

**MINUTES
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
COUNTY OF YORK, VIRGINIA
REGULAR MEETING**

Meeting Convened. A regular meeting of the York County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m., Thursday, January 18, 2008.

Attendance. The following members of the PRAB were present: Ms. Sharon Kline, Mr. Jack Christie, Mr. James Elder, Mr. Bart Barton, Mr. Bill Euker and Mr. Stephen Roth. Absent was Ms. Donna Simkins. Staff present was Ms. Cheryl Sonderman and Mr. Brian Fuller.

Consideration of Minutes. The minutes of the November 15, 2007 were approved with one revision. Mr. Euker asked that the term "soccer" fields be replaced with "athletic" fields under the discussion of the subject of the Sports Field Complex Update.

Election of Officers. Ms. Donna Simkins and Mr. Bart Barton were nominated for Chair. Mr. Barton declined the nomination. On a vote of three yes to one no, and two abstentions, Ms. Simkins was voted Chair. Ms. Sharon Kline was unanimously voted as Vice-Chair.

Overview of Parks and Recreation Division. As requested by the PRAB at the last meeting, Ms. Sonderman gave an overview of the responsibilities and staffing for the Division. Handouts were distributed to summarize this information.

Conservation Needs Assessment Information. Ms. Sonderman provided information on the Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment program. She also distributed excerpts from the County's Comprehensive Plan regarding land use and conservation easements. Discussion followed as to whether or not the County should work with the State to identify tracts of land that could be placed in a conservation easement.

Ms. Kline asked if the 25 acre tract that the County recently obtained next to Seaford Elementary School would be something to talk to the State about placing a conservation easement on. Ms. Sonderman said that she wasn't sure if the State would look at a parcel that size, since their goal was to preserve 400,000 acres of land by the end of the decade. Ms. Sonderman also stated that about 50% of the Seaford property was wetlands and therefore wouldn't support a lot of development. In addition, much of the land in the lower County has constraints which would keep them from being developed. With approximately 50% of the County's total acreage in federal ownership or watershed use, there may not be a need to aggressively pursue conservation easements. While there is some funding in the CIP for these purposes, it is limited.

Communications with the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Barton led the discussion about how to establish effective communications between the PRAB and the Board of

Supervisors. He suggested that the PRAB consider requesting a work session with the Board to discuss various issues relating to parks and recreation services. Mr. Roth indicated interest is formulating a list of agenda items for the work session.

Mr. Barton asked staff about the Board's upcoming schedule of meetings. Ms. Sonderman replied that from now until April, the Board would be focused on the budget. She said that she would forward a copy of the Board's meeting schedule to the PRAB.

Sports Field Complex Construction Update. Mr. Fuller reported that lights on all thirteen fields were installed and that two of the concession/restroom buildings were under roof. The contractor was targeting April/May to lay sod on the fields so that the fields get established during the growing season. The only issue that may affect the schedule would be a possible delay by Dominion Power to get power on the site. The contractor is working closely with the Dominion Power engineer on this issue. The opening of the complex is still being planned for April 2009.

The PRAB asked if there were picnic areas at the new complex. Ms. Sonderman stated that there were some picnic shelters adjacent to the athletic fields, but those were to support the sports teams and spectators. The site was not able to accommodate picnic areas because of all the development constraints. There may be one part of the site near the entrance that could be used as a picnic area but staff was not committing use of that area because it may be needed as a location for a future skate park, which is in the CIP.

Mr. Barton requested that the PRAB take a tour of the complex as part of their annual facility tour in May.

Sports Field Complex Usage Policy. Mr. Fuller provided a rough draft of the usage policy for the Sports Field Complex. He asked that the PRAB review the document and send him their comments. The PRAB agreed to send their comments on the policy to Mr. Fuller by the end of February. Staff would like the policy adopted by the Board of Supervisors in October 2008, when they consider all the other new and revised County policies. The PRAB asked for this issue to be placed on their March agenda.

Dog Parks. Mr. Barton reported that he has been told by Mr. Shepperd, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors that he will be reviewing the March 2007 letter from the PRAB requesting the Board to direct staff to look into the dog park issue. Mr. Barton asked that this item be kept on the PRAB agenda.

Matters Presented by the Board. The PRAB asked staff to explain the conditions of use for the former fly ash sites, Wolf Trap and Chisman Creek Parks in response to an inquiry made from a citizen as to why the gates are locked when the park is not in use. Mr. Fuller replied that the Use Permit and Agreement between the County and Dominion Power for these sites requires scheduled activities to be supervised. The supervision was required in order protect the integrity of the clay/top soil cap that was placed over the disposed fly ash. In addition, the gates restrict vehicular access when there is no supervision on site which is another protective measure for the cap. Also, when the negotiations were taking place in the 1980's between the County and

Dominion Power to develop the sites, citizens in the surrounding neighborhoods expressed concern about people congregating in the parking lots after-hours.

Mr. Barton asked if consideration could be given to moving the gates further back to allow vehicles to park for people that may want to walk in the park when there are no supervised activities taking place. Ms. Sonderman said that a request like could be made but that would have to go through the EPA and Dominion Power to gain approval and could take as long as a year to get a decision.

Mr. Euker asked staff to explain the process of how fields are assigned for use for lacrosse. Mr. Fuller responded that lacrosse has been assigned a field at Bethel Manor Elementary and Yorktown Middle Schools, which are the only locations possible. Mr. Euker asked if the way the field assignments were made was fair. Mr. Fuller explained that it was fair and that lacrosse is actually been given more fields to use than the Virginia Rush Soccer Program, a program that has been in the County for 25 years and has approximately 600 participants. Virginia Rush has been assigned Mt. Vernon Elementary School and uses portable lights that they pay for to accommodate their schedule. Mr. Fuller said that field scheduling is very difficult because their remains a shortage of fields and even though the fields being built at the complex will help, it will not meet all of the demand for fields.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:35 p.m.