

Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee
2024 Annual Report

SECTION I: COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STATUS OF TERMS

Name	Date Appointed	On Term	Comments
Bill Barnard	December 2021	1	
Becky Lehnerd	January 2022	1	Chairman
Pam McGregor	December 2022	1	
Kathy Witmer Toth	October 2023	1	Secretary
Gary Schnell	April 2024	1	
Tom & Terri O’Doherty	October 2024	1	

SECTION II: SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES DURING REPORTING PERIOD

1. Committee conducted complete assessments of OPA’s parks, playground and recreational trails and provided the Board of Directors with reports detailing current conditions, areas in need of improvements and maintenance as well as recommendation to improve these facilities. Reports submitted include: Park Signage, Safety, Bocce Court, OPA Park and Trail, and Outdoor Fitness. Condition reports for the following parks and trails: White Horse, South Pond I (including War Memorial), South Pond II, Swim and Racquet Club, and White Horse Kayak launch.
2. Committee initiated monthly walks to monitor conditions in OPA parks, playgrounds, and recreational trails. These walks identify safety concerns, maintenance requirements as well as picking up litter and performing other associated activities to ensure a high level of “usability” of our trail, parks, and playgrounds.
3. Ocean Pines Community Bike Day – In recognition of National Bike Month, the Advisory Committee organized and sponsored the Third Annual OPA Bike Day promoting bicycling in our community. There were 46 participants at the event.
4. Advocated and provided information, including estimated costs for establishing an accessible kayak launch at Pintail Park. The launch has been installed.
5. Advocated and provided recommendations for improvements to the Swim and Racquet club trail. Some improvements to the trail have been completed.
6. Prepared and submitted to the Board of Directors a report recommending establishing an outdoor fitness capability in Ocean Pines.
7. Assessed current state of OPA Adopt a Park program and recommended revisions. OPA updated program guidelines and posted on OPA website.
8. Participated in OP Day and received feedback from the community.
9. Recommended that Bridgewater Park be updated. Park received a new playground and mulch and boarder.
10. Recommended maintaining the Bocce Court at the Yacht Club. Court was resurfaced, bushes trimmed, and lights were installed
11. Involved in having dead trees removed at Whitehorse Park and the Swim and Raquet basketball court area for safety reasons.
12. Involved in having crosswalks added by trails and signage added to the Robinhood trail.

SECTION III: PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND ASSISTANCE REQUIRED

Pedestrian and Bicycle safety

Based on input provided by OPA members in the 2023 survey conducted by the OPA walking and bicycling are the two most popular recreation activities in Ocean Pines with over 80% citing walking and almost 50% of respondents indicating bicycling. Safety on the parkway is paramount to our members enjoying these activities. Common approaches to improving safety and user's comfort level include providing clear demarcation through road markings, including crosswalks, signage – such as “Share the Road”, and clearly marked crosswalks with advisory signage. Based on outreach by the Advisory Committee to the Maryland State Highway Administration, Ocean Pines Association is responsible for maintaining the roads in the community. We recognize important improvement have been made, especially at Manklin Creek Rd at Racetrack Road (MD 589). The committee is advocating that we continue to enhance road safety in the community through several actions.

- Add zebra striped crosswalks with advisory signage, to MUTCD standards, on Ocean Parkway at the following intersections: White Horse Park, Pintail Park, Yacht Club, Sports Core/Library (Cathell Road), Racquet Sports Complex, and Swim and Racquet Club. Additional, as previously recommended, it is also requested that crosswalk markings and advisory signage be added at each street crossing of the Robin Hood trail.
- Continue public safety communications to promote safe use of these facilities with a focus on driver awareness.
- Develop a Bicycle/Pedestrian master plan for Ocean Pines, including an emphasis on connecting the community to transit, local resources (such as library, post office, grocery stores and pharmacies), as well as regional bicycle and pedestrian networks. Opportunities may exist to leverage other activities in this area such as Worcester County's Greenways and Trail plan, as well as the MD Rt 90 project, for instance.

Outdoor Fitness

Based on the results from the fall 2022 and 2023 OPA community survey, the committee recommends the Board consider establishing an outdoor fitness park and/or trail. In the survey, there were many comments about having a gym in our community. As many of our residents already walk, jog, run, or bike to stay active, residents, of all ages, would benefit from fitness parks or trail. Our recommendations were recently provided to the Board for consideration. Several options were detailed (excerpted below):

- **Centralized outdoor gyms:** A centralized outdoor gym is set up like a park, with multiple pieces of equipment in one location. It typically has comfortable surfacing to walk on and may be located near a parking lot or other amenities. These gyms offer a great way to improve access to equipment for people who might live far from an indoor gym. They're also affordable, a great place to socialize and can motivate passersby to get involved.
- **Trail fitness stations:** Another option is to place a few pieces of equipment along a trail or pathway. The trail offers an opportunity for running or biking, while the exercise stations can introduce some strength training for a well-rounded workout.
- **Obstacle course:** Obstacle courses provide strength, agility, coordination, and cardio training to users. There are even kid-friendly options you can add to your outdoor gym. It connects people of all ages and backgrounds to socialize with their loved ones while exercising. It's designed to engage children and families, and you can either choose a pre-designed course or create one of your own.

The committee advocates that the Board consider developing a community fitness plan that would include phasing in each of these, over the next three budget cycles, as time and resources allow. These enhancements to our amenities would showcase our community, increasing its attractiveness across all demographics as a desirable place to live.

Abandoned Tennis Court at the Swim and Racquet Club

The committee has had discussions regarding the abandoned tennis court at the Swim and Racquet club. This facility is currently in disrepair and is unused. It is our conclusion that repurposing this space would benefit the membership. Potentially, depending on how this space is redeveloped, future revenue generating activities could be realized. We urge the Board to consider issuing a charging document to establish a task force of community stakeholders, including youth, to develop a strategic plan for this space.

Bainbridge Park Playground

In previous Annual Reports that committee has recommended funding improvements to the Bainbridge Park playground. This playground is overdue for refurbishment. Improvements that we suggest are:

- Make the playground more accessible and inclusive with new equipment.
- Expand mountain bike trail
- Add more benches, picnic tables and planting shade trees adjacent to the playground.
- Add a safety fence around the playground.
- Add a fountain in the pond to help circulate the water.

It is our view that implementing any (or all) of these changes would add value to this facility and increase usage.

Parks and Trails Safety

Due to the nature of parks and trails, continual maintenance, general upkeep, and preventative maintenance is required. Our committee has detailed the current state of our parks and trail safety in several recent reports. We also advocate the OPA Public Works tracking system be enhanced to better record, track, and report work orders. With this enhancement, communication, and coordination between OPA departments and the Advisory Committees would be more transparent, responsive and lead to efficiencies of effort.

Community Center Gymnasium floor

The OPA Community Center gymnasium serves as the hub for a myriad of recreational activities. Membership of all ages utilizes this facility daily. The gymnasium floor is currently in poor condition. The committee recommends that this floor be refurbished or replaced with a state-of-the-art surface, as soon as possible. Additionally, as a community “asset” we recommend implementing a preventive maintenance schedule to extend the useful life of the surface, and the gymnasium facility.

SECTION IV: REQUEST FOR ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR INCLUSION IN THE NEXT OPA BUDGET. CHAIRPERSONS SHOULD CONSIDER IMPACTS ON THEIR COMMITTEES RELATING TO THE OPA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

Budget Item	Comment	Request Amount
Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Plan	Long range plan, by obtaining consultant service, with the goal to build and sustain a transportation network for all users.	\$ 35,000
Crosswalk installations (signage and pavement markings)	Improve safety of pedestrians and bicyclist by adding crosswalks in front of the Community Center, at Seabreeze lane and the Parkway and by the Rt 90 underpass. Charging document submitted	\$10,000
Outdoor fitness Park and Trail	Improve community members health and wellness as well as increasing the attractiveness of community as a place to life. Charging document submitted	\$5,000 - \$100,000
Swim & Racquet Club abandoned tennis court redevelopment	Use this area for the new fitness park or Potential revenue could be realized with redevelopment of this site. Charging document submitted.	\$25,000
Bainbridge Park	New accessible playground equipment, and perimeter fence.	\$5,000 - \$30,000
Park and Trail maintenance and safety improvements	Continue to maintain parks and trails for the safety of the residents.	\$30,000
Refurbishment of Community Center gymnasium floor	Current condition requires that needed maintenance, or replacement, be completed as soon as possible.	\$25,000 (refurbishment) \$100,000 state of the art replacement)
Maintain and Fix Bocce court, Horseshoe court and shuffleboard courts at Whitehorse Park	Currently these courts are worn and need maintenance. New stake for horseshoe pit, crack fixed and marking repainted on shuffleboard courts, side boards replaced and remarked on Bocce Court. Charging document submitted	\$5,000
Complete fence around Maklin Meadow Park with an access gate to enter and exit.	Residents have requested in the past surveys to have at least two parks that has a fence completely around it with a gate to enter and exit. For safety and security of our children. Charging document submitted	\$15,000
Update QR codes at all park signs to have them linked to each park's individual parks information.	QR codes should reflect the park information so residents and guest can have accurate information on the park they are visiting. Charging document submitted.	\$1000

Maintain and beautify the Swim and Racquet area	Repaint and line the basketball court at Swim and Raquet Add a walkway from the parking lot to the tennis courts Add flower pots and flowers at the entrance of the pool during the season. Reline the parking area Maintain the walking trail regularly and keep bushes trimmed and weed.	\$8,000-\$20,000
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SECTION V: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOARD ACTIONS

1. That OPA fund the development of a Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan for Ocean Pines.
2. That OPA add zebra striped crosswalks, with advisory signage, to MUTCD standard, on Ocean Parkway at the following intersections: White Horse Park, Pintail Park, Yacht Club, Sports Core-Library, Racquet Sports Complex, and Swim and Racquet Club, Seabreeze Lane, Rt 90underpass and the Community Center.
3. That OPA fund the development a Community Fitness Plan that would include phasing in a centralized outdoor gym, a fitness trail, and an obstacle course, over the next three budget cycles.
4. That OPA Board issues a charging document to establish a task force of community stakeholders, including youth, to develop a strategic plan for redevelopment of the abandoned tennis court at the Swim & Racquet club.
5. That OPA fund new accessible playground equipment, and safety fencing, along the perimeter, for Bainbridge Park.
6. That OPA fund needed park and trail safety and maintenance items and enhance Public Works work order system to include regular reporting to the Board and Advisory Committees.
7. That OPA implements a preventive maintenance schedule for the Community Center gymnasium floor and complete needed refurbishment, or replacement, as soon as possible.
8. That OPA fund to update the QR codes to reflect the actual park and its trails or area.
9. That OPA continue to maintain the trail and large bushes in the Swim and Racquet area as suggested by the committee and the residents that live in that area.
10. That OPA fund to update and maintain the Bocce court, horseshoe court and shuffle board courts in the Whitehorse park area.