

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was held on Monday, January 24, 2011 at 6:30 P.M. in the Recreation Room of the Active Living Center.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Krista Farris, John Elliott, Catherine Mattens, Kyle Homan, Matt Mintschenko, Susan Roberts, Jules Bacha

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Tim Grove and Brian Wigley (Ms. Farris was asked by Mr. Veach to chair the February meeting since both the chairman and vice chairman were absent.)

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Brad Veach, Lisa Hamaker and Sherry Welsh

**CITY COUNCILOR:**

**CITY MANAGER:**

Jim O'Connor

**MEDIA PRESENT:**

Vic Bradshaw – Winchester Star

**VISITOR:**

Dr. Woodward Bousquet, Vice-Chair, NRAB  
Ben Cary, Winchester BMX

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Dr. Woodward Bousquet, Vice-Chair of The Winchester Natural Resources Advisory Board (MRAB) addressed the board regarding the city's two preserves; Abrams Creek Wetlands and Shawnee Springs. The NRAB proposal would provide advisement on ways to manage both preserves. Please refer to handout for detailed proposal information.

The proposal from NRAB was accepted on a motion made by Kyle Homan; seconded by John Elliott, motion carried

Ben Cary, representing Winchester BMX spoke to the board about the upcoming NE Regional BMX event. Mr. Cary provided the group with a handout containing budget items. Some items would be needed prior to the event and others are long-term needs that the group would like to have. Mr. Cary anticipates that the April race will draw approximately 400 – 500 riders. Winchester BMX would like to use this race to gain more exposure within the sport. Brad Veach has contacted hotels in the Winchester-Frederick area to secure guaranteed room rates for those attending the event. Once that information is secured, it will be placed on Winchester BMX's website for easy access.

Mr. Veach asked the board to review the budget provided by Mr. Cary and take those items into consideration for the future.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – TIM GROVE**

### **INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER**

Krista Farris introduced the Winchester Parks & Recreation Advisory Boards newest member, Jules Bacha. Mr. Bacha, originally from Bradford, PA comes to the board after 25 years of service with the Department of State. Mr. Bacha has been a resident of the area since 1997 and came to the board via information he received through participating in the Insight Academy.

### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MINUTES**

The November minutes were approved on a motion by Kyle Homan; seconded by John. Elliott, motion carried.

### **MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2011**

A draft schedule was provided to the Board for 2011. Brad Veach noted two date conflicts occurring in November and December. The board decided to wait until nominations and elections of Officers took place to finalize those dates.

### **NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION**

Brad Veach spoke to the Board about putting together a new member orientation. A tentative date was not set but a Saturday was the suggested day to hold the orientation. This would provide new members with a history of the Park as well as go over the Park Master Plan and allow a Q&A session for new members. The group would also go on a tour of the properties to better educate them on what the Park has and where. The board decided to organize the orientation and select the date via email exchange.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT: BRAD VEACH**

### **PARK PLACE**

Brad Veach provided the board with several email exchanges from residents in reference to soccer play at Park Place. Mr. Veach received an earlier call expressing concern regarding parking in the area. The resident felt parking along the curbs may cause blind spots for traffic. Matt Mintschenko volunteered to look at the area to determine if curbs might require painting to limit parking in those areas. He will report back to Brad within the next few days. (As a follow-up, Mr. Mintschenko reported that the curbs at the intersection of Harvest Drive and Beehive Way are not painted yellow.) Mr. Veach noted that education is a big part of the communication between the Parks and residents. Residents need to be informed of the Parks responsibilities through appropriate communication. Krista Farris noted that there was a positive email in the packet. She felt it was an acknowledgement to the board that their time had been well spent regarding Park Place.

## **DISC GOLF**

Brad Veach informed the Board that the Park was ready to move forward with the next 9 holes for the Disc Golf course. Within the last month, three additional sponsors have been secured which resulted in raising an additional \$2400 toward the course. He noted that one sponsor was from Hagerstown, Maryland. The full course should be completed in approximately one year. The inaugural "Ice Bowl" began on Sunday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at Jim Barnett Park. It is a 3 part series. Overall comments about the course were positive.

Mr. Veach also gave credit to the individuals who assisted with the project. He stated that "they stepped up" to the challenge and kept the project moving. The project was primarily driven by volunteers and their efforts to bring Disc Golf to the park.

## **PRESTON FIELD COMMITTEE/WORLD SERIES UPDATE**

Kyle Homan informed the board that a recent meeting regarding the conversion of Preston Field was very positive. The plans are to redesign the field into 2 rectangular fields which can be used by Winchester Football, BYRSA and possibly a local Lacrosse group. All three organizations have expressed a strong interest in working to raise funds to aid the cost of converting the field.

Mr. Veach also informed the Board that Bob Benyo of Premier Sports Fields has given some pricing which would convert the field to Bermuda grass. This type of grass is very hardy, fast-growing and requires less maintenance. Premier Sports Fields is under a current state contract with Fauquier County so Winchester Parks & Recreation could ride off that contract. Mr. Veach also expressed a desire to include Yost field in the quote. He feels this would be a beneficial improvement for the upcoming Cal Ripken World Series. Mr. Benyo indicated that it would be a cost savings to do both projects at once. The approximate savings would be about \$12,000.

## **SKATE PARK**

John Elliot informed the Board that the local skateboarding community is about to lose their current space. They are now interested in revisiting locating the Skate Park in partnership with Winchester Parks & Recreation. They are now willing to accept a scaled-down version of their prior request. Brad Veach presented handouts from American Ramp Company, a provider of modular Skate Park equipment. Mr. Veach also informed the Board that there is currently \$7,000 in the Park Foundation fund that could be used toward the Skate Park. John Elliott agreed to contact Lance Moss, who is a driving force behind the Skate Park. Mr. Elliott and Mr. Veach will continue to discuss the project in more detail within the next month and will also plan to have a meeting with Mr. Moss regarding the project.

## **OPERATIONS SUPERINTENDENT REPORT: LISA HAMAKER**

Lisa Hamaker informed the Board that Winchester Parks & Recreation has been in talks with Winchester Public Schools regarding the management of gyms and playing fields at Daniel Morgan and the elementary schools. Talks are still in preliminary stages. The Park is well equipped to manage the facility and field rentals through the current RecTrac software. It would also bring in an additional revenue stream since the Park would charge for managing the process. Ms. Hamaker pointed out the Park staff is already familiar with the equipment since the Park currently runs programs in some of the

locations. Winchester Parks & Recreation would provide a staff member at events inside the facilities but would not have a presence on athletic fields.

Catherine Mattens expressed a concern regarding the management of athletic fields. Ms. Mattens felt that taking play space away from adults should be taken into consideration since the fields are City property. She felt by charging for the fields it would disallow residents to have play space that they are accustomed to using.

Lisa Hamaker also presented the Board with drafts of a Program Survey and a Facility Survey. She asked to Board to review and offer suggestions. The plan is to make the surveys available both online and in hard copy. The Facility Survey may also be emailed to residents after they have used space within the facility. Krista Farris suggested adding a contact name and number as well as developing a mechanism for tracking responses. Ms. Farris also expressed a concern that adult programs have fallen by the wayside and are not getting enough focus. Mr. Veach informed the Board that the Park is always looking at programs to determine additions and areas of focus. A big part of the lack of adult fitness programs is the lack of instructors. Ms. Farris also suggested a third survey targeted on memberships. She made the suggestion of asking residents “Will they return?” and “Why or Why Not”.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **UTILIZATION PLAN COMMITTEE: KRISTA FARRIS**

The Utilization Plan Committee met prior to the Parks Advisory Board Meeting. Krista Farris reported to the Board that the committee had defined tasks into two phases. The committee has also asked Brad Veach to further define service projects to better assist the committee.

Phase I would include tending to projects classified as “quick fixes”. Krista Farris and Catherine Matten will put together a list of these items so work can begin immediately with a targeted completion date in the spring. The list will include things such as painting, new basketball nets and other items that will be easy to fix at little to no cost. The idea of a Gift Catalog was also presented to the Board. This would provide potential donors with a selection of items that they could choose from to donate to the park. The Utilization Committee also discussed determining parks versus green space and better identifying those to the public. They will also determine what is defined as basic amenities for recreational spaces. Signage will also be part of this phase once the definitions are determined. The committee will determine which neighborhoods will require meetings once Phase I activities are completed.

Phase II will involve reviewing the Master Plan for the Park to ensure the vision and direction are traveling on the right course. Neighborhood meetings would also take place during this phase based on the selection process in Phase I. Ms. Farris asked to Board to provide any suggestion, ideas or concerns that they might have to the Utilization Committee. Brad Veach also suggested that value be assessed on all current sights to determine if they fit into the scope and direction of the Parks & Recreation Department.

**DESIGNATION OF PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
DATE AND TIME:**

Next meeting scheduled for February 28, 2011 at 6:30 P.M. in the Recreation Room of the Active Living Center.

The Utilization Committee will meet prior to Parks Advisory Board Meeting on February 28, 2011 at 5:30 P.M. in the Conference Room of the Active Living Center.

**BOARD COMMENTS**

None

**ADJOURN:**

Mr. Homan made a motion to adjourn the meeting; motion seconded by Mr. Mintschenko, the motion carried.

Submitted by: Sherry Welsh, Parks Administration Coordinator

**Winchester Natural Resources Advisory Board (NRAB)**

**Proposal for Advising re. the Management and Protection  
of the City's Two Preserves: Abrams Creek Wetlands and Shawnee Springs**

**Presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  
by Woody Bousquet, NRAB Vice-Chair  
January 24, 2011**

**Proposal**

**The Winchester Natural Resources Advisory Board, in keeping with its mission, will advise the Winchester Parks and Recreation Department on the protection and management of the City's two nature preserves: the Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve and the Shawnee Springs Preserve. This responsibility includes advice regarding the implementation of the management plan for the Abrams Creek Wetlands and the development of a management plan for Shawnee Springs by the NRAB.**

**Background**

**The Preserves**

Two of the City's land parcels are formally protected for their natural features. These two tracts are the Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve and Shawnee Springs Preserve. (Shawnee Springs also contains significant historic features.) Both preserves are managed by the Winchester Parks and Recreation Department.

**From the NRAB Mission Statement**

*"The Winchester Natural Resources Advisory Board provides input to City staff, City Council, and the general public as requested on issues concerning the natural resources and environmental health of Winchester. These issues include, but are not limited to, water, air, soil, non-domestic animals, vegetation, habitats, and waste disposal."*

**Implementing the Proposal**

In keeping with our mission, we propose that the NRAB be made responsible for providing input regarding the protection and management of the natural features of the Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve and Shawnee Springs Preserve. In this role, we would assume the responsibilities of the Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve Management Advisory Committee, which developed the management plan for that preserve. We would be willing to provide similar input regarding Shawnee Springs Preserve.