

CHESAPEAKE PARKS, RECREATION AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2022

This meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board was held on March 10, 2022, at the Rokeby Center. Chair Leedom called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Leedom welcomed two new board members, Mr. Phil Johnson, and Mr. Richard Pippin.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Fuqua called the roll. Attendance reflected a quorum with 11 voting members present and 6 absent.

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

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ms. Holt and seconded by Ms. McCambridge to approve the February 2, 2022 minutes as presented. The minutes were unanimously approved by the board.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

None.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

Phyllis Simpson, Housekeeping Supervisor II, gave an overview presentation on the department's housekeeping services.

REPORTS:

a. Ex-Officio Reports:

- **Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge** – Chris Lowie relayed the following:
 - The **Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival** will be a one-day event this year on Saturday, April 30th. Registration opens this Saturday. More details and schedule of events (including guided bird walks, family activities, guided nature walks and wildlife bus tours) can be found on the [website](#).

- **Chesapeake Conference Center** – Ms. Cannatella reported on the following:
 - **Events and Promotions** – The Chesapeake Sports Club Annual Jamboree was held on February 11th, and the Princess Ball on Sunday February 13th. This month is the NextGen Opportunity Fair tonight, the Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast will be guests at Lunch with Chef this Friday, the Chesapeake Conservation Conference and Awards Luncheon on March 9th, the annual Fishing Flea Market on March 12th, the monthly Chesapeake Sports Club luncheon on March 14th, the Chesapeake Forum on March 22nd with featured speaker Dave Barry, and the Chesapeake State of the City on March 24th. In April we have the Chesapeake Regional Gala on April 2nd, the Reptile show on April 9th and 10th, and the Chesapeake Forum featuring speaker Dr. Freeman Hrabowski on April 26th. Visit the [website](#) for a full listing of events.
 - **Facility Update** – New generators have been installed and should be fully operational soon. Mr. Barber added that the community centers will also be getting generators. This was possible due to grant funding because the Conference Center (and community centers) could possibly be used as emergency shelters.
 - **Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Museum** – Mr. Barber gave the following update:
 - **Museum Operating and Sub-Lease Agreements** were submitted by the Foundation to the City three or four weeks ago and it will probably take a couple of months to negotiate through to final agreements.
 - **Chesapeake Public Schools** – Mr. Barber gave the following update:
 - **Public Access to School Grounds/Amenities** – There continues to be some inconsistencies regarding public access to some of the amenities on school grounds during the school day (e.g. playgrounds, tennis courts, tracks, etc.). We're part of that conversation and hoping to be of assistance in a resolution.
- b. **Tourism Report** – Kim Murden gave updates on the following:
- Kim Murden and Jo Slack attended Domestic Society Showcase in Virginia Beach last month and between the two of them, they attended 65 appointments over a two-day period. Four journalists have already expressed interest in coming to Chesapeake and learning more about our city for future articles.
 - A 2022 Media Sheet handout was distributed at the Domestic Showcase and the QR code at the bottom takes you directly to the [media main page](#) on the [VisitChesapeake](#) website. To assist with stories, they can access Fast Facts, Request An Image, What's New, etc. and other great resources.
 - Beginning next month in the Department Report, Tourism will include some tourism metrics and more facts, figures and stats such as occupancy numbers and web stats.
 - For African American History Month in February, staff did three [story webinars](#) and three bus tours. The webinars were very well received and staff did a great job on producing them.

- c. **Parks and Recreation Reports** – Refer to the [Department Report](#) and [Park Project Updates](#).
- d. **Director Updates and Department Reports:**
- Mr. Barber gave the following updates:
 - **Camelot Community Center** – There was an incident in the parking lot a few weeks ago after a basketball game ended that you might have heard about on the news. It is still being investigated. Fortunately, our staff handled it exceptionally well and there was security present. While we do have security at a couple of centers, future recommendations already include adding security at all centers during athletic contests so everyone, both the public and staff, feels safer.
 - **Basketball Playoffs** didn't happen this year for a number of reasons. We had some delays starting the season due to snow closures, then having to schedule makeups, staff shortages, difficulties getting officials, etc. Once you get into March, other spring sports begin for kids and parents so we decided it would be best to just not schedule them rather than extending the season into mid- or late-March.
 - **Staffing** – We currently have 92 part time staff vacancies in the community centers. We're not even getting a significant number of applications, so it's not that we're not interviewing or hiring.
 - **Summer Programs** – Because of our staffing situation, we going to have to go with our Summer Blast camp at only two centers rather than six like we usually have. There will be a Therapeutics summer camp at a third center, an Outdoors camp that is normally held at Northwest River Park will be at a fourth center, Camelot will be closed all summer because of the school renovation, and senior programs will be taking place at the Cuffee center. The Splash Park will still be open this summer.
 - **Historical Village Funding** – Currently we received \$3M from the state last year, another \$3M in federal funding was just approved, and \$1M is slated from the City. Then there is \$2M more currently going through committees which will give us a total \$9M. That's been our magic number since the beginning. The whole project can be done concurrently rather than in phases which is great news.
 - **Summit Point Arts Weekend** – Under discussion with the Virginia Arts Festival folks and Dollar Tree (Summit Point) for October.
 - **Poindexter/Bainbridge Walkways** – Will connect South Norfolk/Lakeside Park to Elizabeth River Park/Jordan Bridge. There is \$2.2M in funding earmarked for this initiative.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- None.

HEARING OF BOARD MEMBERS:

- Ms. Kelley said she heard that Delegate Hayes said that the general assembly had voted on funding for a pool in Chesapeake, or maybe it's in the budget? Mr. Barber said it's in the preliminary budget and is down to a couple of options for a final decision. It's for \$9M to supplement city funding of possibly around \$6M to build an instructional-sized pool at the Cuffee Community Center. That was planned as Phase II at Cuffee from the beginning.
- Ms. Faivre asked whether a pool of that size would be able to accommodate school use and Mr. Barber said it would have to be studied. Maybe for practices but not sure about meets.
- Ms. Kelley then asked about partnering with private companies to build facilities with naming rights. Mr. Barber said that can get complicated for municipalities. It's usually preferable for the company to build it themselves, name it, run it, etc. and the city provide infrastructure assistance.
- Ms. McCambridge said that the webinars for African American History Month were great! She also took the bus tour and would like to see them continued and expanded. She's very excited to hear about the funding for the Historical Village.
- Ms. Faivre asked if there is any update on the naming of the Oak Grove Lake Park lake after Claire Askew? Mr. Barber said there is a city committee reviewing naming guidelines and policy so the discussion on the lake renaming is delayed. The Commemoration and Donation Program that we currently have for park benches, etc. will remain as it stands now because it's a donation program.
- Ms. Thimmes said that on April 23, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Deep Creek Elementary will be holding their Spring Fest and the PTA has asked that she invite the department to participate.
- Ms. Holt said that ODU brought in Maia Chaka, the second female on-field official for the NFL, as the kick-off speaker for Women's History Month and she did a wonderful job. It was a hybrid-virtual presentation held both in person and online with very successful registration and attendance numbers. Ms. Faivre is on the panel and will be speaking next week about women entrepreneur and business owners.

NEW BUSINESS:

- None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 7, 2022, at 6:30 pm at the Dr. Clarence V. Cuffee Community Center, 2019 Windy Road.

Minutes submitted by Cori Fuqua, Secretary