



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

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



February 10, 2020 at 6:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

In Attendance: Melinda Bookwalter, Myra Butler, Melissa Cannon, Kate Ervin, Commissioner Bob Jacob, Greg Welch, and Jim Wright.

Absent: Mary Fisher, Faye Little, Joyce Moody, Penny Usilton and Bryan Williams.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Butler made a motion to approve the December 16, 2019 minutes as they were presented. Ms. Bookwalter approved, and Commissioner Jacob seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Bookwalter made a motion to approve the August 19, 2019 minutes as presented. Mr. Welch seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Recreation

Staff Changes & Announcements – Ms. Thomas was introduced to the attending members as the new Office Manager of Parks and Recreation. Ms. Taylor Hoffman accepted another position and relocated to pursue a teaching career as of January 3, 2020.

Recreation Program Coordinator Vacancy – Ms. Butler advised there were three applicants who applied for the position. Two applicants did not meet the minimum requirements and the other applicant was a strong candidate that met the requirements and previously worked full-time for the county some years ago. Unfortunately, the applicant declined the job offer. The Human Resources office has re-advertised for the position and the position will be advertised until it is filled. The job posting is advertised in the usual outlets for Kent County such as, Star Democrat, Maryland Jobs, and the Maryland Recreation Parks Association (MRPA) website. Human Resources received an application recently, however, the applicant does not meet the qualifications and has extremely limited experience in the field. Filling vacancies throughout the County has been a challenge even outside of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Kent County Family YMCA – In October of 2019 a public announcement was made about YMCA taking over Kent Athletic Wellness Center as of January 1st. The Dixon Group, Dick Goodall, owner, will build a new YMCA facility in Kent County. Ms. Butler originally had a meeting scheduled with the YMCA of the Upper Chesapeake Executive Director; Robbie Gill but, the day before the meeting Mr. Gill asked if the meeting could be rescheduled for the next day. Unfortunately, Ms. Butler was not available and has not been successful at securing a new date. It has been mentioned that it will be approximately two years before the new building is complete. Kent County Parks and Recreation is looking forward to working with the YMCA, in hopes that we complement one another. Kent County is a small county with several fitness facilities that could potentially be affected either negatively or positively.

Recreation Facilities Security Surveillance – Recently staff from the Parks and Recreation department and IT department assessed the security and surveillance needs at the Community Center Pool, Millington Pool and Bayside Pool. There were no concerns at Bayside Pool with the surveillance. The Community Center did have some blind spots as well as the Millington Pool. It was recommended that the Community Center have 6 additional cameras installed. It is recommended to add three more

cameras and additional computers at the Millington Pool location. Millington Pool and Bayside Pool will be equipped to support Active Net and new fencing.

Community Center Swimming Pool Repairs – A part of this years’ fiscal budget was the approval for replacing the diving board (10-year cycle), main pool feature pump and the steps at the three feet end of the pool. Originally it was thought that the entire shallow end would need to be re-plastered. It has been brought to our attention the entire shallow end just needs to be sanded and smoothed. The kiddie pool crab feature will also be replaced.

Department Fees Review & Recommendations – Kent County and neighboring county fees such as Caroline, Cecil, Talbot and Queen Anne’s Counties have been computed in a spreadsheet for comparison. The consensus is that the fees are inline with each of the neighboring counties. In reviewing the chart there were areas that warranted an increase such as the pool season passes and adding a fee for out of county residents for facility and program access. The current fee schedule has been in place since the Community Center opened 10 years ago. Increasing the rates will play a significant role in our seasonal employee salaries. The new minimum wage is now \$11.00. It is recommended that all fees be increased except for the program fees that were increased in the last three years. Discussion ensued regarding the minimum wage increase and seasonal employee salaries as well as the full-time employee salaries.

After some discussion Ms. Bookwalter made a motion to raise the seasonal/annual fees by 10%, except for the fees that were increased in the last three years and leave the daily drop-in fees alone. Ms. Cannon seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Millington Pool Facility Access Pool Pass –The Kent County Commissioners requested the fee recommendation at the time of approval be revisited and brought back to the Commissioners. Members discussed new rates for approval.

Youth Scholarship Awards – Scholarships are given to children whose families qualify and reside in Kent County. The scholarships that are awarded are either 50% or 100% of the registration costs. Ms Butler is not recommending any changes to the current policies.

Discussion regarding out of county fees for Millington Pool ensued. Access to Millington Pool and Bayside Pools are free to Kent County residents. Recommendations for Millington Pool facility were as follows:

- Out of County residents will obtain an access pass (\$5.00 each / 12 years old or older).
- Daily fee of \$5.00 / drop in or \$65 / individual season pass (3 years old and older).
- \$200 family of 4 / \$25 additional member of same household) a season.

Ms. Bookwalter made a motion to approve recommendations as follows:

- Out of County residents will obtain an access pass (\$5.00 each / 12 years old or older).
- Daily fee of \$5.00 / drop in or \$65 / individual season pass (3 years old and older).
- \$200 family of 4 / \$25 additional member of same household) a season.

Mr. Welch seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

Park Regulations Review & Recommendations – The current policies are lean whereas the proposed parks regulations have been the expectation although they were not in writing. Ms. Butler gave an overview of the proposed language and rules.

After some discussion Ms. Bookwalter made a motion to approve the proposed policy with the following changes:

- Remove #23 entirely.
- Remove helium balloon language from #15.
- Add something relative to field rentals.

Commissioner Jacob seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

Park/Facility Renaming Guidelines Review & Recommendations – In August of 2019 Reverend Ruben Freeman inquired about renaming Edesville Community Park. Mr. Freeman was advised of the required information needed to justify the name change recommendation. Mr. Freeman has not gotten back to Ms. Butler with any new information.

After some discussion regarding the process and procedures, Ms. Bookwalter made a motion to approve the Guidelines for Naming and Renaming Parks, Park Structures and Facilities as written. Mr. Welch seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

May 18, 2020, Tour of Parks & Facilities – Ms. Butler stated normal business would be conducted during the tour of the facilities. The department van will be used to transport board members during the tour. A follow-up poll regarding the start time and agenda will be sent to each member to decide the time the tour will begin.

Parks

Parks & Ground Maintenance Shop – Mr. Wright stated the new Parks and Ground Maintenance shop located at the site of the old skating rink is approximately 90% complete.

Betterton Beach Bathhouse Renovation – The Betterton Beach bathhouse renovation is being constructed by the same contractor who is building the shop. The new bathhouse is well underway and will hopefully be finished by Memorial Day.

Pool Fencing Replacement Projects – Mr. Wright stated the job was awarded to Stoltzfus Fencing Company. Mr. Stoltzfus is scheduled to start the Millington Pool fence on February 24th and will move to the Bayside Pool location immediately following the completion of the Millington Pool fence. Estimated time of completion for both locations are two weeks from the proposed start date of February 24th.

Seasonal Employee Recruitment Challenges

Seasonal Park Supervisor Position – The hire of a Seasonal Park Supervisor was approved in the FY20 Budget. Ms. Butler gave an overview of the duties and responsibilities of the position. Ms. Butler advised there has been feedback as to the proposed salary being too low. There was interest on social media, however, the position was not filled, and despite advertising efforts, no applications were received last Summer. At this time the Department of Public Works will continue to keep the Beach clean and maintain the bathrooms.

Betterton Beach has become more popular over the last few years which has caused increased issues with parking and a capacity overload. It has become increasingly more difficult to enforce established rules and regulations due to the volume of attendance and use of the beach due to not having a Park Supervisor. Residents have taken to social media outlets to express their concerns and their unwillingness to visit the beach due to the overcrowding. Former Congressman Gilchrest (member of the Town of Betterton's Town Council) met with Ms. Butler to discuss his idea of Betterton residents assisting the County with educating patrons on the rules and policies. The hope is that with a better understanding of why the policies are in place, rather than a forceful hand of enforcement without explanation, beachgoers would comply more with the rules. Ms. Butler and Mr. Wright met with the Betterton Town Manager and Council members to discuss Mr. Gilchrest's ideas further. A more finetuned plan and approach as to how the partnership might work will be revisited.

In 2014 the County Commissioners approved the Betterton Beach Bathhouse hours to be 8 am - 8 pm however, the facilities remain unlocked all season. Ms. Butler announced the renovated bathhouse will be locked before and after hours. Board members suggested the bathhouse hours coincide with the

supervisor and lifeguard shifts from 10 am - 6 pm.

Discussion ensued regarding the bathhouse hours and potentially adding portable toilets that would be located near the boat ramp. There is a plan to have surveillance cameras installed around the bathhouse.

Program and Facility Staff – Ms. Butler advised that last year there were challenges with recruiting staff that were at least 21 years of age and who could meet preemployment requirements. We are hopeful that this year we are not challenged with the same issues, otherwise we would potentially not offer some programs.

Advisory Board Organizational Items

Election of Officers – The term of officers is two years and the officer cannot serve more than two-consecutive years. Ms. Bookwalter suggested to keep what is current and re-visit in November. All in attendance agreed.

By-Laws Update Status – Back in August the Board approved some changes to the By-Laws, however, there was one piece in the By-Laws that conflicted with the *Code of Public Laws of Kent County*, which was the number of members on the Board. Per the Code, The Board is required to have 11 members, but the current Board has 13 members. There are several changes needed to the *Code of Public Laws of Kent County* that will be scheduled to be presented to the County Commissioners in the future rather than individually by departments.

NEW BUSINESS

FY21 Budget

Minimum Wage Increase – This year's budget and next year's budget regarding seasonal employees' salaries will be impacted by the minimum wage increase. Ms. Butler plans to request all Seasonal Salaries be increased by the same 9% that several positions under \$11.00/hr. increased to as of January 1st.

Recurring Capital Purchases – Other than the recurring and capital purchases such as pool furniture and potential exercise equipment phase out. Ms. Butler doesn't plan to request new funding due to the significant impact Seasonal Salaries will have on the budget.

Community Center Building Hours Expansion – Ms. Butler advised the board that due to the impact of the budget; this would not be the year to request hours of operation to be extended. This recommendation will be presented in a future budget request.

Youth Basketball League Considerations – Participant numbers have decreased which is more than likely associated with Kent County School enrollment declining. Recently staff met with Queen Anne's County Parks and Recreation to discuss merging our leagues. We have a few situations where age divisions may only have two teams, therefore it isn't a very meaningful experience for kids to keep playing the same teams over and over. Our department currently reached out to Queen Anne's and Caroline County, The Christian Academy and Kent School to schedule basketball games against their teams. Queen Anne's County was open to and welcomed the suggestion to merge leagues. Kent County's youth softball, lacrosse, and football leagues also play other counties as part of their schedule.

Summer 2020

Staffing Needs – We received quite a few applications for summer employment. Aquatics facilities need a minimum of 30 lifeguards for the season. Currently there is not adequate staff to allow for lifeguards to be on duty Monday – Wednesday at Betterton Beach and Millington and Bayside Pool locations. Additional summer camp counselors, pool cashiers, and concession stand staff are needed. Facility monitors at the Community Center are at a minimum and we are recruiting additional staff for weekends.

Schedule of Programs & Activities – We are currently working on the upcoming summer programs

and activities. A draft will be complete the first week of March and a copy will be sent to Advisory Board members.

Co-Ed Softball League – Kent County Parks and Recreation will resume administering the Kent County Co-Ed Softball League. For the past 6 or 7 years the league was administered by an independent volunteer group. Unfortunately, the person who had been the league president passed away. The Board’s members asked if Kent County Parks and Recreation would take the responsibility back and we will.

Cornhole League – There has been some interest in starting a Cornhole League. We are in the process of working out the details regarding a league. The Millington Volunteer Fire Company has a cornhole program January – May. It is our intent to not compete with the Millington Fire Co. and look to offer programming outside of their designated times.

Department Website – In the coming months the County’s IT department will be rebuilding our website behind the scenes. Currently, we use a program (Dreamweaver) that uses html codes whereas if we use a web-based program more employees would be able to make updates and keep the website current.

Betterton Beach Trash Can Art Design Contest – Town Manager of Betterton suggested the idea to promote a clean beach and environment. A total of 30 entries were received. The contest ended January 3rd. The Town Administrator of Betterton, Kent Cultural Alliance formally Kent Arts Council Director and Ms. Butler met to review the entries. The drawings were numbered so that no one knew who had drawn the picture. There will be a total of 15 trash cans stenciled and painted by the High School National Honor Society, Arts Program prior to the unveiling of winning designs and artists at the 28th Annual Betterton Beach Clean-up.

Parks

FY21 Budget – Mr. Wright, County Engineer; advised the members of the Board that additional equipment and items needed for the new shop were submitted for the budget. Mr. Wright stated he would like to request a formal overall site plan for Still Pond that would include a feasibility study regarding the shoreline preservation. Mr. Wright also stated the Betterton Beach stairway needs repair or replaced entirely.

County Updates

Vehicle Lease Program – Ms. Butler advised the board members the County entered a contract with Enterprise to lease all new county vehicles for a period of 5 years.

Logo Branding – The County is in the process of updating the County’s Logo. The new logo will be more uniform and in-line with neighboring counties whose individual departments consistently use the same logo representing the county rather than individual departments.

Other

Call-In Meeting Attendance – Ms. Butler announced the meeting is accessible through Call-In. Discussion of the ability to call in to the meeting via phone for any member that is unable to attend. This would allow for a quorum and the ability to attend the meeting without being physically present at the meeting.

REPORTS

Melinda Bookwalter, Chair:
Nothing to report.

Faye J. Little, Vice-Chair:
No report.

Melinda Bookwalter, Turner’s Creek:
Nothing to report.

Faye J. Little, Worton Park:
No report.

Penny Usilton, Bayside /Ingleside:
No report.

Greg Welch, Betterton Beach:
Nothing to 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

Bob Jacob, County Commissioner:
Nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 pm.