



FREDERICK COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
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Frederick, MD 21702
Phone: 301.600.1646
Jeremy Kortright, Division Director

MINUTES

The Frederick County Parks and Recreation Commission March 13, 2025

Parks and Recreation Commission Attendees:

Nicholas Augustine (Chair)
Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis (Commission Member)
Charlotte Davis (Commission Member)
Tamir Shahid (Commission Member)
Jason Schupp (Commission Member)
Mason Carter (County Council Liaison)

Parks and Recreation Commission Absentees:

Daniel Vigus (Vice Chair)
Wayne Watkins (Commission Member)
Nancy Allen (BoE Liaison)

Staff Attendees:

Jeremy Kortright
Joseph Hayden
Carl Lynch
Joseph Murdoch
Heather Heier

Voting Legend

For-Against-Abstained-Absent

6-0-0-3

APPROVED

April 10, 2025

Call to Order:

Chair Nicholas Augustine called the March 13, 2025, meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from the February 2025 meeting were presented for approval. Jason Schupp motioned to approve the February 2025 minutes. Tamir Shahid seconded the motion.

The Motion passed 4-0-2-3

PRC Chair Comments:

Chair Nicholas Augustine had no comments.

Natural Resources Management & Rangers Updates

Presentation by Park Ranger Supervisor, Joseph Murdoch – we currently have 5 Full-time Park Rangers and by the end of this fiscal year we will have 13 Part-time Park Rangers. The Park Rangers work 3 days a week and in the summer months they play an important park in checking our larger parks like Ballenger Creek Park. As the Park Ranger Supervisor, Joseph Murdoch oversees scheduling rangers, budgets, addresses complaints regarding public safety. Our Natural Resource Manager (Carl Lynch) oversees Natural Resources to include working with local non-profits for things like tree plantings or initiatives with public schools and oversees budgets. 365 days a year from 8am to Midnight there is at least 1 Park Ranger on duty for all our county parks. Our Park Rangers are tied into our local 911 call center and have tablets and radios similar to the Sheriff's Department that allows us to communicate with the 911 center and local resources. A big part of our job is education. In order to keep our parks safe and usable for the public we need to educate the community on the rules and regulations. In the last 2-3 years we have seen a huge growth in working with other local agencies on Community Outreach. We partnered with the Sheriff's Office on the first Tuesday in August for the National Night Out. May to September we offer a free programs to the community. We participate in conservation and preservation program such as tree planting and no-mow zones for pollinator habitat.

Presentation by Natural Resource Manager, Carl Lynch – one of the three areas (Education, Readiness and Conservation) we focus on is education and interpretation to keep our community safe and educate, as well as make lovers of the park. If we build that bond and relationships, it reduces vandalism within our parks. We had our first Hunter's Safety Class over the weekend at Othello Park, we kept it to 10 participants and had a waiting list of 50. This program is funded through DNR (Division of Natural Resources). The Middletown Fishing Derby is coming up next month. This is a free event funded by the State of Maryland, they will come out and stock the pond. We had over 100 kids attend last year. We also offer CPR classes, and we are in charge of training our whole division. Junior Ranger and Bark Ranger programs started last year, and they have been very successful. We are building relationships with future generations of people that love the parks. We started the Bark Ranger program because we had dogs not on leashes and people not picking up after their dogs. We also participate in Park Ranger school visits, free Ranger led interpretive programs and public safety events such as National Night Out and World Ranger Day. In 2024 our Rangers logged more than 800 training hours. Some of the trainings included EMR & EMT certifications, Maryland Special Police Officer Certification and Commissioning, Search and Rescue Technician Training, Water Rescue Awareness Training and Traffic Control. An area near and dear to Carl Lynch's heart is our Sustainability and Conservation efforts that we have started in the county. Last year we established 21 acres of designated as pollinator conservation space in Utica, Buckeystown, Ballenger Creek, Kempton and Urbana District parks. We established nesting boxes for birds of prey at Othello Park. We have just shy of 40,000 trees planted within our parks and we anticipate that number going up another 10,000. We have reached out to our community, and they contributed a total of 700 volunteers hours cleaning up trails, monitoring the blue bird boxes, things like that.

Director's Report:

Jeremy Kortright provided updates for the following items:

The Office of Park Management is actively preparing for the spring season with various initiatives. These include athletic field preparation, sensory trail work at Catoctin Creek Park, tree planting at Urbana District Park, CDL training for new staff, and maintenance inspections. Additionally, the Middletown Pond Fountain is undergoing rehabilitation and cleaning, while snow removal equipment is being switched over and site repairs are being conducted.

The Office of Custodial is also busy with several tasks. They are stripping and waxing the conference room at Extensions, preparing equipment for exterior window cleaning, and cleaning out equipment in the Scott Key Center kitchen. Dayshift staff will resume routine cleaning of Othello House, and additional training on Compu Clean is being provided to enhance efficiency.

The Office of Recreation Services has a variety of events and activities planned for the spring. These include the "Luck of the Leprechaun Treasure Hunt" in parks, running now through March 31 with approximately 400 participants, and "A Quest for the Golden Egg" scavenger hunt in parks throughout April, anticipating 100-150 participants. The "Raise the Racks" event for the return of purple martins at Catoctin Creek Park & Nature Center is scheduled for March 29, and the Spring Fling & Egg Roll at Rose Hill Manor is in the final planning stages for April 12. Sports league team organization and practices are starting this month, with approximately 2,000 participants expected for the spring season. Spring Break Camps at nature centers, Rose Hill Manor, and rec centers will take place the week of April 14-18. Athletic field reservations for community user groups on natural turfgrass fields will begin on March 31, potentially March 24. Jeremy Kortright also announced the hiring of our new Fiscal Supervisor, Adam Sees who replaced Kim Taylor.

Commission items:

Chair Nicholas Augustine inquired if anyone had items to discuss, Tamir Shahid gave kudos to how well things are going. Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis praised our kid golf program that her grandson participated in. Charlotte Davis handed out "conservation is a priority" brochures to make the commission aware of the budget cuts that could affect the \$300 million dollars allocated to our state and local parks and suggested to email Senator Young who will have a vote on this. Mason Carter expressed his admiration for our parks in comparison to surrounding counties parks. Nicholas Augustine inquired if the fees raised in July had a positive or negative impact of bringing in new revenue; Jeremy Kortright answered that the total revenue aspect of what was launched last year has not really been seen yet since reservations can take place twelve months prior. We probably won't see in impact until a year from this June. Jeremy Kortright imagines in 4-6 years we will be repeating the revenue evaluation study/process, which is a healthy business practice.

Public Comment:

No Public Comments

Discussion of Next Month (April 2025) PRC Agenda:

In next month agenda we will discuss the following topics: **Preschool Programming Updates on April 10, 2025, at 6:30pm.**

Adjourn:

Chair Nicholas adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m. Mason Carter motioned to adjourn the meeting and Jason Schupp seconded the motion.

The Motion passed 6-0-0-3

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Heier

Recording Secretary