



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

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



Virtual Meeting (Microsoft Teams)
November 16, 2020 at 6:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

In Attendance: Melinda Bookwalter, Myra Butler, Melissa Cannon, Kate Ervin, Faye Little, Bryan Williams, and Jim Wright.

Absent: Mary Fisher, Commissioner Bob Jacob, Joyce Moody, Penny Usilton and Greg Welch.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 pm.

Approval of Minutes

September meeting minutes approved November 11, 2020 via doodle poll.

OLD BUSINESS

Recreation

COVID Building Modifications – Ms. Butler gave an overview of the building modifications that have been installed throughout the building as well as the health assessment and temperature checks that will be done at the front door upon entering the building. Ms. Butler shared pictures of the Community Center building modifications that include roped lanes leading to the newly installed glass partition windows at the front desk as well as a new door that will be closed so that patrons do not approach staff behind the desk. Hand sanitizing stations have been strategically placed throughout the building and two (2) new doors have been added to the hallway that lead to the administrative offices located at the rear of the building.

Mr. Wright stated that he was very pleased with KRM Construction and the staff have been great to work with.

Kent County Family YMCA Update – Ms. Butler saw where the ground-breaking ceremony took place for the new YMCA located at Dixon Valve’s new building site on the corner of Scheeler and Haack Roads. Information on social media accounts have suggested an indoor swimming pool and fitness equipment will be offered. Ms. Butler has reached out to Robbie Gill to discuss in further detail but has been unsuccessful with receiving a response.

Parks

Parks and Ground Maintenance – Mr. Wright stated staff is busy with keeping the grass mowed at the parks.

Bathhouse Renovations – Mr. Wright stated the Betterton Beach bathhouse renovations were completed. The epoxy floor was redone and there are still minor issues with draining in some areas that the contractor will be working on. The building will be winterized when floors are corrected.

Other

Advisory Board Member Terms – Ms. Butler stated that at our PRAB meeting in February 2020, Ms. Bookwalter agreed to continue to serve as Chair. Ms. Butler expressed the By-Laws state that a term cannot be more than 2 consecutive terms for members in the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Ms. Little declined to serve as Chair of the Board and agreed to remain as Vice-Chair. Ms. Bookwalter nominated Ms. Fisher to serve as Chair. Ms. Butler will contact Ms. Fisher with the proposed nomination. Upon Ms. Fisher’s response, if favorable, a doodle poll will be sent to Board members to vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Recreation

Reopening Programs & Activities – Ms. Butler stated she was very pleased with the activities and programs that are currently being offered and there are plans for additional programs in the near future. Ms. Butler explained in further detail that patrons may reserve allotted times to use the fitness room equipment and utilize the computer room. Patrons are required to register in advance for a program or class.

If there are no participants or the minimum participants needed to attend are not met, the program will be cancelled. Currently the Basketball Clinic, Fitness with a Beat and Start Smart/Soccer have been cancelled due to low or no registration.

Participation Levels – Participation levels for programs being held inside the Community Center have been low. Many residents have expressed concerns with sharing indoor spaces or having to wear masks during programs. During the first two weeks of re-opening the Community Center there were 57 visits into the building for Zumba, Tots of Fun, Pickleball and for patrons registering for programs or making payments.

CARES Funding Digital Messaging Monitors – The County building at 400 High Street will be installing monitors in the hallway outside of the County Commissioners Hearing Room to allow the community to view and hear what is going on during the meeting while maintaining social distancing before being permitted to enter the room. The Community Center is expecting to have installed a 55” monitor in the hallway leading to the meeting room and another monitor in the main hall in the vicinity of the fitness room.

Building Hours

Early Closing Consideration Recommendation – In order to enter the building, patrons have to be registered in a program or schedule an appointment in advance. Due to the controlled entry protocols and the lack of program participation it is a waste of resources, electricity and staffing to keep the building open when no one is scheduled to be onsite. With the County Administrator’s approval, the building closed after 5 pm on Veterans Day and 1 pm on Saturday since there were no reservations or participation in programs. The closing of the building will be on a case by case basis going forward.

Youth Sports Grant Funding Cycles Recommendation – Due to COVID, sports were cancelled and the organizations who would normally apply in November were not eligible to apply since they did not offer programs this year after receiving an award last fall. The County has reduced 2021 grant monies from \$20,000 to \$10,000. Typically, there are two cycles a year, Spring and Fall. Ms. Butler offered that due to the budget essentially being cut in half, it doesn’t make sense continue with two funding cycles each year. Ms. Butler recommended changing the program to one funding cycle so all requests could be considered at the same time.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the reduction of Youth Sports Grant Funding Cycles from two cycles to one cycle. Ms. Little seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Cannon made a motion to offer the Youth Sports Grant Funding Cycle in February. Ms. Bookwalter seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Teen Programming Initiatives – The department has received inquiries about programs for youth ages 14-17 (the most difficult population to get interests). Staff has been brainstorming what may pique the interest within this age group. Program staff reached out to Ms. Ervin to get input as far as program ideas for older youth. Staff would like to revisit forming a Youth Recreation Commission. In the past there seemed to be a lot of interest but when it was time to meet youth did not attend meetings.

Elementary After School Program – Public Schools are operating partially in school sessions and remotely. Ms. Butler spoke with Principal Brenda Rose at Garnet Elementary School regarding any need, want or desire for after school care. Ms. Rose stated that parents have adjusted and after school is not needed at this time as far as she is aware. Ms. Rose offered to include a question about after school care needs in the next scheduled Kent County Public School survey in December.

Website Rebuild – Ms. Thomas currently updates the website. We will be working with IT to build a web-based website that provides for easier updates and maintenance by more than one staff. The plan is to have the rebuild complete before June 30 before the Dreamweaver software is set to renew.

Community Center Pool Water Level Issue – The pool has been leaking and not maintaining the water level needed. CW Services assessed the main drains and valves and it has been determined that there is a main drain issue. Repairs will be completed as soon as possible before winter temperatures are upon us.

Staff Recruitment

Summer 2021 Planning – Staff are preparing for the Spring and Summer 2021 seasons. The department expects to face difficult challenges with recruiting lifeguards and other seasonal staff. Staff will be reaching out to the applicants that applied last year to inquire about their interest in returning to work next Summer. Staff are planning to hold a virtual job fair.

Programs & Activities – The Department is looking to partner with other swimming pool operators to offer more affordable certification classes held locally. Staff are also looking at offering a virtual session on how to become a lifeguard with an overview of qualifications and requirements to become certified and work for the County.

Parks – Mr. Wright stated there are no programs or activities currently being held at the parks. This is the off season.

Bayside Landing Pool Water Damage – Mr. Wright advised that the hot water heater malfunctioned and caused water damage to the walls and ceiling. At this time repairs and costs are being evaluated.

Facilities Winterization – Mr. Wright stated the winterization was put on hold the last couple of weeks because the weather has been nice. Winterization will resume after November 20. The pools have been winterized with the exception of the Community Center pool.

Special Park Use Policy Discussion – Over the last couple of years Worton Park has received a number of requests for large scale rentals that would not typically fall under the normal park/pavilion/athletic field use, but instead be categorized as a special park use. A Special Park Use Permit Policy will be drafted and presented to the Board in the near future.

Other – We partner with Friends of Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge in Rock Hall to hold the annual fishing derby. We used to offer separate events on back to back Saturdays. Approximately 3-4 years ago it was decided to partner and hold one event at the Wildlife Refuge. The Wildlife Refuge received a grant for the event in addition to educational classes.

The Maryland Department of Health has started the next round of regulation reviews. As it relates to environmental health specifically to our department for pool operations, the Health Department will be reviewing manufacturing of commercial pool pumps. It is expected that any changes will have a financial impact to the department.

REPORTS

Melinda Bookwalter, Chair (Turner's Creek Park):

Had the opportunity to visit and during her visit Patrick and Greg were fixing the fence.

Faye J. Little, Vice-Chair (Worton Park):

Nothing to report.

Penny Usilton, Bayside Landing Park & Pool:

No report.

Greg Welch, Betterton Beach:

No report.

Melissa Cannon, Millington Pool:

Nothing to report.

Joyce B. Moody, Edesville:

No Report.

Mary Fisher, Toal Park:

No report.

Kate Ervin, High School:

Nothing to report.

High School: Vacant

Bryan Williams:

No Report.

Jim Wright, County Engineer:

Nothing to report.

Bob Jacob, County Commissioner:

No report.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 pm.