

Wicomico Recreation & Parks Commission  
January 22, 2019  
Minutes

The Wicomico Recreation & Parks Commission met in regular session on January 22, 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  
Leisl Ashby  
Larry Dodd  
Jay Disharoon  
John Groutt  
Shawn Johnson  
George Burbage

Staff Members

Steve Miller  
Chuck Poole  
James Simmons  
Linda Lyons

Upon a motion made by Allen Brown and seconded by Tom Bowden, the September 25, 2018 and November 27, 2018 minutes were approved as written.

Mr. Poole reported that the Parks division had a very productive November and December. Park maintenance including leaf, dead tree removal and mowing of ditch banks, which was accomplished by the end of the year. The County is currently waiting for the 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. Improvements to the Henry Parker Athletic Complex include the creation of an entrance into the Park from Paleo Lane, installing new security doors by concession 1, removing existing sliding door to create more ventilation in the kitchen, removing freezer and installing drainage in right field of field 7. The goal of completion of these projects is March 15, 2019.

Appreciation was noted by Mr. Bowden for the newly painted sign at Cope Bennett Park.

Recreation updates were presented by Mr. Simmons. Recapping on the Governor's Challenge Basketball Tournament, he noted that teams traveled to Salisbury from Canada to Florida, California to the east coast. This tournament is considered the largest holiday tournament in the country. When asked the entrance fee for students, he replied the rate was \$10.00 per day or a week pass for \$30.00. He added that UMES facility was used to give the girls their own site. Overall, the event breaks even but the economic impact on the area was \$1.5 Million with approximately 800 booked hotel room nights.

Mr. Simmons reported on Wicomico Youth Basketball League. While this is the first year for the program, they have exceeded the goal of 200 participants by registering 235 participants. Practice is held at WYCC in the Midway Room and games are on Saturday at Bennett Middle School.

Women's six hit and coed adult volleyball programs are in progress. They are working with Worcester County so players are able to play in both leagues.

The Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex is in the process of getting set up with the Live Barn Group for live stream coverage on all eight playing fields. The live streaming will cover local leagues as well as tournaments.

This system can also double as security. The videos are on demand for 30 days. This system is subscribership based.

The Good Sports Awards will be held January 31. Twenty-one organizations will be represented. This awards program's purpose is to celebrate all good aspects of sports in the community. Doors will open at 5:30 pm, dinner will be served at 6:00 pm and award portion will be held from 6:45 pm – 7:30 pm.

Mr. Simmons' final report was a discussion on the Summer Playground Structure for 2019. The locations traditionally included in this free program are Doverdale and Indian Village. As a licensed location, the maximum number of participants is 36. With summer weather conditions, participation in 2018 ranged from 3 to 36 attendees. The Department was trying to provide a program that people can rely on for activity in the neighborhood. One option being considered is offering to provide bus transportation from these parks on certain days so children could attend alternate Kids Klub summer camp locations in the county. The staff will look into working with the scholarship programs to make the fee as low as possible for these participants. Participants would need to register for this program. This would provide tighter controls of who is actually taking advantage of this opportunity. One other alternative solution might be to reallocate resources for a fun family event on select days in these communities. Mr. Simmons continued that the main goal is to be sure that the community realizes that the County is not trying to pull out of these areas. Mr. Simmons will continue to explore alternate options to better serve this portion of the community.

Mr. Miller presented a potential concept for field development at the Athletic Complex, called "Project 7.5". The proposed idea is to build a mini field between fields 7 and 8 at the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex as a home for the Challenger Little program, which is structured for mentally and physically challenged children to participate in ball field activities. The field would consist of 110 ft. fenced synthetic field with stitched-in lines. The planned playground construction through Program Open Space will be paused at this time since the play equipment would need to include ADA accommodations if this concept generated public interest. Mr. Miller will be attending the District Little League meeting next month to seek levels of interest from Little League programs in the District (Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset). In addition to being a primary home for a Challenger-type program, the mini field could also serve as an added amenity for whiffle ball and /or tee ball during the week or during weekend tournament events.

Letters were mailed to the Municipalities regarding their Program Open Space requests for the FY20 cycle. A POS subcommittee was created to review the requests. The subcommittee will consist of Jay Disharoon, Shawn Johnson, Tom Bowden, James Simmons and Chuck Poole. A meeting will be held in mid- February.

Mr. Groutt brought up the wisteria problem at Pemberton Park. He informed the group that the NRCAC is exploring funding and action items to deal with invasive species in County parks and other locations. Mr. Groutt continued to ask if there are places in the parks where people can plant trees. Mr. Poole commented there could be, but not widespread depending on the activities at the park. Mr. Miller suggested there may be opportunities at Pirate's Wharf.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.  
The next meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Lyons  
Linda Lyons, Recording Secretary