

CHESAPEAKE PARKS, RECREATION AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2020

This meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board was held at the Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Museum/Visitor Center on March 5, 2020. Chairman Holt called meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

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

ROLL CALL

Ms. Fuqua called the roll. The attendance roster reflected a quorum with 13 voting members present and 4 absent.

MINUTES:

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve the February 6, 2020 minutes as presented. Mr. Leedom seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved by the board.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

None.

REPORTS:

a. Committee Reports:

- **Tourism Committee** – Mr. Barber recommended that a standing ad hoc tourism committee be established that would meet as needed to complete special tasks. The first order of business would be to work on an annual report. Kim Murden would be the staff liaison, the four tourism/hospitality board members (Ms. Feret, Mr. Bruner, Mr. Gibbs and Ms. Perry) would be permanent members, then a couple of Parks and Recreation board members, and the four ex-officio board members would round out the committee. A Chairman and Vice Chairman should

be appointed. Interested board members should contact Ms. Fuqua by next Friday.

- **Rules Committee** – No updates.

b. **Ex-Officio Reports** – No updates.

- **Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Foundation:** Ms. Carideo provided updates on the following:
 - **Museum:**
 - Although the museum is not open yet, they are open for programs and are conducting ongoing tours for groups like the Joint Forces Staff College and the upcoming Discover Coastal Virginia tour operators. On March 20, the Revolutionary Roundtable group will be meeting here, and Virginia Wildlife Magazine will be meeting with the Chesapeake Master Gardeners to gather information on an upcoming magazine article.
 - 75% of the items/artifacts in the museum exhibits are on restricted permanent loan from private donors. The remaining 25% belong to the Foundation.
 - The tentative museum opening date is the end of March after 100% exhibit completion status has been confirmed.
 - **Lin Olsen:** Mr. Barber introduced Lin Olsen, the Executive Director of the Museum. Ms. Olsen gave a brief overview of the museum and in-kind donations. She introduced Bob Riggs, the creative director and one of the owners of Riggs Ward Design of Richmond, Virginia, who was there personally working on the exhibits. She then gave the board some interesting background and information on a few of the museum and exhibit features and photography, and also answered questions.
- **Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge:** Mr. Lowie reminded everyone about the Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival on Saturday, April 25th. Registration will open on Monday at the refuge office. Give them a call at (757) 986-3705.
- **Youth Update:** Ms. Hamel said that spring sports are starting at the schools – baseball, softball, soccer, field hockey and track. She was part of the League for Change Team at her school and they collected canned food items for the Food Bank. The team entered a world hunger challenge where they raised over \$13,000 and won \$10,000.

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

- **African-American Heritage Trail:** The first five podcasts are being finalized and they should be up on the website within the next two weeks. The brochure

content is being revamped a little from where it began but hope to have printed copies in hand to bring to the next meeting. We received great feedback on the initial three bus tours that were conducted.

- **Groups** – There is a state baseball tournament in Western Branch coming up. We've been working with the group for a while and they will need around 400 rooms. Also working with the MEAC group that will be holding a bowling tournament which will take place at the AMF bowling alley on Battlefield Boulevard.

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

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

- **Soccer** – There were around 1,200 kids that registered for spring soccer and getting ready to do the drafts in the next few days.
- **Jolliff Camp** – We are partnering with resources officers at the high schools and middle schools and they are holding a week-long summer camp at Joliff.
- **Summer Blast Camps** – Registration begins on April 8th.
- **Mr. & Miss Abilities** – The pageant is coming up in April so if anyone wants to volunteer, please let us know.
- **Projects** – lots of things happening. Check out the projects pages in the Department Report.
- **Spring/Summer Discovery Guide** – Comes out at the end of March so be on the lookout!
- **Board Trash Cleanup** – Reminder that the board trash cleanup date is next Saturday (March 14th) at Deep Creek Lock Park. Please get in touch with Cori by Wednesday so we can make sure we have enough supplies.

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

- **Support Services** – Athletics maintenance crews will be supporting the baseball tournament in Western Branch by performing ongoing field prep, as well as field prep for our soccer programs. Grounds crews also support the MEAC tournament by transporting and setting up bleachers inside the bowling alley.
- **Fire Ants** – They are prevalent in Chesapeake and, because we have the only city staff specialists, we handle all fire ant treatments for the city.

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

- **Conservation Conference** – Tomorrow is the Chesapeake Conservation Conference from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. This is the first conference of its kind in the City and it will be at the Conference Center. It's held in conjunction with the CEIC (Chesapeake Environmental Improvement Council). There will be panels discussing different topics and the annual CEIC awards luncheon will take place then as well.
- **Council Work Session/Cornland School** – Mr. Barber attended a council work session two weeks ago. It started out as an update on the Cornland School but turned into a discussion of what we see as a potential historical activity site in the Deep Creek/Dismal Swamp area and looking for a location to move the school since the City doesn't own the property where it's currently located. The City has 12 acres of land off of Glencoe Street near the Superintendent's house so we are looking into the possibility of moving the Cornland School there and developing a historical area for self-guided walking tours.
- **Mayor's Youth Day** – Yesterday around one hundred seniors participated in Mayor's Youth Day and get to shadow the Mayor, City Council, and City department heads. They do a lot of activities throughout the day including a mock council meeting. We had eleven or twelve of the students and we took them on a tour of the museum. Not a single one of the students on our tour had heard of the Battle of Great Bridge which was disappointing.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- None.

HEARING OF BOARD MEMBERS:

- Ms. Hoover – wanted to say thanks for the board tour. It was great and really learned a lot.
- Ms. Arrasate – same! We are making plans to go back and visit many of the parks we saw on the tour.
- Ms. Huber – also really enjoyed it and love the picture taken at the LOVE letters!
- Mr. Gibbs – went to several basketball games to see granddaughter and wanted to compliment the staff.
- Mr. Barber – one of our stops on the Mayor's youth tour was to our Visitor Center and as the group was leaving, one of the teachers who came with us said that he had been there before about a year ago. He had gotten a job teaching at Atlantic Christian school and he and his wife were in the area looking around to see where they wanted to live and stopped in, talked to the staff, got a lot of information and before they left they had decided to live in Chesapeake!

- Ms. Holt – while on the board tour, we visited Indian River Park and saw the area where some of the bike “jumps” were built. It was pretty interesting to see everything up close after hearing about it.
- Ms. Kelley – will there also be a visitors center with for the intracoastal visitor traffic like they have in North Carolina? Mr. Barber said to some degree yes as well as possibly at the north end of the trail maybe with Chris Lowie and the Refuge Center. There are already bulkheads there and improvements would be discussed in a later phase.

NEW BUSINESS:

- None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 2, 6:30 pm, at the Dr. Clarence V. Cuffee Community Center (2019 Windy Road).

Minutes submitted by Cori Fuqua, Secretary