

CHESAPEAKE PARKS, RECREATION AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Notes

October 3, 2019

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

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

ROLL CALL

Ms. Fuqua called roll. The attendance roster did not reflect a quorum with only 8 voting members present, 9 absent. No official business will be conducted. Discussion notes will be distributed at the November meeting for informational purposes.

MINUTES:

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Since a quorum was not present, approval of the August minutes has been tabled to the November meeting.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

None present.

REPORTS:

a. Committee Reports:

- **Tourism Committee** - Ms. Murden said the committee is still working through participation which has not been confirmed yet.
- **Rules Committee** - Ms. Stukes said that the Rules Committee met on August 21st at 6:30pm at the Great Bridge Community Center to review the three rule change proposals. The committee is making the following recommendations to Mr. Barber and the board:
 - **Tackle Football Weight Increase for 13-year-olds:** the committee had lots of healthy discussion on this topic and it was a difficult decision but all agreed that the weight should increase as well as keeping the 5 lb.

additional tournament allowance, but the committee could not come to an agreement as to how much weight increase to allow.

- **Punting:** Malcolm Johnson was asked by the committee to conduct a poll of the coaches on this topic. Even though the final results were very close, the majority of coaches did not want the rule to change so the committee is recommending keeping it as is.
- **Rule Interpretation Protests During Tournament Games Clarification:** The committee recommends that any clarification or change to the rule language be handled by the department.

Mr. Barber commented that the department would support an increase up to 135 lbs. for the 13-year-olds maximum weight in the tackle football program, but not increase more than that in any one year. As far as punting, we could go either way but support keeping it the same.

Ms. Stukes thanked her committee for their participation.

Since there is not a quorum present, a board vote on these recommendations is tabled until the next meeting.

b. Ex-Officio Reports:

- **Youth:** Ms. Hamel commented on the youth football weight conversation and said that finding ideal weight limits for safety consideration should be a priority, but doesn't think a 145 lb. player should be playing against an 85 lb. player.
- **Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Foundation:** Jean Carideo provided the following updates:
 - The museum exhibits are being built as we speak, there is plastic hanging from the ceiling, construction drawings are complete, permits are coming from the City, and everything is a go. Lin Olsen has been very active in acquiring in-kind donations from businesses in the city. One of the planned museum exhibits will be a replica of a 3-tun tavern. Tuns are barrels that beer used to be brewed in.
 - The Heritage Festival will take place at the museum on Saturday, October 26, and will feature vendors, re-enactments and music. In the evening there might be a lantern tour in the woods.
 - A grant was just received for \$63,500 to produce a Prelude to the Battle video that will play on a huge screen.

c. Tourism & Conference Center Report:

Ms. Murden reported on the following:

- **Meeting sales** activity is kicking back up. We attended the Professional Fraternity Association trade show in Northern Virginia in August, and today we had a team attending the Virginia Society of Association Executives Fall Marketplace in Richmond.
- **Chesapeake Tourism Connection Meetings** - The second meeting was held in August and these meetings seemed to be well received. So far attendance is averaging about 25 participants per meeting. The next meeting is October 17th at the Planetarium so if you can attend, please join us.
- **Tourism Ambassador Academy Program** will kick off on October with the first city-wide tour. There will be four themed half-day tours throughout the next year and they will each feature Chesapeake assets within a separate theme - outdoor, history, sports/athletic fields, and restaurants/retail. The program is geared toward frontline staff who deal with the traveling public.
- **Restaurant Week** is October 18th – 25th and there are twenty one restaurants participating. This is the third year and we have the most restaurant participation we've had to date. For more information, go to RestaurantWeek.com.
- **Data Snapshots** -The VATC just released the stats for 2018. The document has data comparisons for the last five years for *Employment, Expenditures, Local Tax Receipts, Payroll* and *State Tax Receipts*, and shows growth in all five categories for Chesapeake. The second document is *Travel Economic Impacts by City* and shows Chesapeake relative to the other Hampton Roads cities comparing the same five categories as well as *Spending/Jobs* and *Spending Per Day*. As expected, we are in the middle behind Virginia Beach and Norfolk, but ahead of Newport News, Hampton, Suffolk and Isle of Wight.

d. **Department Reports:**

Recreation: Ms. Christiansen reported on the following:

- **Performance Surveys:** The department officially launched a survey campaign to measure performance and collect feedback from end users on a broad variety of subjects from grounds maintenance, and customer service, to amenities, structures, facilities, programs, etc. The links to all surveys are on our website, and there will also be informational cards that staff will hand out to the public as well as card holders in our storefront locations. Ms. Fuqua will email the survey website link to the board and will bring some of the informational cards to hand out at the next meeting.
- **October Highlights:**
 - **Heritage Festival** – already mentioned by Jean Carideo.
 - **AutumnFest and Arbor Day** – this coming Saturday at the Arboretum from 10 am – 4 pm. The Arbor Day ceremony starts at 11 am.

- **Movie Night** – the last one of the year is on October 19th, 6 pm, at Elizabeth River Park and the movie is How to Train Your Dragon.
- **Monster Mash** – this TR Halloween event is also on October 19th at River Crest Community Center.
- **TR Fall Festival** is held in cooperation with CHKD from 1 – 4 pm on October 19th as well.
- **Ghost Train** is being modified to a smaller Ghost Maze for one weekend only this year and will not include a train ride. It was anticipated that paving of the road to the river might start this fall and since the event build-out takes months in advance, we didn't want to take the chance of canceling or having to re-invent the event at the last minute.
- **Pedal Surreys** – We were finally able to find and purchase a couple of 4-person pedal surreys like the ones they have at the oceanfront. They will be rentable at Northwest River Park and will be an awesome way to get to the river after the road is paved.
- **Trunk or Treat** is October 26th from 1 – 3 pm at the South Norfolk Community Center. It's a wonderful community center event and very popular!
- **60s and 70s Flashback Karaoke** – A “55 and Better” event on October 25th at the Cuffee Community Center for \$6 per person.

Grounds and Housekeeping: Mr. Wharton reported on the following:

- **Grounds** – Even though we've been short-staffed during our busiest time of the year, we are very proud of our crews for providing support services for hurricane prep, events, athletic fields and schools, as well as regular grounds maintenance. They didn't miss a beat. We have three sheriff's crews that assist us with grounds mowing and trash pickup and they have been immensely helpful. The maintenance contract for Waterways Park and the museum/visitor center was just awarded.
- **Housekeeping** – We're getting ready to hire a Housekeeping Supervisor II (formerly the Executive Housekeeper position) and Mr. Wharton will be very happy to hand the ball over!

e. **Director Updates:** Mr. Barber gave the following updates:

- **New City Manager** will be starting on November 4. Chris Price started his career as a Planner with the City of Chesapeake for a few years, then worked his way up elsewhere, most recently as a Deputy City Manager in Northern Virginia. We will sorely miss Mr. Baker but are excited that Mr. Price will be coming back.
- **Equestrian Trails** – We've had a few calls lately which is interesting because we haven't heard much from horse owners in the last couple of years. Equestrian interest is pretty much a southern Chesapeake thing and we're looking to expand

our facilities/assets there. We've set up a meeting with local equestrian folks to have some discussions with them on the equestrian area at Northwest River Park and future development of Heritage Park. If you know of anyone interested in this subject, please have them contact us because it's a good time to give input and/or get involved.

- A **Youth Initiatives Task Force** has been implemented by the Mayor, initiated in response to incidents in the Holly Cove area. We're looking at some different ways to develop some infrastructure improvements in possible under-served areas of the city like Holly Cove/Lake Ahoy and southern Chesapeake. That could mean partnering with schools, businesses, etc. to offer activities for kids and places for them to go after school, sidewalks, play areas, etc. If you're interested in getting involved, let us know.
- **2020 Census** – 82% of Chesapeake residents returned their census information in 2010 but there is a big push nationwide for counting all folks. For every person that doesn't get counted, cities potentially lose about \$20,000 per person in federal subsidies like grants, etc. So the city is starting early to get the word out and increase awareness before Census Day which is April 1, 2020.
- **Multi-Purpose Stadium** – Mr. Barber will be attending a council work session next Tuesday to ask for a re-blessing on the concept/community planning portion of the stadium proposal to go out to bid.
- **School Safety Task Force** is working on clarification of signage and rules for citizen use of facilities such as tennis courts, ball fields, etc. on school grounds. There have been a couple of incidents where police were enforcing rules based on current "after dark" wording on signs even though the facilities were lighted for intended athletic purposes after dark.
- **Budget Process and Large Scale Multi-Departmental Project Process Improvement** – The performance measurement survey feedback should give us a much better picture of where and how much department resources to allocate to projects based on priority, as well as give us a better picture of the costs associated with them especially if we need to ask for more budget dollars for additional staff, etc.
- **Northwest River Park CIP Plan** – A handout was passed around for review showing the 7-year improvement plan schedule which began in 2018 and goes through 2024. Most of the infrastructure in the park has been in place since the 1970s and there hasn't really been much change or improvement since. We could probably get the park completely renovated faster but that would mean we'd have to shut it down completely at times while work was going on. This plan allows us to keep the majority of the park open during the renovations. The trail road paving is anticipated for next year and has been in the plans for around 8 years. It's not being paved because we're hoping to hold a triathlon as some have suggested - we desire for all citizens to have better access on this main

artery trail to the most beautiful spot in Chesapeake on the river. There's a kayak launch at the river but you can't expect folks to pull or carry a kayak over a mile on a gravel road to get there, or walk down there carrying a load of fishing gear. While some might say paving hurts the environment, the stone dust surface that has been in place and replenished consistently over the last 45 years has likely done some damage as well. If you go to state parks, you'll find that access roads are always paved. It's really all about accessibility and enjoyment of park amenities.

- **Historical Services Division** – A work session was held with Council mentioning the formation of a Historical Services Division. This was also part of our budget submittal for FY21. We're at a critical time in Chesapeake's history. We're losing resources and people and really need a central services division to store materials, assist in preservation of assets, and be able to more accurately tell the stories of Chesapeake. PRT took the lead with this to identify a few really important initiatives to start with and Council seemed to be excited about it.
- **Department Reports** – These reports are distributed to the board before release to the public. Please read them and let us know if you have any questions or comments about anything. Pay special attention to the projects so you're aware of them and if citizens ask you questions that you can't or don't want to answer, refer them to us and we'll be more than happy to address them.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- None.

HEARING OF BOARD MEMBERS:

- Ms. Huber had knee replacement surgery and is happy to be back. Deep Creek High School is looking beautiful and she wanted to say thank you.
- Ms. Kelly said she noticed a handicap ramp going into the stands and had to use it because of her hip problems and was grateful for that. She has also been hearing wonderful comments about the handicap-accessible playground at Deep Creek Park. A lot of people are very happy with that.
- Ms. Dixon attended a couple of events. The Symphony Under the Stars crowd wasn't as big as we'd like but it was a beautiful night for the concert. The 9-11 ceremony was very nice as well and so was the Symphonicity concert that evening. She helped with the Mike Scott camp in Deep Creek and it was amazing. 200 kids and they gave away backpacks full of school supplies, bicycles, etc. and he signed autographs.
- Ms. Holt – Every time her ODU sports groups use the fields at Deep Creek Park, they come back with very appreciative comments. The rugby group wants to make those fields their home fields! And the softball team played at Indian River High School fields the other day. She took a group of students to Northwest River

Park to camp back in August but they ended up having to leave because they left their sleeping bags out and they got rained on and soaked.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 2020 Board Officer Nominations: Nominations will take place in November with the election at the December meeting. If anyone is interested in serving on or chairing the nominating committee, or just making phone calls to other board members to see if anyone is interested in running for Chairman or Vice Chairman, please let Ms. Holt or Ms. Fuqua know.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 7, 6:30 pm, at the South Norfolk Community Center, 1217 Godwin Avenue, Chesapeake, VA 23324.

Notes submitted by: Cori Fuqua, Secretary