

**Wicomico County Council
Open Work Session
September 16, 2014 Part 1**

Work sessions require written minutes that reflect each item that the public body considered, the action that the public body took on each item and each vote that was recorded. **It should be noted that at work sessions, the Wicomico County Council does not take formal action, nor is a vote taken on any item discussed.**

In attendance: Matt Holloway, President; John B. Hall, Vice President; Bob Culver, Sheree Sample-Hughes, Stevie Prettyman, Gail M. Bartkovich and Joe Holloway.

Present: Matthew E. Creamer, Council Administrator; Edgar A. Baker, Jr., County Attorney; Maureen Howarth, Deputy County Attorney; Gary Mackes, Director of Recreation, Parks and Tourism; Brock Parker, Parker and Associates; Steve Roser, Internal Auditor and Melissa Holland, Recording Secretary.

Presentation of Expansion of Henry Parker Sports Complex :

Mr. Mackes said he is in the front of the Council to begin the process of accepting a generous donation of land from the City of Salisbury to expand the Henry Parker Athletic Complex. He said the economic activity calculator is new and it is a product of the Maryland Stadium Authority working with a third party to undertake a trending study to see how much people spend to participate in amateur sports events. He said there is a real spike in the economic impact based on that trending information. Mr. Mackes said the Wicomico Tourism Book now consists of 35 events which generates \$43.1 million dollar of economic activity. He said this is 30,000 hotels nights and close to 200,000 visitors and compared to the previous year the tourism effort has grown by 10%. He said that outdoor amateur sports marketing makes up for 60% of the book. He said the county utilizes the Henry Parker Athletic Complex as the hub for 15 regional events and some events are so large that they exceed the field and lodging capacity. Mr. Mackes said the total economic activity is \$26.2 million and the direct spending from lodging, food, transportation and entertainment is \$16.4 million with indirect spending being \$9.8 million. He said people are buying good and services. He said the State of Maryland allocated \$1 million for the Henry Parker Complex expansion and said they are on course to provide more money in the budget as the expansion is being constructed. He said that there is a partnership with Worcester County and Ocean City which is the Mid Atlantic Amateur Sports Alliance which leverages all assets to accommodate all events. He said this is the first alliance of its kind. Mr. Mackes said there are local partnerships with the hotel motel association to establish a hotel booking system including Ocean City's properties. He said Tourism is also networking with local businesses through the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Mackes said the expansion should be complete in 2017 and bring ten additional events and grow the economic activity by \$6 million. He said that if the county invests \$1.85 million with the state investing the same amount the return on investment will be three times that amount in 2017.

Mr. Mackes said in 1984 the City of Salisbury donated part of the Naylor Mill tract to the county in exchange for land for a marina. He said the county received 44 acres of land. He said the county knew the complex was sitting on the Paleo Channel. He said the land which the city is donating runs across Naylor Mill Branch and goes all the way to the Tourism Center. Mr. Mackes said the city will still have 32 acres of wet land remaining. He said the parking lot will be increased and add four baseball fields which each field being 380 feet in batting radius and five more soccer fields. He said that sports organizers want to have a hub of fields of eight. Mr. Mackes said that quality fields are very important and it will cost \$40,000 to maintain the additional fields and said the complex is financially self-sustaining. He said this expansion won't be an additional cost to the taxpayers.

Mr. Mackes said biking trails, forest conservation, Stormwater management, sediment control, protecting the Paleo Channel and regulatory compliance all were discussed. Mr. Mackes said there will be a stem root out to the bike paths from the parking lot at the complex, adding that a bridge over the stream will be very expensive and he feels it may be easier to get access on the other side. He said that he spoke to Mr. Drew about other trails in the county.

Mr. Mackes said the county has the latest list from the Department of Natural Resources of things that need to be protected. He said that a lot of the land is unforested forest land. He said the county will be involved in mitigation and what is removed will be replaced. Mr. Mackes said the complex won a state landscape architect award years ago.

Mr. Parker said there is the Maryland Forest Conservation Act which sets the guidelines and said a certain amount of trees have to be conserved or planting has to be done off-site. He said the project is in compliance with the Act as hundreds of feet are being conserved between the ball fields and the creek. He said between the baseball fields the underbrush will be cleared. Mr. Parker said they want to do a Phase I and a Phase II for this project. Mr. Parker said the goal of the Stormwater management program is to reduce the run off from a one year storm to down to those levels that were present during a wooded site in good condition. He said the run off will be less than from the site wooded and in good condition. Mr. Parker said the main buffering is along the street. He said the project will not go down the slope of the stream and that is the critical preservation area. He said that in the latter phases they are proposing a concession stand or a central office on the site. He said that he is not sure what phase that will be constructed in but said they do propose to connect to the City's water and sewer.

Mr. Culver asked how much fill will be brought in for the top of the ball fields. Mr. Parker said the road coming in is high and gradually drains to the creek and the slope drops off into the creek. Mr. Parker said he proposed cutting along the road side and fill the back of the ball fields and said the major part of the slope is beyond the ball fields. Mr. Culver asked the total cost of the project to which Mr. Mackes said the total cost is \$3.7 million and the county has already budgeted in the Capital Budget to go to bond market \$1.5 million with \$450,000 from the Tourism fund balance. He said that he may need \$350,000 to finish the project with a hope that the state will budget \$850,000 in next

year's budget along with the \$1 million that he received from the state should complete the project. Mr. Culver asked if the site work will be too expensive and said this may be free but the farm by soccer fields could be bought easily and would not need mitigation. Mr. Mackes said the county wants a continuous complex. He said the City of Salisbury was very open to this concept and said the spirit of cooperation was wonderful.

Mrs. Bartkovich asked if the mitigation was 1:1 to which Mr. Parker said mitigation is only required if the county can't meet the requirements on site to which he feels the county will meet the requirement. He said however, if they have to do off site it will be done on a 2:1 basis.

Mr. Hall asked how deep the Paleo Channel is to which Mr. Frank McKenzie, Planning and Zoning said there is 160 feet of soil from the top of the surface to the bottom of the channel in that one area.

Mr. Culver asked for a break down of the funding to which Mr. Mackel said the funding is in the Capital Improvement Program. Mr. Strausburg said they will provide a breakdown.

A public hearing will be held on this.

Open Work Session Adjourned.