



September 23, 2019

Members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board,

Shenandoah University (SU) is proposing a viable public/private partnership with the City of Winchester to refurbish Bridgeforth Field and Rotary Field located in Jim Barnett Park. This partnership will benefit multiple park partners by extending the playing season for each refurbished field and making them attractive options for large regional sporting event hosts who would not otherwise consider the park. The magnitude of the capital expenditure SU is proposing will transform the fields, and the surrounding areas, with much needed infrastructure improvements, and bring additional revenue – both directly and indirectly – into the city coffers.

This public/private partnership will help Winchester Parks and Recreation accomplish six of its stated goals included in its 2019 budget submission:

- *Continue to develop Bridgeforth Stadium into a premier Baseball Stadium in the region enabling the stadium and its facilities to host such events as Valley League play and an NCAA baseball tournament with Shenandoah University*
- *Improve existing facilities and athletic fields and park spaces*
- *Pursue implementation of field maintenance program to improve the quality of fields enhancing athletic opportunities*
- *Work with Park Partners and other area organizations to enhance the beautification and infrastructure of Jim Barnett Park and other City park areas*
- *Diversify and increase Community Recreation programs to all age groups*
- *Provide financial aid opportunities in partnership with the Winchester City Parks Foundation for City residents who may not be able to afford services*

Specifically, Shenandoah University is proposing to invest the funds reasonably necessary to:

1. Install turf fields, renovate dugouts and install new fencing as needed, at Bridgeforth Field (Baseball) and Rotary Field (Softball) as soon as possible to include any necessary site work, in order to transform these fields into a complex that meets the criteria to host regional and national baseball events for both John Handley High School and Shenandoah University, as well as youth baseball/softball tournaments like the Cal Ripken Baseball World Series or a Babe Ruth Softball World Series. The estimated cost for these initial improvements is between \$3.0 and \$3.5 million.
2. Add new lights, seating, and scoreboards and improve press box facilities at Bridgeforth Field and Rotary Field over a five-year period to bring those facilities up to NCAA tournament standards.

3. Brand the Bridgeforth Field and Rotary Field as the proud Winchester home of the Shenandoah University Hornets.
4. Construct covered batting cage facilities next to Bridgeforth Field that can be used by partner organizations when not in use by SU.
5. Assist with improving concession, parking and bathroom facilities in the park as may be mutually agreed.
6. Provide the city with \$300,000.00 to invest in Bodie Grim Field and Henkel Harris Field. This investment would be earmarked to make improvements to these fields including, but not limited to, seating, scoreboards, PA systems, fences, and press box facilities. Shenandoah University believes this investment and the improvements will be well received by the administration, coaches and student-athletes at John Handley High School.
7. Provide the city with the funds reasonably necessary to start a mutually agreed upon youth sports program aimed at serving children from economically marginalized families in Winchester, and to operate the program for a period of up to five years.
8. Pay or reimburse the city for reasonable utility expenses for Bridgeforth Field and Rotary Field.
9. Maintain Bridgeforth Field and Rotary Field over the life of an appropriate mutually beneficial agreement, and repair and install new turf and improvements as necessary.

In exchange for making this multimillion-dollar, long-term commitment to the city park system, Shenandoah University is requesting appropriate management rights over Bridgeforth Field and Rotary Field, which will include rent-free use of these fields for its baseball and softball teams for a mutually agreeable period of time. SU is also willing to agree to make the fields available to other users (e.g., John Handley High School baseball/softball teams, Winchester Baseball, the Winchester Royals, and other activities as organized by Winchester Parks and Recreation, etc.) on reasonable terms and conditions when SU does not need the fields for its teams' use, or to perform maintenance work.

In addition, SU supports Winchester City providing John Handley High School with appropriate management rights to use the Bodie Grim and Henkel Harris fields when the Handley baseball and softball teams are in season.

SU is committed to resolve any scheduling conflicts with other park partners, including John Handley High School, Winchester Baseball and the Winchester Royals, and we believe that any such conflicts can be resolved in consultation with, and the assistance of, parks and recreation staff.

Likewise, Shenandoah University is committed to exploring alternatives for any lost revenue from fees that Winchester Parks and Recreation depends upon for its operating budget due to the reduced availability of the fields in question.

In short, both John Handley High School and Shenandoah University would appreciate upgraded facilities in their Winchester home. John Handley High School has indicated they endorse this plan with the understanding that they will have the necessary use of Bodie Grim and Henkel Harris fields while in season, provided the fields may also be properly branded.

Shenandoah is NOT asking to purchase or lease park property. Rather, the university would simply like to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the City of Winchester that outlines the rights and responsibilities mutually agreed upon between them.

Shenandoah University recognizes that Winchester City has limited funds to invest in the Jim Barnett Park ball fields. If Shenandoah University is willing to make such funds available, and materially improve the fields and related infrastructure, all park partners could potentially host more revenue generating activities for the citizens of Winchester. The purpose of this proposal is to make the field complex at Jim Barnett Park a shining example of how a public/private partnership can work to the benefit of all partners, and be a model of cooperation, pride and efficiency for all of Winchester.

The university welcomes further discussion with the appropriate subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and is looking forward to receiving a favorable recommendation to City Council for this proposal.

Submitted on behalf of Shenandoah University,



Mitchell L. Moore
Senior Vice President/Vice President for Advancement

JIM BARNETT PARK

