

Wicomico Recreation & Parks Commission
February 26, 2019
Minutes

The Wicomico Recreation & Parks Commission met in regular session on February 26, 2019 in the Conference Room of the Youth & Civic Center. The meeting was called to order by Allen Brown at 7:05 pm.

The following members and staff were present:

Commission Members

Allen Brown
Tom Bowden
Jay Disharoon
John Groutt
Les Wright
Jermichael Mitchell

Staff Members

Steve Miller
Chuck Poole
James Simmons
Linda Lyons

Upon a motion made by Chairman Mr. Brown, and seconded by Mr. Bowden, the January 22, 2019 minutes were approved as written.

Mr. Poole reported that in spite of the wet weather, the Parks Division has been working at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium installing new landscape plantings and assisting with the final construction of the 360 wrap around deck. The staff continues to work on improvements to the Athletic Complex including creating an entrance to the park from Paleo Lane, installing new security doors by Concession 1, removing the existing sliding door to create more ventilation in the kitchen, and installing LED lights in the breezeway. The County is currently waiting for Program Open Space final approval to replace the new playground equipment at East Wicomico Little League, Eastside Youth Sports Complex, Billy Gene Jackson, Emerson Holloway and Indian Village. New safety surfaces will also be installed under all play equipment. These projects are included on the March 6, 2019 Board of Public Works agenda for approval. Upon approval, the current structures will be removed to make room for the new equipment. The other POS spring projects include converting the tee ball field in Delmar to a youth softball field, creating pickle ball courts within the tennis courts at Cope Bennett as well as replacing fencing around the ball field.

Recreation updates were presented by Mr. Simmons. Within Youth Sports, individual participation was trending up 71% primarily due to the new Wicomico Basketball League (WYBL). Childcare is trending down slightly compared to last year, but numbers are still strong. The Good Sports Awards Banquet was held January 31, 2019. Twenty-two organizations were represented at the event. The overall opinion of the Commission was that it was well attended and a well -run event.

Mr. Simmons provided an update from last meeting on the Summer Playground Structure for 2019. Traditional locations for these free programs have been Doverdale and Indian Village. As a licensed location, the maximum number of participants is 36. Participation in 2018 ranged from 3 to 36 attendees, depending on the weather and other factors. The Department is trying to provide a program that people can rely on for activity in these neighborhoods, which includes providing programming during inclement weather. In considering changes to the program, Mr. Simmons spoke with 15-20 neighborhood parents whose children regularly attended in the past. No parents said they depended on the sites for consistent childcare for the summer. Therefore, the Department is proposing to shift directions for the program and replace the daytime playground program by increasing access to existing Summer Escape sites through scholarships (which provide indoor options in case of inclement

weather). Additionally, the Department will sponsor a series of events in different community neighborhoods during the summer. These weekly events would rotate between Billy Gene Jackson, Doverdale, Indian Village, City and Lake Street parks. The events would be held in a three (3) hour window and be marketed as “free family fun.” Events would include art, music and nature themes, among other possibilities. The Scholarship program through Kids Klub Summer Escape would still be offered to the consistent attendees. Board members were in agreement to heavily promote the advantages of Kids Klub, like the inclusion of field trips, to these parents. They also felt it was important to communicate the structure change to council members in case concerns were taken to that level.

Mr. Bowden made the motion to move ahead with this new structure, Mr. Disharoon seconded the motion. There was a unanimous vote from the Commission to move forward with proposed changes to this program.

Mr. Miller went on to say the Program Open Space sub-committee met on February 13, 2019 to review projects requested for FY20. He provided background on how POS has become Wicomico County’s life-line for funding park restoration and development projects. The County has been lauded by State officials for utilizing grant funds to complete projects and for spreading out projects throughout the County to meet existing and future needs. The full Commission reviewed the list of submitted projects and the recommendations of the sub-committee to approve in the FY20 cycle.

After some discussion, Mr. Brown made the move to accept the group’s recommendations for FY20 POS as presented. Motion to accept was made by Mr. Bowden, seconded by Mr. Disharoon. There was a unanimous vote from the Commission to move forward to submit the recommendations to the Executive for approval.

Mr. Miller handed out various mission statements from the 4 divisions within the Department. In crafting the Department’s overall strategic plan and vision, Mr. Miller would like to revisit mission statements with both commissions. A potential goal would be to have mission statements that can be easily memorized by staff and stakeholders while capturing the essence of why the Department exists. Commission members agreed to entertain alternate proposals of mission statements. The group agreed to gather suggestions and to consider alternatives at a future meeting.

Motion was made to allow Sunrise Rotary to apply for a one day liquor license for their Bubble Soccer event on March 30, 2019 at Winterplace Park. Motion was approved by the Commission.

Motion was made by Mr. Groutt to allow the Democratic and Republic Committee to apply a one day liquor license for their events at Schumaker Park. Motion was seconded by Mr. Mitchell. Motion was approved by the commission.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm
The next meeting will be decided at a later date.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Lyons
Linda Lyons, Recording Secretary