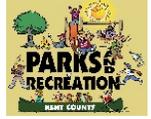




**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**



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

Microsoft Teams Video Conference  
February 8, 2021 at 6:00 PM

**MINUTES**

In Attendance: Melinda Bookwalter, Myra Butler, Melissa Cannon, Kate Ervin, Mary Fisher, Commissioner Bob Jacob, Faye Little, Joyce Moody, and Jim Wright.

Absent: Nivek Johnson, Penny Usilton and Greg Welch.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Fisher called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

**Approval of Minutes**

November meeting minutes were approved electronically via Doodle poll on November 22, 2020.

**New Member Announcement**

Ms. Butler announced that Mr. Bryan Williams' term as the Kent County Public Schools' Board of Education representative ended on December 31, 2020 and Mr. Nivek Johnson is the new representative as of January 1, 2021. Due to a schedule conflict, Mr. Johnson was unable to attend this evening's meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Recreation**

**COVID Building Modifications**

- Building modifications were completed at the Community Center and Millington Pool.
- In November staff inquired about interests of pickleball and ping pong players to resume indoor play for programs. Responses received were specific to the Center's air filtration system (if improvement will be made) and that the level of comfort to return indoors wouldn't be the case until the COVID vaccine was widely distributed.
- Mr. Wright advised the County is seeking advice on options for improving air quality. At present, filters are being cleaned more frequently. The County is also looking into a suggestion for installation of UV lighting that has been proven to be effective in killing the virus.

**Kent County Family YMCA Update**

- Ms. Butler met with YMCA Executive Director, Robbie Gill, regarding programs YMCA will offer and the possibility of collaborating and partnering.
- YMCA construction is expected to conclude in Spring 2022. The 52,000 square feet, two-story building will have an indoor pool, double gymnasium, walking track, wellness center with fitness room, meeting rooms, and programs for all ages.
- YMCA offers Lifeguard Certification classes. Ms. Butler inquired if YMCA would consider extending classes to anyone seeking certification and not only for YMCA employees. Mr. Gill seemed open to the idea but did not commit to any agreement.
- Ms. Butler and Mr. Gill plan to meet on a monthly basis going forward.

**Digital Messaging Monitors**

- Messaging monitors were installed in December and programmed in January.
- Staff is working with IT for content for messaging.

## **Youth Sports Equipment Grant**

- There were no requests for funding received by the February deadline. All youth sports programs were cancelled in 2020 due to COVID and uncertainty remains for 2021 programs as it is too early to make decisions about offerings at this point.
- Ms. Butler suggested that the deadline to submit funding for the current fiscal year be extended to late Spring to allow leagues additional time to apply for assistance due to many not knowing this early in the year if they will offer programs in 2021.
- Ms. Fisher made a motion to extend the Youth Sports Equipment Grant submission deadline to a date Ms. Butler felt was appropriate that would ensure funds will be distributed prior to the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Bookwalter seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

## **Betterton Beach Trashcan Art Design Contest**

- Kent Cultural Alliance is recruiting artists to complete the trash can stenciling in March, followed by a community volunteer day to paint the cans.
- Betterton Beach Clean Up is scheduled for April 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Betterton Beach bath house reopening ribbon cutting is scheduled to take place during the event.

## **Summer 2021 Planning**

- Staff is recruiting Lifeguards, Betterton Beach Supervisors, Camp Counselors and Directors, Concessions Attendants and Pool Cashiers.
- 32 invitations to apply for summer employment were sent to Summer 2020 applicants in December. Only eight responses were received that indicated interest in returning this summer. It is anticipated that lifeguard recruitment will be a challenge as many found other employment last summer due to the COVID shut down of programs. Most camp staff expressed interest in returning.
- Staff is awaiting guidelines for swimming pool and summer camps operations. Both are regulated by Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) under the authority of the Health Department.

## **Parks**

### **Special Park Use Policy**

- Since COVID, there have been numerous requests for use of park space to offer fee-based participation in activities led by private instructors (fitness classes and conditioning classes) and, for larger special events that would require use beyond a pavilion rental. These requests are for areas that are not traditionally used for exclusive use (ballfields, athletic fields, pavilion, etc.). There has also been numerous fee-based uses without authorization from Parks and Recreation. As defined in the Park Use Regulations approved by the Advisory Board in February 2020, commercial activities (including instructional classes) are not permitted without approval from the Department. Ms. Butler advised that there was a need for a permit approval process and minimal fee to ensure responsible use of parks and for there to be some level of control of knowing what is taking place in County parks. This will also eliminate conflicts with reserved use, as unless there is an exclusive use rental of a space, use is open on a first come first served basis.
- Staff is currently working on drafting a special use rental policy that would allow requests for non-traditional use of space. Queen Anne's County has a special park use policy and charges a nominal fee range of \$10-\$20 per hour. Ms. Butler will implement similar guidelines to be implemented for the upcoming park season that begins in April,

## **Other**

### **Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) Update**

- The Department of Natural Resources has requested mapping revisions and a few additional minor revisions to the Plan. Once the Plan is approved, work will immediately begin on the next

Plan which will be due by July 1, 2022.

- Invitations will be sent to community partners and stakeholders, town officials, Advisory Board members, along with participation from County departments, to develop a local team to aid in developing the 2022 Plan. Ms. Butler advised that input and engagement from the Board as part of the local team has not been a practice of the past but would be requested going forward as Advisory Boards should be part of the update and planning process. The effort must also include a much higher level of public input through focus groups, public input meetings, and a public survey on parks and amenities throughout the County that are inclusive of town and state facilities.
- The County plans to hire a consultant for the 2022 Plan to ensure all components of the Plan are satisfied, the Plan is submitted on time, and so it can be facilitated by an experienced park and planning firm that specializes in assisting Parks and Recreation agencies with their planning efforts for development, preservation and use of parks and open spaces.
- Funding for park development projects must be in line with what is outlined in the LPPRP and going forward. Counties will be expected to move forward projects that are consistent with the Plan.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Recreation**

#### **Program Coordinator Vacancy**

- Ms. Chanelle Copper separated from the County in late December to pursue another employment opportunity.
- Interviews were held for the vacancy in January and a hire recommendation was forwarded to the County Commissioners for their approval. Staff is awaiting pre-employment requirement clearance results for the candidate.

#### **Kent County Health Department Vaccination Clinics at KCCC**

- Kent County Health Department will be utilizing the Community Center on February 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and starting February 22<sup>nd</sup>, vaccination clinics will operate four days per week. At this time there are no Fridays, evenings or Saturdays scheduled for clinics but based on the number of doses received and the demand, the schedule could increase.
- The Health Department anticipates administering approximately 600 vaccines per day.

#### **Operational Status Changes**

- Staff will observe the vaccination clinic operations the first two days to assess the ability to accommodate fitness room and computer room reservations during clinic hours of operation.
- If it is not feasible to allow use of fitness equipment and computer room use during clinic operations, use will be permitted after the clinic concludes each day. Use of the amenities will be permitted throughout the full day on any day a clinic is not offered.

#### **Virtual Programs and Activities**

- Parks and Recreation created a new page on Facebook for all things virtual and has increased the level of virtual programs offered on the page.
- All fitness classes are currently offered virtually. Staff is working on obtaining additional music licenses for copyrighted music for which a license may not already cover. Annual fees are currently paid to three music licensing entities. If a license to use music is not in place for a song, the song could be flagged by the owner of the music rights which would then mute the song during a class.
- The Department partners with Kent County Library and Kent Judy Center to offering the Tots of Fun program virtually.
- Staff will also begin offering a weekly video that highlights activities to try at home (craft,

game, sports, scavenger hunts, etc.) and parks and amenities. The goal is the stay engaged with patrons while we still navigate through COVID without our normal program offerings.

## **Parks**

### **Turners Creek Park National & Historic Tree Grove Restoration**

- County staff is working with Mr. Wayne Gilchrest of Sassafras Environmental Education Center (Eastern Shore Land Conservancy) to restore and enhance the national and historic tree grove at Turners Creek. Education Center intern, Jack Wilson, and Mark Dixon of DPW's Parks and Ground Maintenance division have met to discuss the layout of the trees and a new sign with the layout of the grove.

### **Park Concessionaire Annual Request for Proposals**

- In the past, there were a larger number of teams affiliated with youth and adult sports leagues. Over the years participation has declined and despite the ongoing decline, Parks and Recreation has continued to solicit requests for proposals for concessionaire sales at Worton Park (and Betterton Beach) each year. No proposals have been received for more than five years for either location.
- Ms. Butler suggested discontinuing requesting proposals and to allow youth sports leagues to sell concessions as a means for raising funds on their season opening day as well as throughout the season. Ms. Butler made a motion to discontinue making requests for proposals for concessions sales and offer leagues the opportunity to sell concessions going forward. Commissioner Jacob seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

## **Other**

### **FY2022 Budget Preparation/Process**

#### **Relationships/Communication with Municipalities**

- Ms. Butler reached out to the municipalities to advise them of the upcoming Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan and that they would be encouraged to engage and offer in put during the process. Municipalities must have direct input to the Plan going forward.
- Ms. Butler spoke with representatives from three towns about improving County/Town relationships, collaborating in programming and the upcoming LPPRP that will require more input from towns than in the past. Ms. Butler spoke representatives from the towns of Chestertown and Betterton and also plans to contact representative in Millington, Galena and Rock Hall in the near future.

## **REPORTS**

|                         |                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Chair/Toal Park:        | Mary Fisher<br>Nothing to report    |
| Vice-Chair/Worton Park: | Faye J. Little<br>Nothing to report |
| Bayside Landing Park:   | Penny Usilton<br>No report          |
| Betterton Beach:        | Greg Welch<br>No report             |
| Melissa Cannon:         | Melissa Cannon<br>Nothing to report |
| Edesville Park:         | Joyce B. Moody<br>Nothing to report |

Turners Creek Park: Melinda Bookwalter  
Nothing to report

High School: Kate Ervin  
Kate advised a few students from the Kent County National Honor Society will be cleaning the parks for Service-Learning credits.

High School: Vacant

County Commissioner: Bob Jacob  
Nothing to report

Board of Education: Nivek Johnson  
No report

County Engineer: Jim Wright  
Nothing to report

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Fisher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 pm and Ms. Bookwalter seconded the motion.

Next Meeting – Monday, May 17, 2021