

Winchester Parks and Recreation
Park Advisory Board Meeting
Monday, September 28, 2015
6:30pm

Meeting Location: Lord Fairfax Room, War Memorial Building

Present: John Bentley (Chairman), Shelly Lee (Vice-Chairman), Hector Robertson, Rosie Schiavone, Regina Coates, Michael Miller, Jules Bacha and Bill Stewart

Absent: None

City Staff: Jennifer Stotler and Eden Freeman

Media: None

Guests: Jim Smith and Vivian Walker

John Bentley called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

August 24, 2015 Minutes Approval:

A motion was made by Shelly Lee to approve the August 24, 2015 minutes as presented and seconded by Regina Coates; the motion was approved.

Public Comments:

Jim Smith- Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon

Mr. Smith addressed the Park Advisory Board about the Audubon's vision to update or re-new the agreement between the Park and the Audubon, that was put in place at least 15 years ago, for the Arboretum in Jim Barnett Park. He encouraged support to continue the development and management of the Arboretum. He spoke of design and development plans that include working with the City Arborist, a master design plan, walkability, updating the kiosk and accessibility. He spoke of the importance to protect the grounds and enhance the 6.5 acres that is the Arboretum. He arranged to meet the Park Advisory Board at the Arboretum on Monday, October 26 at 5:30pm.

Vivian Walker- Frederick Douglass Family Day

Mrs. Walker, President of the Frederick Douglass Family Day Club addressed the Park Advisory Board with an update of their annual Frederick Douglass Family Day Event that was held in Frederick Douglass Park from July 31- August 2, 2015. She commented it was a wonderful event with approximately 50-75 in attendance at the Gospel Concert on Saturday and approximately 500-600 at the event on Sunday. She thanked the City, the Park Advisory Board and the Park Staff for all of their continued support. The club hit a snag with their insurance and the rates they are being charged but they are still exploring options. The club would not be able to fall under the City's insurance but being able to be added into another non-profit organization is not uncommon.

Chairman's Report – John Bentley

No report at this time.

City Manager Comments- Eden Freeman

Park Director Update-

Ms. Freeman updated the Park Advisory Board that the urgency to fill the Park Director position is not as urgent and she wants to make sure the candidate will fit the needs of the department.

Bridgeforth Field Artificial Turf Project-

Ms. Freeman has been in conversation with Mitch Moore from SU concerning the artificial turf project proposal for Bridgeforth Field. The disposal and replacement of the turf was never discussed in the beginning planning phases of the project. The Park Advisory Board was informed that after some research and speaking with City Schools it was determined that

\$100,000 is being set aside per year for the Handley Bowl turf replacement, over a 13 year replacement plan period, with limited use. Bridgeforth Field, being a public facility, will see a lot more use and the turf life expectancy will decrease. If parties agree not to proceed with the artificial turf project funds could be allocated for projects such as repairs to Bodie Grim Field, expansion of the dugouts at Bridgeforth Field and Tennis Court repairs.

Mr. Stewart indicated a turf field is not a solution to all needs but there is an advantage from a scheduling perspective. Mr. Stewart would like to see the cost benefit for the work SU currently does to the grass field and he would like to see the work cost of Park staff.

Mr. Bentley would like to spend more time on this topic and have it added monthly to the Park Board Agendas.

Interim Director's Report- Jennifer Stotler reporting for Lynn Miller

FY16 Capital Projects Update- Currently reviewing playground equipment that will be installed at Frederick Douglass Park.

Henkel Harris Field Update – Field has been renovated to include new sod at the outside perimeter of the infield. Infield mix has been obtained, installed and graded. We are researching the installation of a new sound system for the field and repairs to the press box. These items will be contingent upon budget. The project is a shared project with Shenandoah University and will place the field in much better condition for various teams including Shenandoah Girls' softball.

Yost Field Update – We are currently in the process of removing the infield turf which is Bermuda grass and will be replacing the infield with Cool Season Grasses. This project is a shared project with Winchester Baseball.

Slide at Children's Dream – This slide received damage from what has been determined as vandalism. A new slide is on order and will be replaced when received. The City's insurance covered the replacement cost (\$8,000) with the exception of \$1,000 deductible.

Dog Park Repairs - Repairs have been made to the Dog Park which included stabilization of the area around the dog fountains and creation of an area for the dogs. This is a great improvement over the previous arrangement but is still not ideal. We are currently reviewing the installation of a concrete to replacement the stones.

Fountain Repair at Wilkins Lake- The fountain at Wilkins Lake is out for repair as it was creating an overload situation due to water entering a chamber that contained oil. The good news is the equipment was replaced last year the current repairs are being addressed under warranty. We are looking forward to having the water feature back in service in the near future.

Tennis Courts – The tennis courts have experienced some cracking and the cracking continues to increase and was expanded as a result of the extremely cold last winter. WPRD is coordinating with Shenandoah University and Tennis Courts Inc. and considering repairs to the courts. We currently have two proposals the first addresses what I would classify as a band aid repair while the other proposal is more comprehensive in nature. Additional discussion will be conducted in the next few weeks to determine the most appropriate remediation and funding issues. I will continue to keep the Board advised of the project's progress.

Interim Assistant Director's Report- Jennifer Stotler

United Way Day of Caring- On Wednesday, September 9 approximately 23 Faculty and Students from Daniel Morgan Middle School and 10 FBLA students from Handley High School came to Jim Barnett Park for the day, to work with Park staff picking up trash. Their efforts were greatly appreciated.

Programs- PB&J Club has started again and the program averages 23-30 children every other Wednesday. A new Wallyball League has been created and it currently has 5 teams. Enrollment numbers for some of the Community Rec Programs are increasing with 11 participants each in Curvy Yoga, Pokémon and Watercolors. The "Tour Winchester" Trolley ride was filled.

Special Events- The "All Paws on Deck" event was held on Monday, September 7 after the Outdoor Pool closed for the season and 101 dogs were in attendance. The Patsy Cline Concert event was held Sunday, September 6 on Bridgeforth Field.

Next Monthly Park Advisory Board Meeting: Monday, November 16 (due to holiday), 2015 @ 6:30pm.

Board Comments/Idea Sharing:

Mr. Bacha inquired if the Splash Pad on the Old Town Mall was Parks responsibility? Ms. Freeman indicated the City Facilities Maintenance Division maintains it.

Mr. Robertson indicated the raised area on the South end of the Park still seems to be an issue. Ms. Freeman will check to see if the Police Department can add some additional patrols.

Adjournment- With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Michael Miller, seconded by Jules Bacha and approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

Respectively submitted by Jennifer Stotler; Park Administration Coordinator