

CHESAPEAKE PARKS, RECREATION AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2022

This meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board was held on February 3, 2022, at the Chesapeake Conference Center. Chair Leedom called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Barber said that there is legislation going through the state now that may allow some meetings in the future to take place electronically. Currently the City is governed by state law and code on that issue which is why we can't just decide to hold a meeting or meetings electronically – they are permitted only during a declared emergency.

Ms. Fuqua announced two new board members, Mr. James Brown, and Ms. Jenna Thimmes.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Fuqua called the roll. Attendance reflected a quorum with 11 voting members present and 4 absent.

Members Present:	Christine Arrasate, James Brown, Donna Cannatella (non-voting ex-officio/CCC), Bryan Carey, Jean Carideo (non-voting ex-officio/GBBWHF), Susan Dixon, Paula Faivre, Jean Holt, Bob Leedom Chair, Chris Lowie (non-voting ex-officio/GDSNWR), Annette Kelley (Vice Chair), Patti McCambridge, Neta Stephens and Jenna Thimmes
Members Absent:	Catina Bondhill, Kevin Cole (non-voting ex-officio/CPS), Sandy Emery (non-voting Youth Liaison), Julie Halsnoy, Lindy Huber, and Michael Williams
Staff Present:	Mike Barber, Monica Christiansen, Thurman Diamond, Jessica Cosmas, and Cori Fuqua

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mr. Carey and seconded by Ms. Kelley to approve the December 2, 2021 minutes as presented. The minutes were unanimously approved by the board.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

Ms. Markiella Moore was present but did not address the board.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

Jessica Cosmas, Historical Services Manager, gave an overview presentation on the department's historical services programs and initiatives.

REPORTS:

a. Ex-Officio Reports:

- **Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Museum** – Ms. Carideo gave the following updates:

- **Events** –
 - **February Fundraiser** will be held online this year as a raffle. Please go to the website, buy some tickets, and support the museum!
 - **The Museum** won an Elizabeth River business award for the shoreline and park.
- **Chesapeake Conference Center** – Ms. Cannatella reported on the following:
 - **Events and Promotions** – The Winter Engagement Bridal Expo is this Sunday from 2-5pm, the Chesapeake Sports Club Annual Jamboree on February 11th from 11am-2pm, the Princess Ball on Sunday February 13th from 1-4pm. Next month is the Chesapeake Conservation Conference and Awards Luncheon on March 9th, the annual Fishing Flea Market on March 12th, and the Chesapeake State of the City on March 24th. Go to the website for a full listing of events.
 - **Lunch with Chef** will be honoring African American History Month with the Chesapeake CVB and they will have a table set up every Friday in February with information on events like the Story Tour.
 - **First Friday Trivia Contest** – Look for details in the eNewsletter for a chance to win a free lunch with Chef.
 - Ms. McCambridge added that **The Chesapeake Forum** is hosting three speakers this season and the events will be held at the Chesapeake Conference Center. Keynote speakers will be Dave Barry on March 22nd, Freeman Hrabowski on April 26th and Joan Lunden on June 7th. For more information and tickets, go the website at TheChesapeakeForum.Org.
- **Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge** – None.
- **Chesapeake Public Schools** – None.
- b. **Tourism Report** – No updates.
- c. **Parks and Recreation Reports**
 - **Snow Cleanup** – PRT staff did a lot of snow cleanup the last two weekends! There are pictures in the monthly Department Report.
 - **Events** – Ms. Christiansen relayed the following upcoming City event: Eggspedition in April. This year it will take place on two Saturdays instead of just one – April 9th and 16th - at different parks spread around the City (15 parks on each date).
 - **Bus Tours** – We have several new board members so hopefully in the spring we can schedule a couple of bus tours. We have to split them up because the bus is not big enough to accommodate everyone on one tour.
 - **Recreation** – Mr. Diamond thanked Ms. Cannatella for the amazing job the Conference Center did for the senior’s holiday luncheon. It was beautiful and the seniors loved it!
- d. **Director Updates and Department Reports:**

- Mr. Barber gave the following updates:
 - **Snow Cleanup** – PRT crews cleared over 60 facilities two weekends in a row. Most of those staff members worked 17 straight days. PRT’s responsibilities include clearing fire and police stations so emergency crews can get out.
 - **Ballahack Boat Ramp** – Repairs to the dock/walkway were completed
 - **Deep Creek Park** – Paving in the back parking lot began yesterday.
 - **Lighting Projects** – New LED lights were installed at one of the soccer/multipurpose fields at Deep Creek Park and were also installed at two fields at Centerville Park.
 - **Sign Replacements** – Field rules signs are in the process of being replaced citywide.
 - **Shelters** – Over 60 shelters are scheduled for refurbishment (total makeovers) this winter/spring.
 - **Newton Neck Property** – 88.7 acres of new parkland on the river! The sale of the parcel to the City closed last week. Once the deed is recorded and details are finalized, community meetings will be scheduled to discuss use, connectivity, etc. The property includes wetland areas and will be a low-key conservation-type park with passive activities like kayaking, to likely include trails.
 - **Operating Budget** – The operating budget was submitted last fall at 97.5% and the hearing was last week. Mr. Barber talked about a few highlights as well as restoring some of the funding in 2024: equipment replacement program, the opening and operation of the historic village, program rebounds (basketball, leisure programs, childcare), resource centers, sustainable landscaping, urban forestry program, additional maintenance at new parks, conference center renovation, and Northwest River Park. There has been a lot of talk about Council’s top three priorities which are 1) the compensation and pay plan for City employees, 2) the Police and Fire Training Facility, possibly to be located in Heritage Park, and 3) a city pool/aquatic center. The upcoming City capital and operating budgets will probably include recommendations for these items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- None.

HEARING OF BOARD MEMBERS:

- Ms. Stephens asked about the fortifications at Jolliff and what’s happening with the Superintendent’s house. Mr. Barber said that we have paid for the State to do the environmental studies on the fort property so are waiting for that to be completed. As far as the Superintendent’s House, the Army Corps still has some work they have said they need to do on it. This is another situation where we’re not sure whether it will be donated or whether we’ll have to lease it.

- Ms. Kelley went through Deck the Hall several times and it was really nice. She then asked if long term camping was allowed at Northwest River Park. Mr. Barber said no, there is a 14-day limit and it's also closed for the winter.
- Ms. Faivre asked if the Blue Heron project was still active and is it a PRT project? Mr. Barber said it is not a PRT project but is done different ways with different groups, mentioning the recent work completed with herons at Great Bridge Lock Park. She saw a public art project that was really cool. It was a large metal sculpture of a fish with holes in it for people to put their empty water bottles in for recycling. Maybe Chesapeake could do something like that with herons. Mr. Barber said our Park Planner was already looking into different similar projects and presented some options to the Arboretum Board for consideration, however we have found that they are very expensive to do.
- Ms. Holt said that there was an ice hockey club that was moving from Virginia Beach to Chilled Ponds in Chesapeake and wanted to pass that information on to Kim Murden. Their season runs from September through February. Also, she would like to talk to Ms. Cannatella about ODU having an event on March 1st for Women's History Month featuring a female NFL official as a speaker.
- Ms. McCambridge had two people ask her if the City is considering putting in another piece of public art (like the fish) at Oak Grove Lake Park. Mr. Barber said the fish had been replaced with a smaller dragonfly which is now aging as well, and we are looking at replacing it with another piece that is more substantial.
- Mr. Leedom also welcomed the new board members, and thanked Ms. McCambridge and Ms. Cannatella for working so diligently on the historic photography now on display at the Conference Center.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Ms. Holt brought in a nice box of Valentine's Day chocolates, and it was raffled off by a randomly chosen number. Ms. McCambridge received the candy.
- Naming Rights – Mr. Barber gave an update on this topic. Council Member Carey is leading a committee which Mr. Barber was asked to join. The committee will be reviewing processes and will recommend avenues for individual recognitions from resolutions to certificates of appreciation to naming rights. Mr. Barber will keep the board apprised of the progress.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Thursday, March 3, 2022, at 6:30 pm at the Rokeby Center, 1709 Rokeby Avenue.

Minutes submitted by Cori Fuqua, Secretary