> – 3 yr. term 7.13.2023

B. Scott Jenkins – Appointed July 14<sup>th</sup> – 3 yr. term 7.13.2023

#### **Newly Appointed Advisory Board Members**

Pete Lowe – Appointed October 13<sup>th</sup> – 3 yr. term 10.12.2023

Andy Gail did submit his resignation. We hope the position will be filled soon.

## **12.2 Winter/Spring Guide**

A plan was in place, but given the surge in COVID, the decision was made to not make the expenditure in printing the guide. Will continue to use social media and other means to get information out as programs are available and activities increase.

## **13. Next Regular Meetings –**

- 13.1** Monday, January 25, 2021  
6:30 PM  
War Memorial/Active Living Center – Lord Fairfax Room

## **14. Closing Comments Director**

As we approach the holiday season on behalf of the department staff, I thank each of you for your service to the community and the department and wish each of you the very best for a wonderful holiday season and prosperous new year.

## **15. Closing Comments President**

December 9<sup>th</sup> Insight Academy. Holiday Lane Lighting is exciting, and I hope that you drive through. Addressing Dan, one of the perks of Parks & Rec is the Letters from Santa program...Let Lynn and Sam tell you all about it! Congratulation to Robbie as Supervisor. Welcome Sarah. Welcome Dan to the City. Happy Holidays and we look forward to a great 2021.

## **16. Closing Comments Board Members**

Cal had comments, but they were not audible.

## **17. Motion to Adjourn**

- 17.1** With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Pete Lowe, seconded by Chris Way, and approved unanimously 6/0. The meeting adjourned at 7:20pm.