



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



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

**August 19, 2024 at 6:00 PM
Kent County Community Center**

MINUTES

In Attendance: Rick Myers, Vice Chair; Aidan Butler, Student Representative; Jill Coleman, Member; Carrie Klein, Member; Faye Little, Member; Paige Miller, Student Representative; Joyce Moody, Member; Albert Nickerson, Member; Jane Welsh, Member; and Sandy Adams, Clerk.

MINUTES

The minutes from the May 20, 2024, meeting were approved by the Board electronically.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Myers called the board meeting to order at ~6:10 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

- Ms. Coleman introduced and welcomed Aidan Butler and Paige Miller, the Board’s two new student representatives. Aidan is going into his junior year at Kent County High School and Paige will start her senior year.
- Ms. Coleman introduced and welcomed Carrie Klein, the new deputy director for the Department of Public Works.

OLD BUSINESS

Parks

- Program Open Space (POS) and Local Parks and Playground Infrastructure (LPPI) Grant Projects Updates (Carrie Klein):
 - Fourteen benches and new sensory panels will be installed at Worton Park at the end of September. Two (2) benches will be installed at the playground and twelve (12) will be installed along the walking path around the fitness equipment.
 - The Department of Public Works (DPW) Grounds division will paint the sensory path, along the walking trail, at Worton Park.
 - DPW is in the process of preparing a bid for ballfield fencing and backstops at Toal and Worton parks. Once this bid is out, we will review the Worton restroom renovation project, but no decisions have been made yet on this project.
 - Renovation of the basketball courts at Worton Park, a FY25 POS project, has been scheduled for early spring. This project requires paving, thus the reason why it will not be done until then.
 - Dan Mattson, Director, Department of Public Works, continues to work with the engineer on the Betterton Beach boardwalk project; an update will be provided soon.
 - Notifications continue to go out to Bayside slip holders pertaining to the piers that were damaged by the most recent hurricane. Slip holders are being asked to vacate their slip while renovations are

being done. Repairs will take place November through March and the cost will be covered with grant funds.

- Two of the three playgrounds have received 6” of mulch. A playground instructor has been making inspections over the summer.
- The Turners Creek bulkhead needs repair, as well as the pavilion. A branch broke through the pavilion roof during the most recent storm and the repair will take place over the next couple of weeks.
- Two fields at Turners Creek will be converted to meadows. We are working hand-in-hand with Washington College to get this project off the ground. The Department of Public Works will take care of weed management and mowing, and Washington College will take care of most of the planning and the grant writing. If everything goes according to plan, this project will be grant funded.
- Development Updates (Jill Coleman)
 - We are still waiting for a response back from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) regarding the grant application that we submitted for the small (0.2 mile) outlook trail at Turners Creek. We are trying to make the trail ADA accessible.
 - The story walk project at Worton Park has been completed. A summer story was displayed throughout the summer and will soon be replaced with a fall story. In addition to the story walk, a sensory path will also be installed.

Recreation (Jill Coleman)

- FY24 and FY 25 Approved Capital Projects:
 - FY25: Pool furniture for the Community Center Pool and Millington Pool was received.
 - FY25: The commercial grade exercise equipment for the Community Center Fitness Room was received.
 - FY25: The (full court) basketball adjustable rims were received today. The adjustable rims will go on the main rims and can be adjusted and lowered for our youth to be able to make more baskets. Instead of shooting at 10 feet, the adjustable rims will allow them to shoot at 8 and 9 feet.
 - FY25: The two (2) new Activenet Data Card Printers have been received. These printers are used to print Facility Access Cards (FAC).
 - FY24: The new flooring has been completed at the Community Center’s Kitchen, Library, and Kids’ Room.
- Free Facility Access Cards were offered to all seasonal employees this year.
- This year, pool vouchers were offered in lieu of refunds. Pool vouchers can be used anytime during the current pool season.

NEW BUSINESS (Jill Coleman)

- Summer 2024 Attendance & Revenue Numbers are tallied daily throughout the summer and documented on a calendar. We use this information as a focal point for determining whether attendance and revenue is up or down from year-to-year.
- We struggled with lifeguards this season. We usually have 30 lifeguards to run our three pools and beach. This year we ended up with 20 lifeguards and only approximately 10 were with us full time. Moving forward my team will discuss how we can come up with a creative plan to attract more

lifeguards for the next swim season.

- The Toal Park Survey and Results have been summed up based on the survey: Top responses were as follows: A connecting trail, a dog park, pickleball courts, a restroom facility, a bigger or another parking area, and a disc golf course. One response for a soft-landing launching for kayaks and canoes would be the most difficult to accomplish since the area is not visible and would also require the Planning Department to assess prior to deciding. We will put this topic back on the November agenda for further thoughts and discussion.
- During the summer season, we encountered a broken pipe at Millington Pool. The pool had to be closed for two days to get the pipe repaired. We also had a pump overheat at Bayside. Both repairs totaled \$5,000. Fortunately, we were able to find the funds for these repairs within our current budget, instead of having to request additional funds from the Commissioners. Ms. Coleman gave kudos to her staff for being frugal with the budget.
- Ms. Coleman recommended the following Community Rental proposals for the Board to vote on:
 - A complimentary park and/or pavilion rental offered to all Kent County public service agencies for an event or picnic, subject to a deposit fee.
 - Approved by the County Commissioners: All County employees are eligible for one complimentary pavilion rental and a free Facility Access Card. In addition, if an employee rents a room at the Community Center, they will have complimentary access to the kitchen facility.
 - Kent County non-profit agencies are eligible for a 50% discount of rental costs (limited to 2 per year). Requirement: The organization's billing address must be located within Kent County.
 - Non-profit partnering agencies which are not located in Kent County but are partnering with Kent County Parks and Recreation events and programs are eligible for one complimentary rental per year.
 - All full-time Kent County Parks and Recreation and Department of Public Works' ground maintenance employees are eligible for one complimentary pavilion, Community Center rental, or athletic field rental per year.
 - Fundraisers held to aid in a (Kent County) child's medical need are eligible for an annual complimentary park or pavilion rental.
 - All Kent County departments receive a complimentary rental for parks and pavilions.
 - Outside vendors that wish to bring a new program to us, we will partner with them, advertise for them, and only charge them 50% of the rental in order to get the program up and running.
 - Kent County Public Schools do not pay rental or deposit fees; this excludes pool use.
 - All Kent County sports leagues utilizing Kent County parks are granted access to the meeting room for their league meetings and on-site registration (already in progress).
 - Any other special accommodations and pricings may be granted by the director of Kent County Parks and Recreation.

Note: All recommended proposals exclude pool use and are subject to the payment of a deposit fee.

Mr. Myers asked for a motion. Ms. Welsh made a motion to accept the recommended proposals as written and Commissioner Nickerson seconded the motion; the motion passed with all in favor.

- We ordered a duck for our new kiddie pool feature, and it has been received. Since we are at the end of our pool season, it is being saved for the 2025 swim season.

Ms. Coleman talked about the qualifications for utilizing the County's Youth Sports Equipment Grant

funds. She said you can utilize the county funds for most things that you are able to keep with the sport and use from year-to-year. She said that currently Little League Softball does not qualify for use of the grant funds because they are a Parks and Recreation program. However, she said their equipment is just as expensive as football and baseball and their little league's president has asked for the league to be considered eligible to use the funds as well. Commissioner Nickerson wanted to know what other sports currently do not qualify for use of the grant funds. Ms. Coleman said basketball, softball, volleyball, and wrestling are also Parks and Recreation programs that currently are not eligible. Commissioner Nickerson said his concern would be singling out one sport over the others, and the Board decided not to approve the request at this time.

Recreation (Jill Coleman)

- A Fall 2024 Activity Guide was provided in each board member's meeting packet. The guide informs patrons of all programs and activities that are going on during the fall. Ms. Coleman announced that, same as last year, we will offer all freshman (attending Kent County public or private schools) free Facility Access Cards during the month of September.
- Our Athletes of the Week/All Star videos have been phenomenal, and everyone loves them.
- New this year: We conducted a Water Safety Week for our 3 ½ - 5-year-old kiddie campers, and it went extremely well. A lifeguard came in and taught the kids a lesson for 30 minutes and then they practiced in the pool for 35 minutes. All lessons were pertaining to safety. The kids enjoyed it so much that they asked for two weeks next year.
- Afterschool registration is now open, and patrons are actively registering their children in the program. The program is being administered at our three elementary schools: Galena, Garnett, and Rock Hall.
- New Programming: One of our staff members is a certified First Aid/CPR instructor, and we will offer the class to the public in September. Note: The class will also be offered to the Board annually.

Parks (Jill Coleman)

- Ms. Coleman said next week she will present the idea of renaming E Diamond to "Volunteer Field" to the County Commissioners. She said she wants to honor all of our volunteers that contribute and are the backbone of our community. Ms. Coleman said that most people do not know the names and locations of the fields, so she and Ms. Klein will collaborate on signage for the fields.
- The County Commissioners approved Mr. Wayne Gilchrest's garden project at Turners Creek. Ms. Coleman said it is at a low cost to the County, as we are currently just supplying water for the tanks that are there. The garden is used for service-learning projects for our summer camp kids and the vegetables grown there are donated to the food bank. Ms. Coleman said they are currently looking for a solar well and she asked for recommendations.
- We will request POS Funds for a New Playground at Edesville Park. If approved, the funds would come from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the County would have to pay 10% of the cost. Ms. Coleman said we are currently asking for \$103,000 which is the maximum amount that can be requested. Ms. Coleman asked the Board for a vote.

Ms. Welsh made a motion to recommend using the funds for a new playground at Edesville Park and Ms. Little seconded the motion; the motion passed with all in favor.

- Ms. Coleman talked about her desire for the County to purchase the school land next to the Community Center. She said it would be a great opportunity to be able to use the space for converting it to a T-ball field for the kiddie camp kids. She said we would also like to redo and extend the playground area. She said we currently have 100-125 children that come to our summer camp annually, and it is a much safer

(grassed in) area for the kids to play.

- Ms. Klein announced that Chip MacLeod presented a proposal to build (4) sand tennis courts at Worton Park. She said they are providing \$80,000 towards the project and DPW will provide some labor and equipment, as well as materials to lower the contractor's cost. The proposal will go before the County Commissioners on August 27th. The project is being called "Beach Tennis Maryland," and the courts will be used for volleyball and beach tennis. Ms. Klein said it will be completely managed by Parks and Recreation and if approved, it will be a great addition to Worton Park.

REPORTS (All Members)

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Myers asked for a motion. Ms. Welsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Nickerson seconded the motion; the motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING: Monday, November 18, 2024 at 6:00 PM
at the Kent County Community Center**