



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

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



May 17, 2021 – Board Update Report

In lieu of the regular meeting scheduled for May 17, 2021, for which a quorum was not achieved, a written report with updates provided by Myra Butler, Director of Parks & Recreation, is outlined below.

Approval of February Meeting Minutes – A Doodle poll with a response deadline of 4:30 pm, Friday, May 22, 2021, was sent to board members to request approval of minutes for the February 8, 2021 meeting.

Old Business

Recreation

Program Coordinator (After School, Camps, Activity Classes & Special Events) – Marcus Goldman began employment with the department in late March. Marcus previously worked for Echo Hill Outdoor School, as a teacher at Radcliffe Creek School and volunteers on the Boards of Rebuilding Together Kent and Bayside HOYAS. Marcus enjoys canoeing, hiking and running in his spare time.

29th Annual Betterton Beach Clean Up – The event was held on Saturday, April 24, 2021. In addition to unveiling of trash can art designs by five winning artists, a bathhouse reopening ribbon cutting ceremony was held.

Youth Sports Equipment Grant – A Doodle poll with a response deadline of 4:30 pm, Friday, May 22, 2021 was sent to board members to request approval to award a grant in the amount \$3,984 for Shore Sticks Field Hockey.

Virtual Programming /Activities Highlights: Each week, staff post a video to its dedicated virtual activity page on Facebook (KentParksAndRecMD). Staff have highlighted all county parks including a chalked sensory path on a portion of the walking path at Worton Park. Fitness classes were held virtually through mid-May that included AM Zumba, Evening Zumba, Evening Circuit Training and Tai Chi/Qi Gong.

Parks

Special Park Use Policies – As discussed in the February meeting, a special park use policy was drafted and recently implemented. A nominal hourly rental rate ranges from \$10-\$20. On a case-by-case basis depending on the size and nature of the event, the security deposit is subject to being waived for activities such as small fitness classes. Public advertising of fee-based participation in activities in parks by instructors is not permitted.

FY21 Park Development Projects Status – Final funding approval by the Board of Public Works is expected in the next several weeks. Due to the timing of approval so late in the fiscal year, Still Pond Station Park Site/Concept Plan and replacement of Betterton Beach steps will take place in the fall.

Vaccination Clinics at KCCC – Originally anticipated to be held four days per week, however due to limited doses of vaccines received each week clinics have been held one to two days per week since February.

Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) – The 2017 Plan received approval in early May after several resubmissions over the last four year. The approval allowed the County to be able to move forward with requesting funding to hire a consultant for the 2022 LPPRP update.

2022 LPPRP – A Work Group has been established (minus Advisory Board members to date). As discussed in previous meetings, it is the hope that the Board plays a larger and more engaged role in the LPPRP update process, along with more input being required from the public and municipalities. The LPPRP will lay the foundation for future park development projects, acquisition of land and overall recreation programs/areas and as such, park development projects for which funding is requested will be required to be in line with what is outlined in the LPPRP.

Park & Planning Consultant – A recommendation to hire a consultant to facilitate the process to update the Plan was approved by the County Commissioners. Board members will receive an invitation to participate in the LPPRP Kickoff Meeting in the coming weeks (likely to be held the second or third week of June). During the Kickoff meeting an overview of the LPPRP Guidelines will be provided, dates for Work Group meetings will be established, a timeline for public engagement meetings will be provided and a draft public survey will be presented for review and discussion.

New Business

Recreation

Program Coordinator Vacancy (Sports & Aquatics) - Kieran Dunn separated from the Department in late April. The position is open until filled. We have received little interest in the position, and unfortunately, the minimum qualification required have not been met. Workforce shortages are a national issue for both full time staffing needs as well as summer seasonal help.

Summer Operations Status Overview – Board members were provided the Summer Operations Status Announcement document via email on May 14, 2021.

Programs / Activities / Facility Use – We are hopeful enough teams register to offer the Co-Ed Softball League. AM Zumba has resumed in person at Worton Park three mornings per week. The fitness room and computer room are open for use outside of when vaccination clinics are operating. As of May 17th, face coverings are no longer required to enter County buildings.

Fall 2021 Planning – We anticipate resuming indoor programs beginning after Labor Day. We are also hopeful to resume use of schools for elementary after school programs and evening youth basketball.

Parks

Summer Operations Overview

Parks & Beaches Summer Operations – Information related to parks and Betterton Beach was included in the summer operations announcement document sent to board members on May 14th.

Potential FY22 Park Development Projects – Parks and Recreation and the Department of Public Works are working on determining projects for funding through the Program Open Space Grant Program. The potential projects being considered are: Worton Park Playground & Swings, Edesville Park Swings, Bayside Pool Flooring, Betterton Beach Pavilion Roof, Ballfield Backstops, Orem Field Sideline Fencing, Ballfield Team Bench Fencing, Worton Park Pavilion Roof, Worton Park Concession Stand Roof and E Diamond Lighting or Multi-Purpose Field LED Lights Retrofit.

Other

New Park and Playground Funding (Pending State Budget Adoption) - The County is awaiting notification of additional park and playground projects' funding as part of the State's capital budget. If approved as written in the proposed budget, Kent County is slated to received \$1M in additional funding. The County Commissioners will determine how much if any of the funding will be allocated to municipalities for parks located within towns.

Mid-Shore Health Improvement Coalition – A regional approach to establish goals for measurable and meaningful health improvements in the lives of our Mid Shore residents, and communities will be established by the Coalition. While the focus will expand over time to address many common population health priorities, the shared goal for 2021 will be to address diabetes. The number of US adults diagnosed with diabetes has more than doubled in the past 20 years and in Maryland, over a third of all adults have prediabetes, the condition that often leads to diabetes. This is a call to action for local health departments and their partners. The Coalition will work to create the first Diabetes Action Plan and workgroups will meet to develop goals, objectives, and strategies across these sectors: Healthcare, Schools, Communities, and Businesses.

End of Fiscal Year Capital Purchases – The County Commissioners approved the purchase of new fitness equipment during the current fiscal year. We will add two treadmills and a rower. Additionally, pool furniture was approved to be purchased. The costs for the purchases were absorbed in the existing budget as a result of savings from programs being closed during COVID.

Next Meeting – LPPRP Work Group Kickoff Meeting Date TBD