

Wicomico Recreation Parks Commission Meeting

April 28, 2020

Minutes

The Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting met in regular session on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 via Webex due to the Coronavirus restrictions.

The following Commission and staff members were on the call:

Commission Members

Allen Brown  
Jay Disharoon  
Tom Bowden  
Shawn Johnson  
Erin Smith  
Deena Cook

Staff Members

Steve Miller  
James Simmons  
Chuck Poole  
Linda Lyons

Chairman Allen Brown called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. The minutes from January 28, 2020 were approved as submitted.

Mr. Poole reported that the Parks division was completing seasonal projects such as grass cutting and landscaping at the parks. Electronic locks have been installed on the restrooms at Winterplace and Schumaker Park . Time is set remotely to open and close the restrooms. He continued with the updates at Henry Parker Athletic Complex. By season opening, all fields will have electric, cameras installed on all back stops, and misting fans on fields five through eight. Additional projects include: Riverside boat ramp is complete, Schumaker parking lot is paved, Nick Meyer basketball court is ready for repair, and an additional field will be skinned at East Wicomico Little League.

Mr. Simmons presented the Recreation updates. Winter child care was down slightly while youth sports were overall flat. Governor's Challenge was successful and Good Sports Awards Banquet was well attended. He stated that the recreation staff was working from home on virtual programs and challenges. Wicomico County Recreation & Parks, Amerigroup and the Mizzle House Foundation set a goal of 300 5K/300 meals for the Virtual Run/Walk to benefit the front line workers of Wicomico County. This was a free event that was be done from your home. For each of the 5K's completed and uploaded to Facebook with the hashtag #5KforFrontLines, one meal was purchased from a local restaurant and donated to frontline employees in Wicomico County. Gift cards were presented to Deer's Head, PRMC, Nursing Homes, and local Police and Fire Departments. Other virtual events included Earth Day clean up, fort building contest, at home workouts, Lego challenge and "Chalk Wicomico". While outdoor recreation programs have been cancelled through April, the staff is working on contingency planning for these spring cancellations and trying not to cancel too far out. Two truckloads of school supplies were taken to Board of Education for students. Fundraising has begun for this fall's back to school event. The goal is to provide supplies for 4,000 students.

Mr. Miller addressed the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to programs and facilities. County Parks were closed for a time at the end of March as the pandemic hit the Eastern Shore. The trails were re-opened this week, while the pavilions, playgrounds and basketball/tennis courts remain closed until direction to open is received from the Governor and local health officials. The Department also is assisting in a number of Countywide COVID-19 efforts: Parks' staff put up a decontamination tent for Emergency Services located at the Detention Center. Arthur W. Perdue Stadium will host COVID-19 testing station Thursday April 28-Saturday May, 2. The Recreation, Parks, Tourism and Civic Center staff will be supporting the testing.

Mr. Miller opened a discussion regarding Program Open Space for FY21. He explained that it is a State Grant Program and has been a lifeline for funding for Counties, including Wicomico County. Though it is a State-to-County grant

program, the County has the ability to share funds with municipalities and towns at its discretion. To help inform new members, the POS recommendation process was outlined:

- A sub-committee is formed and reviews the requests from the County and local municipalities and towns.
- After initial review, the sub-committee make recommendations for consideration by the full membership of the Recreation and Parks Commission.
- Once the full Commission vets and approves, recommendations are taken to the Wicomico County Executive for final approval.

The sub-committee met to review the requests for 2021. The County is anticipating approximately \$500,000 from the State while \$1,000,000 worth of projects were requested.

In addition to regular requests, the City of Salisbury requested to move \$90,000 from the boathouse renovation project, 1<sup>st</sup> locally approved in 2015, to a different City project. The boathouse project was recently disapproved by the State and is no longer eligible for POS funding. The recommendation was made by the sub-committee to put this funding toward other priorities on the request list. Sub-Committee member Mr. Bowden explained his motivation is to touch as many locations in the County as possible.

Chairman Brown asked for a motion to accept the POS FY21 recommendations from the sub-committee. Mr. Bowden made the motion to accept recommendations as submitted and Mr. Johnson seconded. There was a unanimous vote to accept the sub-committee's recommendations.

Mr. Miller continued to present program updates starting with Field 7-1/2 at the Henry S. Parker Athletic Complex. The field is built and dugouts have been started with estimated completion in two weeks. Concrete surrounding the field will follow the dugouts, then bleachers with shade structure will complete the field construction. Rotary Club of Salisbury has been working to build two pavilions on site. To date, over \$300,000 has been committed in private donations toward the Field 7-1/2 fundraising efforts. Once ongoing construction is complete, attention will shift to funding and placement of playground equipment.

Mr. Miller's final update was on Pirate's Wharf. We are currently in the design phase. The next 6-9 months will include permitting, bidding parts of projects then begin building. The pavilion and comfort station designs are on track. 7,500 trees were planted on the park property in early April.

Mrs. Cook was introduced as the newest member to the Commission. She moved to the area in 2009 and is heavily involved with the Westside Community. She supports bringing programs back to the Westside.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Next meeting TBD.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Lyons  
Linda Lyons, Recording Secretary