



Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, December 1, 2021 ❖ 7:00 P.M.

DRAFT MINUTES

Virtual Meeting: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YTEwYzg1NjgtOWM4Mv00MjBILWE4M2UtZDA5OWYzYmI1OWE1%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2273ba5b04-4ace-4ae3-a6b2-65cbc403418b%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2288dcaad5-f9e7-4ed3-b8c9-1d3cd1ec8369%22%7d

NOTICE: This virtual meeting of the Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks was held pursuant to and in compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Section 2.2-3708.2 and state and local legislation adopted to allow for continued government operation during the COVID-19 declared emergency.

All participating members of the Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks were present at this meeting through electronic means. All members of the public may view this video of this meeting on the City's website at [Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting \(Virtual Meeting\) \(granicus.com\)](#)

1) Call to Order

- Charley O'Hara called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Members present were Charley O'Hara, Chair, Leslie Rye, Vice Chair, School Board member Laura Downs, Liz Weatherly, Jenna Schroeder and City Council Liaison Letty Hardi. Student Representatives Nate Kusic and Thomas Downs were also present. Staff members present were Danny Schlitt, Director Recreation & Parks, and Jessica Hilgendorf, Senior Administrative Assistant Recreation & Parks.

2) Receipt of Public Petitions and Board Member Petitions

- No Public Petitions or Board Member Petitions

3) Minutes for Approval: [November 3, 2021](#)

- Motion to approve minutes by Laura Downs, seconded by Liz Weatherly.
- Approved 5-0

4) Recreation Directors Report

- Recreation Classes
 - Winter/Spring 2022 brochure should be online by December 10 and mailed to homes on or around December 15.
 - Winter/Spring registration will open January 3 for City residents and January 10 for non-City residents.
 - New classes to include woodcrafts, The Great Food Truck Race, a new toddlers arts and craft class, new tot sport classes, chemistry creations, group drums class, and Country 2-Step.
 - There are also expanded professional day/holiday and spring break camps.
- Early Release Wednesday Program

The City of Falls Church is committed to the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request a reasonable accommodation for any type of disability, call 703-248-5027 (TTY711).

- Fall session of Wednesday Early Release Program at Mt. Daniel and Oak Street continue. Both programs are at capacity with a small waitlist.

- Camps
 - Awarded contracts to those who have asked to be vendors. This does not mean they will be given contracts to hold camps. Class camp providers will be selected. Final selections will be made over the next few weeks. The Summer Camp brochure will then be finalized and staffing for summer camps will begin.
 - Seven school professional day camps were held this fall. All went well with the majority enrolled to capacity. Additional programs were added to accommodate waitlists when applicable.
 - We will be offering eight professional day camps for the winter/spring session along with six spring break camps. The spring break camps will be offered on both the FCCPS and Fairfax County spring break. Registration opens on January 3 for City residents and January 10 for non-City residents. We have coordinated with FCCPS to advertise these programs.
 - We will be offering the camp extended day program - both AM and PM sessions - for spring break. This will be the first time these traditional programs will be offered since the start of the pandemic. We feel the time is right to bring them back and anticipate having them available for summer camp season as well.
 - Based on professional day/break camp registration this past fall, we anticipate high demand and enrollment for these programs.

- Cherry Hill Farmhouse
 - Victorian Society hosted their annual Victorian Christmas Open House at Cherry Hill Farmhouse on Saturday, November 27th. The event was well attended with roughly 140 visitors over 4 hours. The house was decorated for Christmas and the Victorian Society members dressed in period clothes. Outside the house there was caroling and Hoop & Stick, inside the house featured a schoolmarm and Santa.
 - The Friends of Cherry Hill Foundation will be hosting their Children's Holiday Shoppe in the Senior Center this year on December 4 in coordination with the Holiday Gift and Craft show.
 - The Friends of Cherry Hill Foundation will also be hosting two Holiday Teas on December 11 and December 12 at Cherry Hill Farmhouse. These will be their first teas since the start of the pandemic. They have limited attendance to allow for social distancing between parties. Both teas have sold out with a waitlist.

- Arts & Humanities
 - City Council approved the FY 22 Arts and Humanities Project and Operations Grant award recommendations by the Arts and Humanities Grants Review Committee.
 - Grant Recipients this year included Creative Cauldron, Falls Church Arts, Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation, Washington Sinfonietta, The CATCH Foundation and VPIS. Funding included \$23,500 for project grants and \$25,000 for operational grants.

- Senior Center
 - In person programs are going well.
 - In December the French Conversation and New Yorker Discussion group will be transitioning from virtual to in-person.
 - Jazz Ensemble from our High School will be performing on Monday, December 13 in the Senior Center.

- Special Events

- The Veterans Day Ceremony went well with about 100 people in attendance in addition to participants.
 - Holiday Gift and Craft Show will be held on Saturday, December 4 from 9am-4pm and Sunday, December 5 from 11am-4pm.
 - The Meridian HS Chamber Singers and Ensembles will be performing as well as the Oak Street 5th grade band.
 - We currently have 2 supporting sponsors.
 - The number of vendors has increased since our last report.
 - Friends of Cherry Hill Foundation will host their Children's Holiday Shoppe in the Senior Center on Saturday, December 4 instead of the Farmhouse.
 - The City will continue to support Watchnight. We have met with VEPIS and Watchnight organizer Keith Thurston. While organizing the event is slowing moving forward, Watchnight is planned for Friday, December 31. At the moment, the availability of indoor venues is unknown but the plan is to move ahead with outdoor activities.
 - Special Event Application is close to being finalized. The City Attorney is reviewing the application and will make some decisions as to how the application is released and how we can allow people to apply for and host special events throughout the City.
- Youth Sports
 - Youth basketball player assessments have concluded and teams have been formed for grades 2-7 on the boys' side and 2-8 on the girls' side.
 - Assessments and team formation for grades 9-12 are being held this week and team formation will take place the week of November 29 and practices will begin the following weekend.
 - Unfortunately, low registration resulted in the cancelation of the 9-10th and 11-12th grade girls' leagues. The low enrollment does not allow for an alternate option for the few girls who registered.
 - Youngest age groups are officiated by youth referees.
 - Hiring staff for programs such as youth sports has been difficult. Recreation and Parks has reached out to Finance to see if an increase in the hourly rate to attract more youth referees is possible.
 - Staffing for summer camps may see an increase in applicants if a higher hourly rate is offered.
 - The budget has not been finalized but we anticipate having a tight operating budget.
 - May not be able to hold a number of our camps and programs if we cannot staff them. We will work with Human Resources and Finance but one of the major challenges we face is hiring staff at a wage that is fair enough to attract enough candidates.
 - Comment that City Council has been looking at this issue due to the large number of vacancies and staffing shortage in areas such as Public Works and Police and are discussing the possibility of mid-year salary increases.
 - Letty Hardi raised a question regarding the scholarship/low-income/fee reduction program and if there has been an increase in usage of the program.
 - Response that the program has seen an increase in usage. The program has been promoted through the schools, fliers and advertisements. We will continue to take steps to let residents know about the program. We can provide specific dollar amounts spent on the program during our next meeting.
 - Comment that the timing of this information is important. A determination will need to be made in January if the scholarship amounts are to be increased or remain the same for the next budget.

- Response that we can provide the Board with the current usage of the fee reduction program in dollars spent.
- Comment that the Board can be an advocate for increased funding.
- Letty Hardi asked if there was a decline in enrollment in youth basketball across all age groups or if the decline is more acute in two specific age groups.
 - Response that enrollment in youth sports is down across the board. We attribute this to COVID and individual preference during the pandemic. Registration is down as much as 30% in our classes and programs. The decline in youth basketball registration is not at 30% overall but girls' basketball enrolment is down 30% at the older age groups. The decline in boys' enrollment is not as large.

5) New Business

6) Old Business

- Charley O'Hara inquired into if the voluntary concessions from Founders Row I have been deposited.
 - Response that the question has been asked but there has yet to be a clear answer. We will look into it and report back.
 - Letty Hardi commented that the school capital contributions have come in and it is possible that parks contributions have come in as well.
 - Charley O'Hara suggested to begin looking into Berman Park improvements with these funds. Given how long it has taken to move forward with Fellows, beginning planning for Berman Park should be a priority.
 - Response to clarify that the CIP is to replace existing playground equipment. We were not anticipating going through a master park planning process but rather to reach out to contractors to come up with ideas for replacing the equipment when the money is available.
 - Charley O'Hara commented that it may be helpful to involve the community in the planning process to find out what equipment they would be interested in. This would follow the plan taken for Big Chimney's Park improvements.
 - Response that we will confirm that we have money for the project. At this point we don't believe money has been bonded to the project so it will still be some time before the project gets underway. In the meantime we can start brainstorming ideas.
 - Jenna Schroeder requested an update on which parks are being considered for refurbishment and if ARPA funds are being used.
 - Response that Berman Park updates are a preplanned CIP project that will receive funding through the voluntary concessions from Founders Row I. At this point, none of the money allocated for this project is from ARPA funding.
 - Further response that we have not seen any of the ARPA spending that included any of the items that were sent forward to Finance from Recreation and Parks. These projects were presented in the October 2021 Advisory Board Meeting. Confident that at some point the trickle-down effect will free up money to allow for projects to be completed. If money is taken off of the current CIP because

ARPA will fund a number of projects (i.e. storm water, infrastructure, etc.) it should free up the ability to add projects or move them forward in the CIP.

- Cavalier and W. Westmoreland projects are considered for future CIP but have not been move forward as a result of APRA funds.

A) Park project update

1) Fellows Property

- Charley O’Hara asked if any comments on the draft had been received.
 - Response that Charley O’Hara submitted comments. Some of these comments were factual or could be changed without being vetted by the Board. These comments were incorporated into the draft presented this evening. Comments which remain will be discussed. The goal is to prepare the document for a community meeting. Would like to make a decision about how this document will be brought to the community.
 - Concerned raised that a January 5, 2022 community meeting to be held during the monthly Advisory Board meeting may be too soon after the holiday. Consider proposing that we meet on January 5, 2022 if needed, if not, move our meeting to later in the month and hold the community meeting at that time. Come to a decision if the meeting will be in-person or virtual.
 - Suggestion that it may be best to wait to later in the month or February to hold a community meeting.
 - Response that waiting until later January or early February would not dramatically impact the timeline. Have promised to have the master plan ready to go before City Council in early summer 2022. Prior to going before City Council, the master plan will need to be reviewed by other Boards and Commissions, City Planner, etc.
 - Suggestion to highlight changes to the document during this meeting.
 - Response that we could go through each item or look at changes. Would like to have this document posted to the City website for community review prior to the community meeting.
 - Suggestion to only highlight changes to the document since the last version.
- Changes Made:
 - A. Park Purpose
 - 4. Provide a variety of passive and limited active recreation activities for all age groups
 - B. Desired Future Visitor Experience
 - 1. Visitors will be able to participate in a variety of passive and limited active recreational activities.
 - 3. Visitors will be able to enjoy a natural park scape with possible limited active recreation to be explored.
 - Addition of “limited” to the above three items.
 - Comment that “limited” dissuades the public from thinking of soccer playing, sports, etc.
 - Suggestion to remove the word “active.” Some people view active as sports even if it is written as “limited active.”

- Comment in response that some activities such as a walking on the trail is active recreation. Would like to include “limited” to allow for the inclusion of light active recreation activities in the future.
- A. New Plan Elements
 - 1. Park Access
 - Park access from South Oak Street is the preference from a majority of survey respondents. However access can should still be included from Fellows Court and Parker Avenue.
 - Replaced “can” with “should.”
 - Suggestion that “can” was not strong enough a word. If a nature trail goes around most of the property and an access point is not included from Fellows Court and Parker Avenue, visitors will create an access point from the side streets.
 - Liz Weatherly raised a question regarding parking on Parker Avenue and if access to the new park will reduce available parking. Further question if the school has been notified of the possible change and what the process is.
 - Charley O’Hara responded that the trail access point would be 4 feet wide, made of the same materials used for the pathway. The access point may be on the storm water side of the property as it is the most level. There will likely be 10-12 parking spaces from Oak Street to the park access point. If any parking spaces are lost, it will most likely be only one.
 - Question raised by Liz Weatherly if the possible loss of parking is something we should inform the schools of in advance?
 - Response that it may make sense to present this to the schools at some point in the planning process. If you wanted to include a statement to the effect that park access is important but, you don’t want to limit the availability of parking, it can be incorporated into the plan.
 - Further elaboration that the schools should see this plan since does have education components within the master plan.
 - Laura Downs will reach out to FCCPS Superintendent Dr. Noonan to find out who the best point of contact for this would be and will circle back.
 - Response we have a few months until we are at that point.
 - Board agrees with removal of “can” inclusion of “should.”
 - Response that we could also put in a caveat understanding that these areas might get used for parking and to be cognizant of that.
 - Charley O’Hara is satisfied without the additional wording but if the group would like the additional wording included there are no objections.
 - 2. Interpretative Signage
 - The main body of text remains unchanged. A second boy paragraph has been added.
 - “The extent of the signage should be designed so as not to overwhelm the natural feel of the property. This should be considered in the number, placement and material used.”

- The Board is in agreement to keep this second body paragraph.
 - 5. Nature Trail
 - The body lists “nature trail, kiosk and/or markers”
 - Suggestion to either broaden the heading to include more items or limit this to nature trail only. The other items can be included in three different categories – one each for nature trail, kiosk and markers.
 - 6. Bike Path
 - Suggestion that if there is no support for a bike path it should be removed.
 - Further suggestion that this is an item that should have a consensus from the Board if it stays on the plan.
 - Further comment that as a Board the bike path was not approved but it may have been left it on the draft as an item for the community to review.
 - Suggestion to remove the item at the moment and add if the community requests.
 - No support for the item to remain on the master park plan. The item will be removed.
 - “Neighborhood Park” has been removed as it is a term that is no longer in use. “Community Park” remains as it is the term that is used.
 - Benches and Open Space listed under items removed have been removed from the list. Benches and open space are still included in the master plan.
 - No objections from the Board on the removal of items.
- Discussion on meeting schedule going forward:
 - Concerned raised that a January 5, 2022 community meeting to be held during the monthly Advisory Board meeting may be too soon after the holiday. Consider proposing that we meet on January 5, 2022 if needed, if not, move our meeting to later in the month and hold the community meeting at that time. Come to a decision if the meeting will be in-person or virtual.
 - Suggestion that it may be best to wait until later in the January or February to hold a community meeting.
 - Response that waiting until later January or early February will not dramatically impact the timeline. Have promised to have the master plan ready to go before City Council in early summer 2022. Prior to going before City Council the master plan will need to be reviewed by other Boards and Commissions, City Planner, etc.
 - Comment from a that it may be best to hold a community meeting in February to receive comments, look at approving the master plan in March, send to Council and have them review the draft.
 - Response that there will probably be a few months of community meetings. We are still scheduled have a January Advisory Board Meeting but there will not be a community meeting regarding Fellows in January. The community meeting will be held in February.
 - Comment that the school can put information about community meetings in the daily school newsletter.
 - Question raised by Charley O’Hara as to whether the group is comfortable moving to in-person meetings now that the vaccine is available for younger children.
 - Comment to move forward with the majority decision.

- Comment to accommodate the needs of the least comfortable person in terms of transitioning to in-person meetings.
- Question raised by Leslie Rye if hybrid is a possibility?
 - Letty Hardi commented that the original plan was that everyone would have to return to in-person meetings in January 2022 due to the lifting of the state of emergency. The City Clerk and City Attorney announced this week that we can remain virtual due to a local state of emergency.
 - Letty Hardi explained that if we transition to hybrid meetings, Board members will be capped at attending 25% of meetings a year virtually. For Recreation and Parks Advisory Board members, this would be 3 meetings a year.
 - Further comment that going forward, the Omicron variant may be a concern.
 - Further explanation that there must be a physical quorum to hold a meeting.
 - Comment from that this may be difficult since we are down one member which makes it harder to have a quorum.
 - Suggestion that we remain virtual through January to allow for more information about the Omicron variant to be available. This also pushes back the number of meetings members can miss should we move to a hybrid meeting scheduled in the future.
 - Response that if we do go back to having members participate virtually, we may go back to having members participate virtually through a telephone as was the case prior to COVID-19.
- The meeting schedule going forward has been determined to be a virtual meeting of the Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks on January 5, 2022. A community meeting will be held in February 2022. At the moment this meeting is planned to be held virtually due to the number of expected attendees. The Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks will consider returning to in-person meetings in March 2022 and will revisit this topic in January 2022.

2) Student Representative Report

- Thomas Downs reported that the Schoology questionnaire form has been created. At this point the form needs to be sent to middle school and high school students.
- Suggestion to show the questionnaire form to the Board before distributing the form on Schoology.
- Student Representatives Nate Kusic and Thomas Downs are in agreement to show the Schoology questionnaire to the Board at the January 2022 meeting.
- Request for student representatives to reach out to their peers to let them know about job opportunities offered through Recreation and Parks, particularly as referees and scorekeepers through the youth sports basketball program.
- Further explanation that we are trying to increase the hourly rate. If we are unable to have enough referees on staff, we may have to contract out. The preference would be to have community youth involved in staffing the program.
- Laura Downs has offered to work with Jimmy Ruby to work on language for an announcement to be made to the high school over Schoology. This can also be run in morning announcements.

- Response that Jimmy Ruby will reach out the Board member.

7) Adjournment

- 1) Laura Downs motioned to adjourn. Liz Weatherly seconded. All approved 5-0.

Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks Staff liaison: Jessica Hilgendorf, 703-248-5027 (TTY711), jhilgendorf@fallschurchva.gov

Instructions for joining a Microsoft Teams meeting:

[Click here to watch a video with instructions for joining a Teams meeting](#)

Join a Teams meeting on a phone or tablet

1. Click the meeting link provided.
2. **Download the Teams app for your device when prompted:**
 - Type in your name.
 - Choose the audio and video settings you want.
3. Select **Join now**.
4. Depending on meeting settings, you'll get in right away, or go to a lobby where someone in the meeting can admit you.

Join a Teams meeting on the web or through a web browser on a phone or tablet

Don't have the Teams app? You can still join a Teams meeting.

1. Click or copy and paste the meeting link provided.
2. You have two choices:
 - **Download the Windows app:** Download the Teams app.
 - **Join on the web instead:** Join a Teams meeting on the web.
3. Type in your name.
4. Choose the audio and video settings you want.
5. Select **Join now**.
6. Depending on meeting settings, you'll get in right away, or go to a lobby where someone in the meeting can admit you.