

CHESAPEAKE PARKS, RECREATION AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2022

This meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board was held on April 7, 2022, at the Dr. Clarence V. Cuffee Community Center. Chair Leedom called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Leedom welcomed new board member Jessica Woodyard.

ROLL CALL

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

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

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mr. Pippin and seconded by Ms. Holt to approve the March 10, 2022 minutes as presented. The minutes were unanimously approved by the board.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

None.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

Mr. Barber gave an overview presentation on “City Vision and Priorities to Budget Development”.

REPORTS:

a. Ex-Officio Reports:

- **Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge** – None.
- **Chesapeake Conference Center** – Mr. Barber gave the following update from Ms. Cannatella:
 - Exotic Pet Show is this weekend.

- **Chesapeake Public Schools** – None.
 - **Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Museum** – Ms. Fuqua gave the following update from Ms. Carideo:
 - Come to our **Revolutionary Beerfest** “*Where there will be no taxation without fermentation!*” ~ *Jon Stull*. Saturday, April 16 from 1-5 pm at the Khedive Shrine Center, 645 Woodlake Drive. Tickets available [online](#).
- b. **Tourism Report** – Kim Murden gave updates on the following:
- Beginning in the March Department Report, Tourism will include some tourism metrics and more facts, figures and stats such as occupancy numbers and web stats. If you have any questions, please call or email Ms. Murden.
 - The Chesapeake Meeting and Sports Incentive (rebate) Program has been approved and is geared toward providing an incentive to meeting planners and sports planners to host or book rooms/functions/events in Chesapeake. They would be eligible for a rebate (capped at \$4,500 total maximum). The money spent must be at a Chesapeake business and they must fill out an application, turn in a receipt and be approved for the rebate. This incentive fund is revenue generated from hotel room taxes collected.
 - We are hosting a free Hospitality Job Fair for our tourism travel partners (hotels, retailers, attractions, facilities, etc.) that are hiring, on Thursday, April 28 from 1-6pm at the Chesapeake Conference Center.
- c. **Parks and Recreation Reports** – Also refer to the [Department Report](#) and [Park Project Updates](#).
- **Recreation** – Mr. Diamond gave the following updates:
 - **Pickleball** – We began offering it on Fridays here at the Cuffee Center.
 - **New Basketball Goals** – We’re in the process of replacing the goals at the South Norfolk Community Center.
 - Outdoor Summer **Camp registrations** will be opening on April 11, Summer Blast registration opens May 5 and Therapeutics Summer Camp registration opened on April 4.
 - **Events & Misc.** – Ms. Christiansen gave the following updates:
 - **EGGspedition** will take place on two Saturdays this year – April 9 and April 16 – at 16 different parks on each date. Check the [website](#) and our [Facebook page](#) at 9am on each of those Saturday mornings for the list of participating parks for that day.
 - **Wildflower Planting** will be happening April 23 at Bells Mill Park and we’ll report on it next month.
 - **Trash Can Painting Contest** at Bells Mill Park took place on Saturday, March 26 at there was lots of participation and engagement on social media. Check out our Facebook posts to see the entries and the winner chosen by most number of likes.
 - **Staffing** – We’ve hired new staff for two key positions, Chief Park Ranger and Turf Manager. We still have holes to fill but starting to make some progress.
 - **Paddle for the Border** is sold out and coming up in May, and KayaXpedition in June.

- Northwest River Park Campground opened for the season last weekend.
- **Grounds** – Mr. Hopson gave the following updates:
 - Mowing – Transitioning into mowing season, but still finishing up some of the winter projects.
 - Event Support – Events and volunteer projects are beginning so we'll be busy soon with grounds support.
 - Hiring – Also working hard trying to fill vacant positions.
 - Athletics Support – Soccer and softball are up and running for practices/games so our athletics grounds team is busy preparing and maintaining fields.

d. **Director Updates and Department Reports:**

- Mr. Barber gave the following updates:
 - **Great Bridge Battlefield Park South** – The Battle of Great Bridge Monument is scheduled to be moved from City Hall to Battlefield Park South beside the Great Bridge bridge on April 23. The Battlefield Park South site is where the battle reenactment is held every year and we are working with the Army Corps of Engineers to further develop that site. Future plans include renovating the old fire station building to become a waterways-type visitor facility, adding some shelters, work on improving the bulkheads and pylons, and connectivity with sidewalks, etc.
 - **Chesapeake Rotary Club's Spring Art Show** is also happening April 23-24 at City Park with over 100 artists. The Deloreans and other groups will be performing free concerts.
 - **Generators** have been installed at all community centers and they are up and running. This was done mainly so the centers could be used as emergency shelters if needed.
 - **Historical Village at the Dismal Swamp**– We hosted a very nice ceremony with Congressman McEachin and other federal, state and local representatives attending where they presented a “check” for \$3M to the City for the Historic Village project funding. The entire project is projected to be around \$9M and we are close to that figure in financial commitments. We are hopeful that we can open at least part of the village around 18 months from now.
 - **Judge Eileen A. Olds Courtyard Park** – Plans include installing a clock tower and it's out for bid.
 - **Heron Landing Park** – The pre-bid meeting was held today and bids close at the end of the month.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- None.

HEARING OF BOARD MEMBERS:

- Ms. McCambridge reminded everyone that the Chesapeake Forum will feature Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski on April 26 at 7 pm. Tickets are available [online](#).
- Ms. Faivre asked if the board was going to do a park cleanup like in years past. Mr. Barber and Ms. Christiansen said that the parks are currently in pretty good condition and there are a lot of groups that are doing cleanups at parks. Maybe later this year in the fall, there might be some opportunities so let us know then if the board has any interest. Ms. Faivre also said she is willing to volunteer on an athletic rules committee this year if needed. Mr. Barber said it would be good to initiate a group to serve on that committee.
- Mr. Leedom agreed that the ceremony event at the historical village site was very well done and very nice. Lots of political clout present!

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Park Naming** – Mr. Barber received an official request this week to rename Oak Grove Lake Park in honor of Claire Askew. He will meet with the group and then present a full proposal to the board for recommendation before it goes to City Council. There is also another requesting to name the trail at Oak Grove for a Navy Seal. More to come on that as well.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 5, 2022, at 6:30 pm at the Great Bridge Battlefield and Waterways Museum, 1775 Historic Way.

Minutes submitted by Cori Fuqua, Secretary