

CHESAPEAKE PARKS, RECREATION AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

August 1, 2019

Chairman Holt called the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board to order at 6:31 pm.

Members Present:	Christine Arrasate, Derek Bennett, Rick Bruner, Jean Carideo (non-voting ex-officio/GBBWHF), Chelsea Hall, Kayleigh Hamel (non-voting Youth Liaison), Jean Holt (Chairman), Jennifer Hoover, Annette Kelley, Mike Kos (Vice Chairman), Bob Leedom, Phyllis Lewter, Geral Stukes, and Troy Thorn (non-voting ex-officio/CCC)
Members Absent:	Chuck Anderson, Kevin Cole (non-voting ex-officio/CPS), Susan Dixon, Dani Feret, Berkley Gibbs, Lindy Huber, Melissa Randall, and Chris Lowie (non-voting ex-officio/GDSNWR)
Staff Present:	Monica Christiansen, Thurman Diamond, Kim Murden, Ray Wharton and Cori Fuqua

ROLL CALL

Ms. Fuqua called roll. The attendance roster reflected a quorum with 10 voting members present and 9 voting members absent. Ms. Stukes arrived late (after the approval of the meeting minutes) which then made it 11 voting members present and 8 voting members absent.

MINUTES:

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Mr. Leedom asked that the June minutes be corrected to reflect the location of the next meeting on August 1st at the Indian River Community Center, not the Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Museum/Visitor Center. Mr. Kos made a motion to approve the June 6, 2019 minutes as corrected. Ms. Hoover seconded the motion. The corrected minutes were unanimously approved by the board.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

Chairman Holt welcomed the citizens attending the meeting.

1. **Marsel Mason:** Youth football coach (Great Bridge Broncos Football). Mr. Mason brought up the following suggestions for youth football and basketball:
 - a. Keep punt rushing and returning punts in the game, especially for the age group that will be moving up to the Junior level (which is just like high school). These players will need the exposure, real experience and practice before moving up. Not letting them get any experience before moving up to the Junior level is like

- letting them drive for the first time on I-64 instead of getting a little practice driving on regular streets first. He would like to propose having 7 rushers instead of 11.
- b. Increase top weight limit for 13-year-olds playing football. It's now at 115 which is the lower level for midget. Would like to see it move up to at least 125.
 - c. Would like to see the city look at other basketball uniform options please.
2. **David Lane**: Youth football coach (Junior). Mr. Lane brought up the following suggestions for youth football:
 3. Recommends that midget weights stay the same. But increase maximum weight limit from 115 to 145 lbs.-150 lbs. for Juniors (10-13 year olds) so they are all the same. Weight ranges are beginning of season/end of season. The Pop Warner JV League (10-13 year olds) max weights are 155 -164 lbs. and their Older Lighter (13 year olds) is 135 – 144 lbs. Other area city/county leagues have the same or unlimited weights. He presented medical and league studies to back up his recommendation. He also requested that the board vote tonight so that the rule change could take effect this fall.
 4. **Greg Buenviaje**: Youth football coach (Junior). Mr. Buenviaje brought up the following suggestions for youth football:
 - a. He also requested the same weight limit change for 13-year-olds as Coach Lane and said it would make a big difference in participation numbers. They keep requesting this year after year and don't understand why Chesapeake refuses to change it when every other city has. Would love to see this made a priority.
 5. **Kevin Rowe**: Western Branch youth basketball. Mr. Rowe brought up the following suggestions for basketball:
 - a. Said that the jerseys worn for basketball look like soccer jerseys and would like to see jerseys that look like basketball jerseys. The kids would be able to move better in a basketball jersey.
 - b. Also, his main concern is gym space. His team has to share with another team and it's crowded and doesn't allow them to learn full court skills during practice. Or it would be good if shared practice times are with another team at same age level so second half of practice could be "game" practice.

Ms. Stukes, the Chairman of the Rules Committee, arrived and apologized for being late.

Questions to coaches, discussion, and other comments from the board:

- **Regarding the punting, you have seven players on the line and one back to receive the punt, where would the other three players be?** Mr. Mason said that the seven on the line would be down in a 3-point stance so you would know who would be rushing.

- **How many kids are not able to participate due to the current weight limit?** Mr. Lane responded that he has three that he knows of right now but knows there are several others. Every team out there has a couple. Teams have so few players that if someone is hurt, sick or just absent, you are forfeiting the game. And we've been told that these players can go elsewhere to play or play middle school ball, but those are not options for many of these kids.
- **How light is the youngest player on the team?** Mr. Lane said he had an 85 lb. player and a 145 lb. player which is a 60 lb. difference but it's the same difference as the midget league (55/120). The studies show that it's the older kids that tend to have injuries, not the younger, lighter ones. Also, a 12-year-old can be up to 145, but a 13-year-old only up to 115? That seems really wonky.
- **It doesn't make sense that a 13-year-old should have to weigh 30 lbs. less than a 12-year-old. Is there someone on the board that can address that?** Ms. Stukes responded that it was experience as much as weight. Mr. Lane responded that wouldn't that same logic also apply then to the midget group?
- **What is the opposition? Why are we opposed to changing it?** Ms. Stukes said we're not opposed to it and that it will definitely be reviewed again but there are many factors that are considered. We try and make things work for as many people as possible. Even if we did change it, we'd be right back here next year dealing with it again.
- **When was the weight rule last changed?** Two or three years ago. A 5 lb. buffer was added to the maximum for tournament playoffs.
- **When was the last time the weight rule changed for during the season, not just for tournament play?** Mr. Lane said he has been coaching for seven years and has not seen a change other than the 5 lb. playoff addition. Even the 5 lbs. is still not enough.
- **Hampton is shown as having unlimited weights. Is there any data on the injuries?** Mr. Lane said no, he couldn't find any data on that for Hampton. But the studies on injuries for age/weight limits vs. no weight limits found that there were basically no differences. 75-80% of leagues are age-based, no weight limits. In the past seven years, coaching two teams per year, he has only had one "season-ending" injury (minor concussion) where the player was cleared to come back, but the parent said no. Other coaches present said they had never had any in 1) eleven years and 2) two years so the coaches are doing their jobs.
- **Are we just doing this for a few kids?** Just between the three coaches here, we have seven players that could be added to the rosters. Add in the other three or four teams and you probably would have another seven. It could make the difference in not forfeiting games because you have more players.
- **Are there a lot of 13-year-olds that want to play or is it only a few?** Looking at the age bracket for football, most of them play on school teams as they get

older. The ones that don't make the school teams or don't want to play on school teams are the ones that play rec because they still want to play football. There a small handful of players on the rec teams that play both. But we really have no idea how many are out there who would play if the weight limits allowed them to.

Ms. Holt then explained that the advisory board Rules Committee would meet separately, review and discuss all rule change proposals, review them with Mr. Barber, the Director, and then make their recommendations to the board to vote on at the next board meeting.

Mr. Lane asked why the board couldn't vote on the proposals tonight so rule changes could be effective immediately for this coming season. Ms. Christiansen responded and said that the structure of the rules committee is set in the bylaws so immediate approval tonight is not possible. The process is set up for rules review on a yearly basis and any changes that are approved would take effect in January for the entire next calendar year for all sports that take place during that year.

Mr. Lane asked about the review process – did all requests make it to the board for a vote or were some disqualified beforehand? Ms. Stukes responded that the Rules Committee presents its recommendations for all requested rule changes to the board and the board then votes on them.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

Chairman Holt welcomed new members Jean Carideo, the ex-officio member representing the Great Bridge Battlefield and Waterways History Foundation, and Kayleigh Hamel, the youth liaison for 2019-2020.

REPORTS:

a. Committee Reports:

- Tourism Committee
 - Chesapeake Tourism Meeting Session: The meeting/visionary session was held on June 27th at 9:00 a.m. at the Conference Center. Overall it went well, and there was good representation and participation from the industry partners that attended and we received valuable feedback. From the hotel perspective, occupancy was a good measure of success and they felt that current conditions were strong in Chesapeake. They did have some concerns regarding diversification between the travel segments. Since they do rely very heavily on the government travel base, a government shutdown can have a disastrous impact so they are looking for opportunities to diversify the type of traveler that we can bring to Chesapeake. They would like to see more city-wide events like large meeting conferences.

- Chesapeake Tourism Sub-Committee: It was decided that a sub-committee would be formed to include industry partners as well as the board Tourism Committee members to have a continuing dialogue on Chesapeake tourism. The first meeting is being planned for October, then maybe quarterly after that.
- Communication: Although we try very hard to communicate with our tourism partners, it seems as though we are not being heard so we need to make some communication channel changes to re-engage with them. We are re-energizing our Tourism Connection meetings and finalizing the calendar. The meetings will be held on the 3rd Thursday of every month throughout the city and welcome any of you who can attend.
- Tourism Ambassador Program: On October 23rd we will kick off our Tourism Ambassador program with a city-wide tour to include city assets as well as businesses such as retail, restaurants, etc.
- Rules Committee: Ms. Stukes said that the committee would meet on August 21st at 6:30pm at the Great Bridge Community Center to review the rule change proposals and prepare to make recommendations to Mr. Barber and the board.

b. Ex-Officio Reports:

- Jean Carideo provided the following updates for the Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Foundation:
 - We're still celebrating the completion of Phase I and enjoying (and appreciating) the positive partnership we've always had with Parks, Recreation and Tourism.
 - The construction of the museum exhibits is in motion. Construction drawings are complete, the in-kind donations are being finalized and there is the strong possibility that painting will start next week.
 - Thanks to PR&T, the Dominion Foot Bridge has been connected with the viewing tower that looks over the marsh and museum staff have been receiving lots of positive comments about it. Since the walkway from the parking lot to the start of the footbridge is bare ground and because this park draws many seniors with mobility issues, a permeable hard surface from the parking lot to the start of the foot bridge is needed as soon as possible. Ms. Christiansen said the department was looking at
 - Lin Olsen and Elizabeth will be providing a few bullet points that all Parks, Recreation and Tourism staff can use when they provide information about the museum to visitors.
 - Advertising and tourism: The Battlefield is now listed on the American Evolution app (heritage tourism is significant in Virginia, this is an important marketing avenue), school groups from other cities are taking Docent tours

and I offer the suggestion of museum representation on the tourism subcommittee.

c. Tourism & Conference Center Report:

Ms. Murden reported on the following:

- Department Updates: There are three family reunions coming up in August that staff is working with. Also a large conference at the Conference Center with Nexcom.

d. Department Reports:

Recreation: Ms. Christiansen reported on the following:

- Fall/Winter Peake Discovery Guide: Printed copies will be distributed in the paper on Sunday, August 25th. Senior bus trips will be available for registration at 8am on Monday morning, the 26th.
- Athletic Rules: While she has no opinion on the weights, Ms. Christiansen did want to pass along that she has noticed an increase in refunds this year due to the weight restrictions but they were not for 13-year-olds, they were for 8- and 9-year-olds. Also, there are many times where there are not enough players to fill teams in certain areas (in all sports) and we try to consolidate teams. Where our frustration lies is that many people are not willing to go out of their area and drive a few more miles down the road to play, but the opportunities are there. So to clarify, we are giving people options and they are not taking advantage of them.

Grounds and Housekeeping: None for this month.

- e. **Director Update:** Since Mr. Barber could not attend this meeting so he will give his updates at the next meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- None.

HEARING OF BOARD MEMBERS:

- Mr. Hoover – Went to the overlook recently with her husband and the improvements were a pleasant surprise - it was really beautiful.
- Mr. Bennet told Kayleigh that as a youth liaison, the board values her input so don't be shy about giving feedback from the youth perspective.
- Ms. Holt – Took her dog to the Arboretum for a walk and really enjoyed it.
- Ms. Fuqua – Mr. Gibbs is working over at the Town Center Summer Concert Series so couldn't be here tonight but he wanted me to pass along the invitation to you all to come on over after the meeting if you can. If you get there before 8:30pm, your first beverage is on him!

NEW BUSINESS:

- Next Meeting Location Change: September's meeting will be held at the Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Museum/Visitor Center instead of the South Norfolk Community Center. Come out a few minutes early and check it out.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 5, 6:30 pm, at the Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Museum/Visitor Center, 1775 Historic Way, Chesapeake, VA 23320.

Minutes submitted by: Cori Fuqua, Secretary