

## OCEAN PINES RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**MEETING MINUTES:** February 15, 2022

**LOCATION:** Ocean Pines Administration Building

**PARTICIPANTS:** Committee Chairperson, Patti Stevens; Laura Scharle; Steve Cohen; Roy Foreman; Becky Leonard; Bill Barnard

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from January 17, 2022, meeting were reviewed and the committee voted unanimously to approve.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

### REC & PARKS DIRECTORS'S REPORT

Debbie Donahue was unable to attend.

### BOARD MEMBER REPORT

New Board Liaison Rick Farr was unable to attend.

### OLD BUSINESS

Membership: The Committee received an application from Thomas Fraser. The application is under consideration, pending further review. Steve will contact Mr. Fraser about his interest.

Bainbridge Park: Potential space for the new facility has been laid out. Configuration for parking lot and consideration for accessibility were also incorporated into the plan. Next steps include contracting with an engineering firm for a preliminary plan in anticipation of developing an RFP. The plan will provide an estimated cost for the developing the site for an inclusive, accessible playground.

*Action: Debbie is in contact with an engineering firm to develop a preliminary plan, including an estimate cost for site preparation.*

Trail Replenishment: Patti reported that trail replenishment is not included in the OPA budget as it has been considered maintenance. Debbie walked portions of the OP trails and confirmed the need for restoration and repair primarily for the South Gate Pond #2 (Rt. 90) trail and the Robin Hood trail. There is a proposal to use wood chips from downed trees to replenish trail surfaces. It was noted that this type of surface is not desirable in some situations, and its use is dependent on the unique properties of each trail. Patti emphasized the interest in the community for improvements on the OP trail system. There has been a positive response for community walks. The Committee is seeking sponsors for the walks. The events will be included in the OP

Newsletter. Patti stated that these walking events provide an opportunity for participants to provide feedback on the conditions of the trails and identify specific area for maintenance. Roy suggested reaching out to community groups such as the Boy Scouts for volunteers.

*Action: (1) Develop recommendations and provide to Public Works on where and how best to fill and level the trails using wood chips and stone/gravel fill where necessary. (2) Engage volunteers/contract services as needed to assist on trail work.*

#### Kayak Storage:

Patti stated that Debbie is checking on the order for the kayak storage racks. 18 have been ordered and received. Installation at the Swim/Racquet Club facility is anticipated by April. Locks are not included. Kayak/paddleboard storage rental will be added as an amenity to the OPA website once racks are hung. It is anticipated the rental fee will be between \$75-100 per season. Pintail Accessible Kayak Launch: Patti reported that Mr. Viola supports this launch site. It was recommended that the launch be located as close as possible to parking to facilitate accessibility. The launch will be included in the 2023 budget. GM indicated that he will try to complete this sooner. Ideally, this would coincide with the planned improvement to the Pintail bulkheads schedule for Summer 2022. Once the site for the accessible launch is finalized, the additional free-standing kayak storage rack should be installed nearby.

*Action: Determine specific location for Pintail launch site. Complete county permit application.*

Volunteers: A discussion regarding the availability of volunteer provided the following suggestions; consideration for a volunteer coordinator for OPA, adding OPA to the United Way database of volunteer opportunities, coordinating with local civic organizations, such as Kiwanis. It was also noted local high schools have a requirement that students participate as volunteers in the community. Considerations for this including funds for background checks; responsibility for follow-up on background check results; line of reporting for an OPA volunteer coordinator.

*Action: Identify who will create an account for OPA in the United Way Get Connected database and post opportunities. <https://www.uwles.org/volunteer>*

Community Bike Ride: the committee continued the planning discussion for the upcoming OP Community Bike Ride. Saturday, May 21 was decided on as the date, with May 22 as a rain date. The ride will be approximately 12 miles and open to experienced riders age 12 and up. There is a need for a volunteer to operate the "sweeper" truck for any bicyclist that may need assistance. Traffic control will need to be confirmed. Steve will serve as Volunteer Coordinator for the event. Volunteers are needed to place signage on morning of the event. A flyer will need to be produced and provided to Debbie for inclusion in the next OPA magazine edition. Becky volunteer to organize contributions of treats and "prizes". Steve will post an announcement of the event to the Kiwanis.

*Action: (1) Steve will recruit volunteers for Bike Day. (2) Outreach to OP Police and Fire Departments to confirm availability for traffic control (3) Outreach to area businesses*

## NEW BUSINESS

Kayak Safety Awareness Program: Laura is preparing lecture series on kayak safety. Topics will include water safety awareness, tips for equipment purchase and maintenance, overview on safe kayaking, weather forecast and marine information resources, etc. Sessions will be conducted in early spring (March) in advance of Paddle “season”. Notification of lecture series will be included in the upcoming OPA magazine and on the website (under water sports). A discussion of OPA kayak launch site followed.

*Action: Committee volunteers will tour each kayak launch site and report back to the Committee on what improvements may be needed.*

AARP Community Challenge grant application: Bill reported on the application for an AARP Community Challenge. This grant is focused on improvements to trail surfaces, signage, cross walks where trails cross streets, establishing walking groups, monthly walks, and collecting data on trail utilization. Deadline for applying is March 22, 2022. Patti mentioned the Choptank Foundation as an addition source of grant funding.

*Action: (1) Rick Farr, Board Liaison. will present the grant proposal to the OPA Board for endorsement at the next Board meeting on 2/23/2022. (2) Modifications/additions to grant will be made in time for submission by March 26<sup>th</sup> deadline.*

Community Walks: A brief discussion was held regarding establishing some dates for a community walk. Dates and walk leaders will be established. Robin Hood trail and “library” trail (South Gate Pond Trail #2) were identified as trails for the walks. Each trail is approximately 2.5 miles in length.

*Action: At March meeting Committee will determine next steps for community walks to include identifying dates and walk leaders.*

Cross Walk at 589 and Manklin Creek: Installation of a cross walk at Rt 589 and Manklin Creek Rd will be undertaken this spring by the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration. Additionally, Worcester County Public Works is reviewing options for extending a sidewalk from the Rt 589 – Manklin Creek Rd to the 4-way stop at Ocean Parkway. Evaluation of potential right of way issues will be completed as part of the review.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20.

The next meeting will be held at the Community Center on March 14, 2022, at 7:00 pm. Zoom will be available for those unable to attend in person.