

MINUTES
BRUNSWICK COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
July 13, 2021

I. Call to Order

- Laura Botto called the Meeting to order. The Meeting was held in Building G, Parks and Recreation Conference Room.

II. Invocation

- Dale Rabon gave the Invocation.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 13, 2021 Meeting

- **Dale Rabon made a Motion to accept the Minutes as approved and Teagan Perry-Hall seconded. The Minutes were approved 5 to 0.**

IV. Citizens Wishing to be Heard

Rick Griffith, Ambassador for Brunswick County Pickleball was present. Mr. Griffith indicated that the Ocean Isle Beach Park Courts were outstanding but wanted to ask about possible shade options. He explained that currently there is no place to hide. Mr. Griffith plays at OIB Park 5 days a week and 1 evening. During the morning, the courts are packed and all taken with people waiting. He would love to have more courts, especially with so many people moving down. There has been a 650% increase in pickleball. A lot of older developments utilize the courts for tennis and pickleball. New subdivisions are not putting in pickleball courts. Mr. Griffith explained he has been playing pickleball for 4 years and been Ambassador 7 months. He thanked the Board for their time and consideration.

V. Commission Business Session

- **Nomination Committee Recommendation and Election of Officers FY 21-22**

Aaron explained the term expired July 1, 2021 and needed to elect Officers. Dale Rabon nominated Laura Botto and Mike Sullivan. Teagan Perry-Hall seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- **Soccer Citizens Group Aaron Edwards**

Aaron Perkins stated that Aaron Edwards had contacted him about the soccer fields at Ocean Isle Beach Park and his concern that the fields are not being kept up to par. Aaron P. indicated he had shared with Mr. Edwards about the drought we had experienced that led to water restrictions. In addition, Aaron P. stated he had provided some background information to Mr. Edwards regarding Phase 1 and 2 at OIB Park and how the Master Plan was done with citizens wanting baseball fields put into place. Mr. Edwards stated that since he began coaching soccer that he has seen a serious decline in the fields. He was worried about the safety, as well as holes, dryness and fields not being irrigated. Mr. Edwards indicated that children were playing elsewhere which was crazy. He felt if fields were better, we would have more children playing. Mr. Edwards stated our fields look like fairground parking lots. He asked what could be done as citizens, coaches and parents to get the fields looking better. Shared that the baseball fields looked great and soccer looked like garbage. Also stated there was no water fountain at the soccer fields and that the goals and bleachers were falling apart.

Mr. Edwards stated the goals had jagged metal that the kids could get hurt on. Anthony Straw, spoke also stating he had coached the past 5 years for Brunswick County and had 20 plus years' experience up North. Mr. Straw stated at every practice the nets have to be moved back to position and there were no weights on the goals. Mr. Straw said coaches have to tell kids not to climb or hang on nets since equipment is not welded together. Mr. Straw said at one game the referees informed them that one of the nets blew over and could have been a fatality.

Kris Crane asked Mr. Straw did he coach for Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Straw replied yes and that parents hold the goals during games to keep from injury. Mr. Straw stated since the fields are utility fields used by multiple, they need weights and welding done.

David Kesterson shared that he had coached for years and had tweaked his knee due to unlevelled fields at OIB Park.

Aaron P. said we have Parks that the property is wetlands.

Kris Crane said it is soggy in the back corner of OIB Park.

Mr. Kesterson stated his daughter plays in Myrtle Beach, SC and is now going to play in Wilmington, NC. He asked if we have extra money to get in better shape.

Mr. Edwards said we have a lot of people coming in the summertime and would like to see the fields lined in the summer so kids can play then as well.

Kris Crane said the parking lot lines are nonexistent and need to be lined as well.

Teagan Perry-Hall stated her daughter plays soccer at Smithville Park and the goals get moved there also and lines are typically not lined till games.

Aaron P. stated our facilities are used for so many different things and when programs are scheduled the fields are prepared and lined. If we do not have a MOA with someone, we do not spray lines. Aaron P. additionally stated that during Covid we did spray the lines based on we didn't have money being spent on a lot of programs and was able. Aaron P. stated we budget for everything. If we spray lines all the time, we would have those expenses go up.

Mike Sullivan asked if all 3 coaches speaking tonight coached together and if it was rec or travel ball. They stated rec with the County.

Mike Sullivan shared that he had been coaching for years with BCP&R baseball and football. The P&R Department just received the Maintenance Staff back under their division in 2020. Mike said you can reach out to the Maintenance Staff at the Parks and they would help.

Kris Crane said safety takes precedence to lines on the fields.

Aaron P. stated Maintenance Staff returned to our Department July 2020. Site was shut off for over a year then Staff was allowed to mow fields when doing Phase 2. As a Department we will do everything we can to help. Brian Moore and I walked around and resodded and filled in areas. We are a public park and even if we put signs out to not get on the fields the public still does it. Currently Smithville, Northwest and Leland Park have no irrigation on the fields. Lockwood Folly, Cedar Grove, Town Creek and Waccamaw have irrigation. It is hard to keep maintained when we have so much usage. We are currently working on a turf management plan. We currently fertilize and use pesticides as well as top dress. Currently, we have adults who play 7 days a week at Navassa, Leland and Northwest Park.

Mr. Edwards said we need more fields and parks.

Laura Botto asked if the Parks have a safety check list.

Aaron P. stated yes and that we are still looking to hire a Foreman for the Parks. We have made a lot of changes with Maintenance this past year since they returned. When they were working for Operation Services, they had more duties added with recycling and illegal dumping. Staff is spending 8 hours a week loading illegal dumping and taking to the landfill.

Rick Griffith asked if wrong stuff is thrown into recycling does it contaminate it and everything goes to the site. Aaron P. stated yes and that there is so much illegal dumping that we are looking at getting them moved out and have public go to the convenience sites and landfill instead of Parks.

Mike Sullivan asked if Sheriff is aware of this situation. Aaron P stated yes and that Parks were in municipalities so Sheriff can't do anything.

Laura Botto stated she was glad the Soccer Citizens brought these items to our attention. Laura asked if Aaron P. asked for increase in our budget. Aaron P. said slight increase in capital improvements for a playground at Cedar Grove, lights/asphalt at Shallotte Park and little more funding in grounds. Have machine to spray with 5-gallon sprayer to maintain. When Maintenance Staff mows, they touch up with aerosol. Currently have contract with Pioneer who has the better paint.

VI. Director's Report

- **Update on 10 Year Comp Master Plan**

Aaron had Zoom Meeting with McGill and went over rough draft of Plan. Received 3400-3700 surveys and making sure information is correct on the rough draft. Hope to have something in the next few months to look over before making final approval.

- **Update on Smithville Park Project**

Aaron stated in this year 500,000 to add value engineering to include walking trails, basketball courts with lighting and dog park. Working on concession stand and waiting on storm water permit to then get permit for the whole project. Had to move within 400 feet of fire hydrant.

- **Local Baseball/Softball Tournaments Brunswick County Parks**

Aaron stated had big tournament at Town Creek Park and raised \$26,0000.

Laura Botto asked where money went and Aaron stated into the General Fund.

9/10-Year Old's played at Lockwood Folly Park and Leland and Shallotte Teams won.

11/12 Year Old's played at Ocean Isle Beach Park and Leland and Shallotte Teams won.

Dixie Belles and Debs went to State Tournament in Cherryville, NC and Belles won State. Going to Moncks Corner, SC to play World Series.

Dixie Boys/Junior Dixie played at Ocean Isle Beach Park for State Tournament. The Junior Dixie Team won and are going to Louisiana for World Series.

Dixie Pre Majors played at BCC. There was no Brunswick County Team in Tournament, but we hosted Tournament.

- **Comments from Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Members**

Laura stated Dale and Mike had been renewed with 3-year terms on the Board.

Mike asked how were sign ups looking for football. Aaron stated they are trickling in and that everyone waits till last minute. When we returned to Spring sports in the Spring everyone was ready for something and sign ups seemed quicker.

Mike said last week in July that the Southport Cougars will be having football camp at no charge due to Covid.

Dale thanked citizens for coming and said we will do all we can.

Mike thanked citizens as well stating that if you are coaches, he understands what they deal with.

Laura asked that we talk to Commissioners to ask to have our budget increased.

VII. Adjourn Meeting

Mike made a Motion to adjourn meeting and Dale seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

VIII. Meeting Roll Call

Board Members Present: Teagan Perry-Hall, Laura Botto, Kris Crane, Dale Rabon and Mike Sullivan

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Aaron Perkins and Tanya Jackson

Citizens of Interest: Rick Griffith, David Kesterson, Aaron Edwards and Anthony Straw

Next Scheduled Meeting: Tuesday, August 10, 2021