

OCEAN PINES RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES: September 13, 2021

LOCATION: Ocean Pines Administration Building

PARTICIPANTS: OPA Board Liaison, Larry Perrone; Committee Chairperson, Patti Stevens; Program Manager, Debbie Donohue; Laura Scharle; Martha Arthur; Skip Flanagan; Kathi Gottsman; Steve Cohen

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from August 12 meeting were reviewed and the committee voted unanimously to approve.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

UPDATE FROM THE BOARD

Committee Changes: Larry Perrone informed the committee of the appointment of Patti Stevens as the committee chair. He recognized Steve Cohen for his service as chair for the last 2 years.

Public Access to Meetings: He also reviewed requirements for open meetings and ensuring public access. Meetings will be announced to the public prior to the meeting and minutes will be posted on the OP website following review by the committee members.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Debbie Donahue provided an update. She reported the department currently has 7 staff members and has implemented a variety of summer activities that include camps, recreation programs, and concerts in addition to special events, administration and planning for new projects.

Upcoming projects include: Haunted house, Trunk or Treat, and Fall Festival. There is a need for volunteers to support programs. Debbie can be contacted by interested people and has application forms and information regarding requirements for potential volunteers

OLD BUSINESS

Membership: The committee is required to have at least 3 members and no more than 9 members. Currently the committee has 8 members. One new member, Skip Flanagan, has been appointed. Three members have terms ending through November 2021. One of the three has expressed interest in continuing on the committee. Kathi will develop a letter to contact members whose terms are ending. Committee discussed recruitment to invite someone representing youth, young families and one other person. There is interest in obtaining input from renters. Guidelines prevent non property owners from serving on the committee; however, renters can provide input through public participation.

Actions: Committee will review membership status at next meeting. Kathi will report on responses from members whose terms will be ending.

Debbie will contact school personnel to identify a possible youth member and report at the next meeting.

Kayak Rack Installation: Debbie reported temporary racks which have been ordered and are designated for installation at the racquet club are delayed. Location designated for permanent racks needs to be reviewed due to issues related to location in or near wetlands. Current restrictions prevent construction at identified site at the Racquet Club. Options considered should not include eliminating parking. Public works staff will need to assist with development of a specific plan.

Actions: Debbie is communicating with Public Works staff (Eddie) to request their involvement in identifying a new location that will meet wetland requirements and access to launch areas. Once a site is identified, Public Works will be asked to implement the proper planning process.

Committee requested that Debbie report back at the next meeting. Members have agreed to participate in site visit(s) to look at options.

Possible Paddling Event: Patti asked Laura Sharle about the possibility of a paddling event to highlight the new map of water trails she recently developed. Laura has completed and worked with public information staff to post the water trails map on the OP website. The committee thanked for her efforts.

Action: Additional information regarding requirements and feasibility for an event will be provided by Laura at the next meeting before a decision is made.

Inclusive Park Progress: Debbie reported that she has been informally identifying resources and considerations for the park with committee members, park staff in other counties and community members. We currently have demonstrated interest and possible funding from the County Commissioners, support for planning from other counties in Maryland and two vendors who can assist with park design. She advised the committee that this is a complex process that will occur over a period of time, possibly in stages. She recommended that a planning workgroup be established to explore options and ideas for consideration by the committee.

Actions: Place on agenda for discussion and input at the next meeting: Committee will discuss work group make up/participants, charge or goals for the workgroup, timeframe, and possible input by outside partners. Debbie and Steve will invite planner/vendor who volunteered to assist to next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Walktober - Walk Maryland: Walk Maryland is a statewide initiative to encourage MD residents to walk. Two walks have been scheduled on October 6. One will be held in the morning led by Patti on the Library trail and one in the afternoon led by Laura at the Robin Hood Park trail.

The committee reviewed previous discussion about the need to improve community awareness of existing trails. The group also reiterated the need to properly maintain and improve existing trails that include trails near the Community Center, around the lake at the Southgate, the Library Trail that runs along Route 90, and the trail at Robin Hood Park.

The committee also discussed that parking on the shoulder of the parkway is a problem for bikers and walkers. Even though the shoulder is not specifically designated as a bike or walking path the committee will develop information for possible dissemination at the next meeting regarding safety for walkers, bikers and motorists.

Martha also met with golf course Director regarding the possibility of a walk at the course. The course is currently not available. The course would have to be closed to accommodate a walk. This is not possible at this time due the amount of scheduled play and the negative impact on revenue that would occur. The course is currently exceeding projected revenue. Outside play is a significant factor. The Director did indicate there might be a possibility for a special event at a time when the course is not busy. Larry Perrone indicated winter months would be the most likely time to consider this activity.

Action: Skipwill develop language regarding biking/waking safety for review at the next meeting.

Budget Process and Timeline

Larry Perrone reviewed the budget process. Budget submissions are made through the fall. Consideration of projects and needs is part of the formal process which occurs beginning in January. The Board expects the advisory committee to identify the specific need, review the need with staff, and work with staff who will submit specific plans and budget requests for consideration by the Board.

Submitted by Martha Arthur

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15. The next meeting will be held at the Community Center on October 11, 2021 at 7:00 pm.