



FREDERICK COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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JEREMY KORTRIGHT - DIVISION DIRECTOR

MINUTES

The Frederick County Parks and Recreation Commission
Oct 12, 2023

Parks and Recreation Commission Attendees:

Howard Looney
BoE Liaison – Nancy Allen
Viktor Kraenbring
Charlotte Davis
Mary Jo Richmond
Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis

Parks and Recreation Commission Absentees:

Council Liaison-Mason Carter
Nicholas Augustine
Harry Lashley

Public Attendees:

Jeff Schover – Glade Town HOA
Mary Aune Schover – Glade Town HOA

Staff Attendees:

Bob Hicks
Lin Wang
Kim Tailor

Voting Legend

For-Against-Abstained-Absent

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APPROVED
Nov 9, 2023

Call to Order:

Chair Howard Looney called the Oct 12, 2023, meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from the September 2023 meeting were presented for approval. Charlotte Davis and Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis voted to abstain because they were not in the September meeting. Nancy Allen motioned to approve the September 2023 minutes. Viktor Kraenbring seconded the motion.

The Motion passed 4-0-2-3

PRC Chair Comments:

Chair Howard Looney addressed the importance of conducting effective public meetings. Both Howard Looney and Viktor Kraenbring attended the training session on the Open Meeting Act and the public record retention policy. The main point of the Open Meeting Act dictates that if the commission is conducting any kind of county business, they must publish and invite the public to participate. This is essential because they are dealing with county taxpayers and citizens' businesses.

2024 Community Grant Submission

Kim Taylor presented the Community Grant recipients and their projects as well as some changes next year.

This year, there were four applicants, with scores ranging from 84 to 79.25, and a budget of \$100,000. Since a refund was received from last year, \$28,178.87 will be left for the next year if all current applicants are fully funded.

- Jefferson Place Homeowners Association – renovate an underused sand volleyball court into a community gathering space.
- Glade Town HOA – renovations of two basketball courts which are heavily used and over 10 years old.
- Meadow @ New Market – Phase II trail improvements.
- Wood Spring – Trail improvements.

A new GIS map website is introduced to show all community grant recipients from 1985 to 2023, a total of 244 projects.

Viktor Kraenbring praised the streamlined process of grant application and approval in the past two years.

Howard Looney asked why there were only four applicants. Kim Taylor explained that extra paperwork was involved such as the IRS form. Kim also discussed that the turnaround time for grant applications this year was only four weeks, which proved difficult for many applicants. Therefore, they plan to extend it to two months next year and start advertising in the winter. So next year will be a lot better.

Viktor Kraenbring motioned to approve the submitted community grant applications. Mary Jo Richmond seconded the motion.

Mary Jo Richmond asked the Glade Town HOA representatives why they decided to apply this year. Mary Aune Schover commented that they decided to start gathering everything for their project early thanks to Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis's assistance and Kim Taylor's help.

The Motion passed 6-0-0-3

After the motion passed, Chair Howard Looney commented on the program's impact on the community. He praised the wonderful work being done by the employees and the people working on this program.

Director's Comments:

Bob Hicks shared several updates on parks, recreation, and capital projects.

- Strong turnout with over 400 kids in the youth soccer league and more than 600 in the NFL flag league.
- Super-heroes Training Day took place on Sep 15, with 150 kids and families participating. The Day of the Fairies event at Fountain Rock Park also attracted 150 participants.
- The parks crew has started preparing for winter, focusing on turf care, including composting, aerating, fertilizing, and seeding, with the goal of completing these tasks by the end of October.
- Parks are also working on insulating the Dairy Barn at Utica and making electrical updates.
- Rec staff is currently working on planning winter recreational activities, and they're already thinking ahead for future seasons.
- A parking lot provided by the highway shop yard eliminates the need to go through the forehead property and allows for controlled access with gates. This lot will be enhanced with an enclosure, steps, and a handicap ramp.
- The Division is in the process of hiring for positions:
 - Two full-time rangers
 - Deputy Director
 - Admin Support Supervisor
 - Recreation Supervisor
- Starting a design project for the Ballenger Park which involves redesigning the shop area and rehabilitating historic buildings – Widrick House. The exterior renovation on these old houses is notable, with scaffolding connecting the building's exterior three floors. There are also plans for roof repair to prevent animal and weather damage.
- The Widrick House exterior renovations are being funded by two years of POS allocations. This year's POS allocation will be \$900,000 and will be presented to the Board of Public Works in November.
- The Exhibit Barn and the Carriage Museum at Rose Hill projects are waiting for building permits from Frederick City.
- A pre-construction meeting on the Othello maintenance shop was held recently.

Bob Hicks shared his upcoming retirement on October 25 and his new position in Carroll County as the director. All Commission Members congratulated Bob and discussed the differences between Carroll County and Frederick County, such as the number of municipalities, the number of employees, and how they allocate funds for parks and recreation.

Bob Hicks and Howard Looney presented Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis with the Award for her services.

Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis asked if there were any applicants for the vacant Commission member. She mentioned she knows someone from the Walkersville Parks and Recreation Commission might apply. But that position is a stipend of \$40 per meeting, which makes the person ineligible to be on the County committee. Bob suggested that she needs to contact Joyce from the County Executive office or the County attorney's office for clarification.

The Commission members discussed their terms and possible solutions if there are no applicants. Chair Howard Looney asked all members to spread the word out and tell people who might be interested. Bob Hicks mentioned that Joyce from the County Executive Office may increase some social media or newspaper advertising.

Commission Items:

Charlotte Davis asked about the FY24 Trail Feasibility Study updates. Bob Hicks pointed out that the Trail Feasibility Study is run by the Planning and Permitting department. Joe Kelley is their coordinator and Mark Mishler is their engineering manager. Jeremy Kortright may invite them to the Commission meeting to talk about the study.

- Trail connecting Middletown and Myersville through the Jolly Trail.
- Designing a trail along the railroad tracks, with the first phase connecting to Fountain Rock and the second phase going into the town. This trail is noted to be more challenging particularly when dealing with river crossings.
- Design a road trail with the first phase going towards Manor Woods and eventually extending to the C & O Canal area. Howard Looney suggested including these projects' information in future meeting agendas.

Mary Jo Richmond asked if a park will be included in the 120-acre new school right off Fingerboard Rd near 75. Bob Hicks didn't think a park was planned due to the sheriff's office, substation, the bus depot, and everything else taking up the space.

Mary Jo Richmond discussed the possibility of adopting a different way of appointing Commission members. She mentioned that some organizations like the library board of trustees, where members can be reappointed for another term without going through a formal application and discussion process. She suggested that the PRC could adopt a similar process. Bob Hicks acknowledged that permissions or changes in the county code might be necessary to implement such a change. Jeremy Kortright may need to connect with the County Executive Office and inquire about it.

Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis asked about the updates on implementing a system to coordinate emergency services with longitude, and latitude signs in the parks. Bob Hicks introduced the system which is to make it easier for emergency services to locate people in need of assistance. A representative from Emergency Communications approached the Parks and Recreation team with this idea, inspired by a similar system in Howard County Parks and Recreation. The plan is to place these signs at various locations within the parks, making them easily accessible, such as bridges, trails, playgrounds, or near pavilions. When someone calls 911, they can provide the sign's identifier to help emergency services pinpoint their location. The goal is to enhance safety and communication in park areas. The initiative is still in the planning stage.

Public Comments:

Both Mary Aune Schover and Jeff Schover expressed gratitude for the help and funding received. They mentioned that their organization's funds have been variable, and the support they have received has been instrumental in their efforts.

Adjourn:

There being no further business, Viktor Kraenbring made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and Mary Jo Richmond seconded the motion.

The Motion passed 6-0-0-3

Respectfully Submitted,

Lin Wang
Recording Secretary