

# CHESAPEAKE PARKS, RECREATION AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

## Meeting Minutes

### January 9, 2020

Chairman Holt called the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board to order at 6:34 pm.

<b>Members Present:</b>	Chuck Anderson, Christine Arrasate, Kevin Cole (non-voting ex-officio/CPS), Susan Dixon, Dani Feret, Chelsea Hall, Kayleigh Hamel (non-voting Youth Liaison), Jean Holt (Chairman), Jennifer Hoover (Vice Chairman), Lindy Huber, Mike Kos, Bob Leedom, Chris Lowie (non-voting ex-officio/GDSNWR), Melissa Randall, and Kimi Stevens (non-voting until sworn in),
<b>Members Absent:</b>	Rick Bruner, Jean Carideo (non-voting ex-officio/GBBWHF), Berkley Gibbs, Annette Kelley, Phyllis Lewter, and GERAL Stukes
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Mike Barber, Monica Christiansen, Thurman Diamond, Kim Murden, Ray Wharton, Nicole Merchant and Cori Fuqua

#### **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Fuqua called roll. The attendance roster reflected a quorum with 11 voting members present, 5 absent, and 1 member not yet eligible to vote.

#### **MINUTES:**

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Mr. Kos made a motion to approve the December 5, 2019 minutes as presented. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved by the board.

#### **HEARING OF CITIZENS:**

Mark Shackelford, a member of SEAT (SouthEastern Association of Trailriders) and the Tidewater Horse Council, stopped by to talk about the future of Heritage Park with regard to equestrian trails and assets. A few years ago, SEAT began mapping and cutting out about a mile and a half of trail at Heritage Park and their vision was to eventually cut out 5-7 miles of trails. Mr. Shackelford would like to re-energize their efforts and work with the board and department to support the efforts at Heritage Park. Mr. Barber added that a new fire station was being built next door to the property and as soon as that was done, Phase I infrastructure at Heritage Park could begin to include parking lot with pull-through spaces for horse trailers and a shelter. Eventually there would be an updated master plan to include more amenities and pedestrian walking trails.

#### **REPORTS:**

##### **a. Committee Reports:**

- **Tourism Committee** – No updates.
- **Rules Committee** – No updates

b. **Ex-Officio Reports:**

- **Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge:** Mr. Lowie reported that the Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival will be back this year after a two year hiatus, but will be smaller and only a one day event on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>.
- **Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Foundation:** Ms. Carideo was not present but arranged for Ms. Fuqua to read the updates she provided:
  - **Museum:**
    - The brick façade in the Aftermath Gallery was completed utilizing the original brick from the 1907 Great Bridge Schoolhouse. It looks amazing. In addition to the Aftermath Wall, Atlantic Foundations installed the same brick in our faux fireplace in the Three Tun Tavern.
    - The beams and posts featured in the Three Tun Tavern were fabricated from a one hundred-year-old Cypress tree that went down in Deep Creek a few years ago. It was rough-milled by Foundation volunteers and then Premier Milling and Lumber picked it up, milled, assembled and stained it. It was delivered and now Chuck Clark, the owner of Clark Roofing and Siding, will install it over the next few days.
    - Harry Murphy has completed our Featured Walls and they're ready for installation of the graphic panels.
    - The Old Bridge Tender's Control Panel was picked up and delivered to Maaco (Greenbrier), who sand blasted it and painted it to match Riggs Ward's cabinets. In addition to the large control panel, we received two additional artifacts that are being installed.
    - Grand Opening for the Exhibits will be set via Riggs Ward finishing up all installations.
  - **Events:** The Foundation will once again host their annual Valentine Wine Tasting on Friday, the 14th of February. For ticket information, please call the foundation office or visit the website at [www.gbbattlefield.org](http://www.gbbattlefield.org).
- **Chesapeake Conference Center:** Mr. Barber relayed that Donna Cannatella, Troy Thorn's successor, started her new position on December 19<sup>th</sup> but must be officially appointed to the board by the City Council. That will take a little time so maybe she'll begin attending meetings in February but most likely it will be March.

c. **Tourism & Conference Center Report:** Ms. Murden reported on the following:

- **Tourism Connection Meeting:** The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, at the Chesapeake Conference Center at 9:00 am. The folks from Virginia Green will be there to talk about the Virginia Green certification/re-certification process and provide information to attendees on how their businesses can receive a Virginia Green designation. If you can make it, please join us.
- **Ambassador Academy:** Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, will be the fourth track of our current Ambassador Academy program and will feature history in Chesapeake. If any of you are interested in attending this track or signing up for the next Ambassador program (four tracks), please let Ms. Murden know.
- **African-American Heritage Trail:** Moving forward with this. The brochure is going through the approval process and we should have that in hand in February. The bus tours will begin in mid-February as well. The podcast narrator has been selected and we're working on the scripts and booking the studio time. We're really excited about this program and think that it's something that folks will not only really embrace, but that we can build on and expand.
- **Your Military Reunion Conference:** February 16-18 we're hosting the Your Military Reunion Conference at the Delta Hotel.

d. **Parks and Recreation Department Reports:**

**Recreation:** Ms. Christiansen and Mr. Diamond reported on the following:

- **Advisory Board Bus Tour** – In December a handout was given to the board that listed some ideas on ways the board could get involved in department activities and events. An Advisory Board Bus Tour has been scheduled for Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup>. We'll need at least 10 to commit to that so please let Monica know if you plan on going.
- **Splash Pad** site at Western Branch Community Center is now a real construction site and clearing is underway. We're still hopeful that we can open on Memorial Day weekend.
- **New Miniature Golf Course** will be installed this spring at Northwest River Park.
- **2020 Schedule of Events** is being finalized and will be sent out to you in the next few weeks to review. So check it out and see if there is anything that interests you to sign up for as a volunteer.
- **New Recreation Manager** – Mr. Diamond introduced Nicole Merchant, our new Recreation Manager.
- **Basketball** – Basketball is full and we have over 180 teams citywide. We're short one coach in Deep Creek so if you know of anyone that would

be interested in coaching, please let us know. All centers will have games going on all day on Saturdays if you're interested in going to one.

- **Athletic Fields and Permits:** Field rental and use permit season is underway. Some fields have, or are currently having, maintenance done on them. New lights have been installed at Jolliff MS and Crestwood MS, and we have 30 sets of brand new bleachers that will be spread out throughout the city. The goal is to get rid of all wooden bleachers.
- **Mr. & Miss Abilities:** Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, at 4 pm at the Conference Center. All male contestant slots have been filled. Five ladies have entered so far so there are only three slots left.

**Grounds and Housekeeping:** Mr. Wharton had the following updates:

- **Athletic Grounds** – the Grassfield High School baseball infield and on-deck areas are completely being renovated; adding sod, cutting out lips, etc. We're doing the same thing at BM Williams as well as replacing dugouts and adding new fencing and bleachers.
- **Municipal Grounds** – busy with winter projects such as landscaping in the entrance median to the Emergency Operations Center, and will be seeding wildflowers in an area that is too soft to mow. We've started landscaping the circle at the Indian River Library, and also at the main Central Library at the Civic Center.
- **Parks Grounds** – also busy with winter projects such as painting and repairing picnic tables, benches, shelters, basketball courts, and getting playgrounds ready for the season.
- **Housekeeping** – the new supervisor is working out very well and she certainly has her challenges as we have multiple vacancies. It's very difficult to fill (and keep filled) the part-time housekeeping positions so if you know anyone who would be interested, please send them our way.

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

- **Budget Presentation** – Tomorrow is the big day. Our budget hearing will be on January 10<sup>th</sup> with the new City Manager and budget review team. The biggest area of discussion tomorrow will center on a Historical Services Division and trying to fund that for operation in FY21.
- **Museum** – There is a phase II planned; the construction of an auditorium which will be a great place to hold programs and activities. The Museum Foundation is working with the City on a long-term sustainability study.
- **NWRP Updates:** The Marjorie Rein Overlook renovation has begun and it's projected to be completed in summer. The main access road paving should be

completed in March. The ranger station/camp store, interpretive center and activity buildings will stay in the same location. Rebuilding those facilities will be Phase I and the rest will be in subsequent phases. Part of next phases include a Master Plan for undeveloped areas of the park as well as reviewing campground layout and location, horse trails, group shelter locations, and possibilities for expansion, etc. Hopefully by the end of the fiscal year we'll have design drawings for those new buildings, and then can start construction in the fall.

- **Arboretum Farmhouse** – We met with an architectural group and some restoration experts to look at renovation of the farmhouse long term. The roof and some of the fascia boards were replaced in December, but squirrels got in anyway and did some damage. There are foundation issues that need to be addressed. The Arboretum board would like to keep the farmhouse and some of the artifacts that are there from different periods of the farm's history. The building has not been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but the board would like to proceed with the process to do so.
- **Heron's Landing Park** – This new park site with water access off of Indian River Road was acquired a couple of years ago and we now have funding to turn our conceptual plans into reality. We met with an architect to get plans started and hope it can go out to bid by the end of the fiscal year.
- **Deep Creek Village and Cornland School** – We're working with the Cornland school folks, Army Corps of Engineers and others to create a possible "Deep Creek Village" down off of Glencoe Street. There is some interest on working a public/private trust to restore the Superintendent's house. We are working on conceptual drawings of the "village" now. The Cornland School could be moved to the "village" and possibly other structures (including maybe a small visitor center?) built which would create a potential nice walking tour.
- **Stadium** master plan is currently out for bid and the bids are due February 5<sup>th</sup>. The pre-construction meeting was held yesterday with about 30 people attending. Once the bids are in, they will be reviewed and negotiation conversations can take place. It would then go back to Council and the School Board one more time before moving forward on the Phase I conceptual study (with public input). Phase II will be designs/site planning/masterplans.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- None.

#### **HEARING OF BOARD MEMBERS:**

- Ms. Feret mentioned that the Chesa(sneak)peake comes out on Monday mornings around 10 am and since she is at work at that time, she forgets to go back and watch it later and probably many others do too. She suggested that the

timeline to release it might be adjusted to later in the day or something? Mr. Barber said that they are released early in the week on Monday mornings so people can plan ahead for the week/weekend and are alerted to events coming up before they make plans. Maybe we could send out a reminder later in the week.

- Mr. Lowie said that the cultural significance of the Dismal Swamp is getting a lot of attention and people are fascinated by it. Dan Sayers has conducted a lot of research and excavations of the maroon communities in the swamp and recovered thousands of artifacts. Maybe a maroon site could be considered for the Glencoe project.
- Ms. Arrasate asked if there was any update on the golf course off of Cedar Road. Mr. Barber said there has been no interest from the owner in selling or donating it to the City as of this time.
- Ms. Holt then asked if the department still had problems with finding contractors to assist in park mowing. Mr. Barber responded that the city has decided to group sites together with Public Works for bidding/pricing purposes and then we should be able to choose from a list of vendors that will be able to handle certain sites and parameters. So we'll try that and see what happens.
- Ms. Fuqua brought some of the survey business cards if anyone is interested in taking some and handing them out to citizens.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- None.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 pm.

#### **NEXT MEETING:**

**The next meeting will be on Thursday, February 6, 6:30 pm, at the Delta Hotel, 725 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake VA 23320 (next to the Chesapeake Conference Center).**

Minutes submitted by: Cori Fuqua, Secretary