



**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**



Kent County Community Center * 11041 Worton Rd., Worton * MD 21678

November 21, 2022, at 6:00 PM

MINUTES

In Attendance: Jill Coleman, Director; Mary Fisher, Chair; Faye Little, Vice Chair; Penny Usilton, Member; Greg Welch, Jr., Member; Guest Speaker Jim Bogden; and Sandy Adams, Clerk.

Absent: Melinda Bookwalter, Melissa Cannon, Commissioner Bob Jacob, Nivek Johnson, Joyce Moody, and Mike Moulds.

MINUTES

The minutes from the May 16, 2022, meeting have been approved by the Board electronically.

GUEST SPEAKER(S):

Jim Bogden, Chair of the Chestertown Recreation Commission, was a guest speaker at the meeting. Mr. Bogden asked to meet with the Board to discuss bicycle tourism and how the County can benefit by expanding its rails-to-trails system throughout the County. Mr. Bogden is seeking the Board’s consideration for amending the Land Preservation Parks Recreation Plan (LPPRP) (Executive Summary/Trails/Page 4), which identifies the following:

- “Work with DNR and other interested parties to continue to investigate continuation of the Gilchrest Trail, the additional four miles to Worton, and other longer trail options.”

Mr. Bogden said the Commission is requesting to amend the language from 4 miles to 25 miles, and he expressed the following:

- The Chestertown Recreation Commission has a \$2,000 annual budget and cannot make the proposed project come to fruition without the help from others.
- The 25-mile expansion would connect and bring economic development to 8 towns across the county.
- The 25-mile expansion would improve residents’ health and enhance the quality of life.
- Currently resident children cannot get around to use the County’s facilities without their parents transporting them.
- The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC) is projecting to build bike pathways throughout the Eastern Shore.
- Delaware and Virginia have bike routes all over their state, but Maryland does not.
- There is 37% more federal and state funding available this year compared to last year.
- Electric bikes (aka eBikes) are becoming more common, and many states have their own subsidies for eBikes.
- Many people want bike trails.
- A federal report shows by the end of 2018, there were 343 identified rails with trails within the U.S. totaling 917 miles in 47 states.
- A 25-mile expansion (in lieu of the 4-mile expansion that is currently identified in the LPPRP) could run through Lynch, Kennedyville, Massey, up to Golts, and down to Millington.
- A 25-mile expansion of the trails would provide economic opportunities for new take-out food businesses and sandwich shops.

- Without further expansion of the trails in Chestertown, there will never be a safe place for bikes.

A discussion ensued amongst the board members with regards to how much the project would cost the County; how current businesses are having to close due to the lack of employees; schools having to close due to the decrease in the number of children attending Kent County schools; and safety concerns for children riding bike trails without adult supervision. One member commented that the expansion project could be a great idea if it were at no cost to the County.

In closing, Mr. Bogden said a feasibility study is needed for determining the cost to build and maintain the project. He said he is seeking the Board's guidance on how to proceed with getting the project adopted and moving forward. Mr. Bogden said in speaking with the person in charge of the railroads at the state level, he learned that the County would need to apply for permits and show that they are behind the project.

The Board lacked a quorum for voting at the meeting. Mr. Bogden was informed of the next board meeting date/time.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Fisher called the board meeting to order at 6:43 pm.

Jill Coleman introduced herself as the new Director of Kent County Department of Parks and Recreation and gave some background information on herself. Ms. Coleman welcomed everyone at the meeting and thanked everyone for their service to the Board.

OLD BUSINESS

Recreation

Full Time Staff Updates (Old and New)

- Ms. Coleman gave the following updates on departmental full-time staff:
 - The department is down three full-time staff positions: the Recreation Supervisor position which she said might be reclassified to a Deputy Director position; and two Facility Monitor positions. She announced that there is one potential applicant for the Facility Monitor position.

FY22 Capital Projects

- Ms. Coleman announced that she is working on submitting a Request for Proposal (RFP) for pool replastering: Millington's pool needs to be completely replastered, and the kiddie pool and shallow end of the main pool at the Community Center needs replastering. The cost allocated to replaster the Millington pool is \$45,000, and the Community Center pool is \$35,000. The goal is to have the County Commissioners approve the bids in February and to start the work in the April/early May timeframe.

Parks and Recreation Website Rebuild Update

- Sandy Adams informed the Board that the Department migrated its website to a new platform called "Joomla." She said the new platform is easier to navigate and overall, more user friendly. She asked the members to let her know if they encounter any problems when navigating the site.

Fall/Winter 2022/2023 Schedule of Programs & Activities

- Ms. Coleman announced the programs that are being offered in the fall and winter seasons:
 - Senior Hike (New/for 55 years & Better): Wayne Gilchrest heads up the program with a tour, the history of Turners Creek, and a hike.
 - Youth Basketball in partnership with Queen Anne's County: The program has been successful.
 - Washington College Softball Clinic: 40+ kids participated.
 - Fall Festival at Lockbriar Farms (partnered with Kent County Health Department): There were many activities, and over 300 people attended the event.

- Doggie Palooza in partnership with the Animal Care Shelter of Kent County: Each year more and more participants attend. This year approximately 25-30 were in attendance.
- The Fall Nature Hike and Bird Feeder program at Turners Creek: This event is for youth and parents.
- The Punt, Pass, Kick event (partnered with Kent County Spartans Football): Approximately 50 children participated in the event.
- Bus Trip: A Day in New York City (December 10th): This trip is upcoming, and the event is sold out.
- Platform Tennis
- Pickleball
- Indoor Soccer
- Ping Pong
- After School Care: Offered at each of our elementary school locations.
- Before School Care: Offered at the Rock Hall Elementary School (only), and only three children signed up/attend. Next year there will be a minimum attendance requirement in order to proceed with the program.
- Kids Night Out: The program is offered at the Community Center (Fridays/once a month from 5:30 – 8:30 pm) starting in October and ending in March.
- Tots of Fun (0-5 years old) in partnership with the Judy Center and Kent Family Center: 15-30 participants usually attend.
- Kids Care program: During virtual learning days, parents can bring their kids to the Community Center for the day, so that they do not have to take off from work; approximately 10 children attended.
- Registration is still open for Junior Wrestling; approximately 56 kids have already registered, and there are 11 coaches.
- Grab and Go Activity Bag (Ages 5-10): The activity bags are given out the first Tuesday of each month, and the program runs from November – February.
- Start Smart program (3-5 years old): This is a child/parent participation program where we offer the fundamental skills for soccer, basketball, baseball, and football.
- Santa's Workshop (Ages 12 – under) in partnership with the Kent County Health Department: This is a free event and will be held on Friday, December 9th, from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm, at the Community Center.
- Letters to Santa: Children are invited to mail Santa a letter to the Community Center, or to drop off the letter in the drop box located in the front of the Community Center. Each child will receive a letter back from Santa before Christmas.
- Winter Holiday Camp: When schools are closed during the holiday break, parents can bring their children to the Community Center to be cared for during the day, so that they can go to work.

Ms. Coleman said the search for new programs is on-going. She said staff is looking for more programs to offer during the day for seniors and children under 5, since the majority of these two age groups are not in school. Ms. Coleman welcomed the board members to drop by the Community Center to participate in the programs, to see how they function, to promote them, or to just offer some tips on how to improve them.

Aquatics Staffing Management

- Ms. Coleman announced that Aquatic Management Systems (AMS), the full-service company that was awarded the contract to supply lifeguards and maintain the County's pools during the past summer season, fell short of meeting the County's expectations. She said there were constant issues pertaining to lifeguard staffing, balancing the chemicals in the pools, and overall problems that they could not solve. Ms. Coleman said she will meet with her program coordinator to discuss options for the 2023 pool season. She said one option will be to hire a different pool management company; and the other option would be to hire another company to maintain the pools while Parks and Recreation staffs and manages the lifeguards. Ms. Coleman said staff will weigh the pros and cons of each option and ask the Board for their input at its February meeting.

Parks

Local Parks & Playground Infrastructure Grant Projects Status

County Parks:

- Ms. Coleman said the following renovations and projects have been approved for LPPI funding:

Betterton Beach:

- A boardwalk replacement.
- An ADA extension that will go down to the beach.
- New park benches.

Millington Park:

- The tennis courts will be resurfaced.
- Lining for tennis and pickleball.
- The parking lot will be repaved and lined with parking spots.
- The basketball court posts, and the back board will be replaced.
- The half court will be lined.

Worton:

- The restroom will be renovated.
- The spectator bleachers will be replaced on Orem Field.
- The dugouts will be replaced on Orem Field.
- The ballfield fencing will be replaced; and sunshades, park benches, and a digital message sign will be added.

Town of Betterton:

- Basketball courts will be refurbished.
- Tennis Courts will be refurbished and lined with pickleball.

Town of Chestertown:

- A small playground will be added at Carpenter Park; it will be ADA accessible.

Town of Galena:

- Five new park benches.
- New charcoal grills: one grill will be ADA accessible.
- The lower field in Toal Park: Ballfield fencing, and park benches will be added.

Town of Millington:

- The Town is designing a site plan for soccer fields, a possible basketball court, and a walking trail with skateboard curbing.

Town of Rock Hall:

- Park benches, picnic tables, and grills will be added at the Rock Hall Civic Center.
- A boardwalk extension and upgrade, new gazebo, benches, picnic table, and a grill will be added at Ferry Park Beach.

NEW BUSINESS

Recreation

Bylaws

- Ms. Coleman asked the members to review the Board's bylaws for updating at the next meeting. She said moving forward, the County Commissioners request that the Board become

more self-sufficient and conduct all meetings in accordance with the bylaws.

Other

Advisory Board Member Terms (Expiration)

- Ms. Coleman announced that six members are termed to expire, and two members have announced their resignation. Ms. Fisher, Ms. Little, and Mr. Welch said they are interested in renewing their term, and Ms. Usilton said she will be happy to stay on until her replacement is found. Ms. Fisher said she feels it is important for a student to serve on the board. Ms. Coleman agreed that their input is needed, and she said she will continue to search for student representation on the Board.

REPORTS

Chair/Toal Park:	Mary Fisher Nothing to report
Vice-Chair/Worton Park:	Faye J. Little Nothing to report
Bayside Landing Park:	Penny Usilton No report
Betterton Beach:	Greg Welch No report

Ms. Coleman thanked the Board for their continued service.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Usilton made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. Little seconded the motion; the motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, February 13, 2023