

## **BOTETOURT COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

The regular meeting of the Botetourt County Parks & Recreation Commission was held on **Monday October 3, 2022**, in Room 212 at the Botetourt County Administration Center.

**Members Present:** Mr. Tim Snyder (Chairman), Mr. Matthew East, Mr. Alan Bayse, Mr. Robert Campbell, Mr. Steve Clinton, Mr. Dean Hackett  
**Members Absent:** Mr. Danny Agee, Mr. John Mays  
**Others Present:** Mandy Adkins, Director of Parks & Recreation  
Shontae' Wade, Recreation Manager  
Chris Mundy, Recreation Program Coordinator

**Mr. Snyder called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Due to two of the three members who attended the September meeting being absent, Mr. Snyder tabled the approval of September meeting minutes until the next meeting.

### **New Business**

#### Recreation Department Report

Mrs. Adkins indicated the Recreation Incentive Fund application is now open, accepting applications through November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.

Mr. Snyder asked if she received any feedback on the changes to the application. Mrs. Adkins says she has not heard any feedback.

Mr. Hackett asked if any language was added to the application about private companies applying for funds.

Mrs. Adkins says no changes were made after the discussion last month. The application may be revisited next year to decide if significant changes are necessary.

#### Fall Athletic Update

Ms. Wade updated the Commission on recent fall athletics activity. A Booster Club meeting was held on September 21<sup>st</sup> at which the Booster Club members provided positive feedback on uniforms and the start of the fall season as well as many suggestions for future changes and improvements.

Ms. Wade said that winter basketball registration is open; 160 players and 31 coaches have already registered. Mrs. Adkins thanked Botetourt County Public Schools for their cooperation in distributing registration flyers and indicated Mr. Moser has been a big help to the department.

Mr. Hackett commented that in the past the communications relationship between the Department and Botetourt County Public Schools has been lacking and commended the group on the improvements made here.

Mrs. Adkins explained that quarterly meetings have been organized to include Parks & Recreation staff, school athletic directors, and county maintenance staff to help improve communication. Mr. Campbell commented that he received feedback after the first quarterly meeting that it was very productive for BCPS staff.

Mrs. Adkins introduced Chris Mundy to Mr. Hackett and Mr. Bayse. Mr. Snyder asked how Mr. Mundy has been doing in his new position. Mrs. Adkins and Ms. Wade reported that Mr. Mundy has hit the ground running and been an incredible asset to the team. Mrs. Adkins explained she had a recent interview with an administrative assistant applicant that went well and she hopes to fill that role soon.

Mrs. Adkins provided an update on the Alpine river access parking improvement project. The VDOT land use permit has been approved. Construction will begin after the County issues the Land Disturbance Permit. Mrs. Adkins demonstrated on a satellite map where the parking lot will be expanded.

Mr. Hackett suggested the department coordinate that project with the railroad. Mr. Snyder expressed that that this project has been a long time coming and he is happy to see it progressing.

Mrs. Adkins mentioned an upcoming movie in the park and trunk or treat event in partnership with Buchanan PTA on October 21st. They will show Addams Family 2 following a trunk or treat event.

Mr. Campbell asked if Parks & Recreation has also partnered with the other elementary schools to do similar events. Mrs. Adkins responded that the intention was to do an event within each magisterial district but that did not happen due to staffing challenges in the office. Other schools have organized events on their own.

Mr. Campbell stated that Rec Night at Lord Botetourt High School was the same night as an Elementary School hosted movie in the park so community members had to choose. He explained there was a great turnout at Rec Night.

Mrs. Adkins explained that in the past James River and Lord Botetourt held Rec Night on the same night and participants had to choose. After feedback, the school athletic directors decided to hold the events on different nights and the community really enjoyed it. Mrs. Adkins thanked Ms. Wade for her work on the logistics of coordinating those events from the Parks & Recreation office.

Mrs. Adkins stated that while a copy of the basketball rules for the upcoming winter season were provided to members, no significant changes were made. A few small changes were made from last season's rulebook to provide clarity on questions that arose last year.

Mr. Snyder asked for an update on coaches and registration procedures. Mrs. Adkins explained that the procedure for coaches background checks has changed. The Parks & Recreation office has begun creating badges to give to coaches once they have cleared a background check and the badge contains the background check expiration date and serves as proof of clearance to coach.

Mr. Snyder inquired about the funding for a new museum. Mrs. Adkins responded that she has not been involved in that project, the acceptance of the grant was discussed at the last Board of Supervisors meeting and Mr. Clinton may have more information on that topic. Delegate Austin was involved in securing that funding for the County.

Mr. Clinton responded that Mrs. Adkins is correct and it has not been decided where that project will fall within County Administration. Mr. Clinton said the location will likely be the old Courthouse square.

Mr. Bayse asked if it would be a good idea to create dual use tennis and pickleball courts and whether funding for a project like that is available or would need to go to the Board of Supervisors. Mrs. Adkins replied by explaining that such a project would need to go through the Board of Supervisors. Two pickleball courts would cost about \$60,000. Mrs. Adkins and Administration are looking at the budget and the Greenfield Master Plan to determine possibilities. Mr. Bayse asked about rental income from pickleball courts as a funding source for a potential facility. Mrs. Adkins responded that the department does currently rent facilities and generate income.

Mr. Bayse commented that people would like an indoor facility to use through the winter. Mr. Bayse asked what happened to the indoor soccer discussions and a partnership with Roanoke Stars. Mrs. Adkins replied that those discussions predated her time at Parks & Recreation.

Mr. Bayse commented that maintenance is doing a good job maintaining the fields at Greenfield Recreation park, he sees them frequently when he walks. Mrs. Adkins thanked Mr. Bayse for his comments and will pass them along to the Facilities and Maintenance team.

Mr. Bayse asked Mrs. Adkins about getting the sports complex painted, saying it should not cost too much money and the facility is showing signs of age.

Mr. Snyder said he reached out to the citizen who planned to speak about pickleball at last month's meeting and was unable to reach him. Mr. Snyder did not hear back from that citizen.

Mr. Snyder asked Mrs. Adkins if there is any update on the proposal for Roanoke College Softball to play at the sports complex this spring. Mrs. Adkins says she is still working on the details of that plan. Mr. Snyder inquired when that season would start. Mrs. Adkins responded it would start February 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Bayse asked if a study has ever been done on the revenue from the complex. Mrs. Adkins responded that she believes one was done previously but she has not seen it. Mr. Snyder added that he believes there have been significant changes to the complex since a study was done and it is probably time for a new one. Mr. Bayse said another locality told him they bring in about \$60,000 from a tournament.

Mr. Bayse mentioned the old Colonial building and asked what ever happened to the old colonial building. Mr. Hackett says nothing has been done with it. Mr. Clinton says the County put out an RFP for interested parties and it would require a revenue generating component. He has not heard anything on that in 6-8 weeks. Mr. Clinton adds that it would be very costly to update the building.

Mr. Hackett asked if the Sports Complex has its own budget and is it adequate for improvements. Mrs. Adkins explained that yes, the Complex has it's own budget and it does include basic improvements.

Mr. Bayse stated that the fields at the complex used to be immaculate and that the County is not doing anything to improve the facility. The facility is being maintained but not improved. He added that one advantage Botetourt has is that we have the room to expand.

Mrs. Adkins indicated three are funds in the FY23 CIP budget to complete field 5 including sidewalks, fencing, and dugouts which will be a large improvement to the Complex.

Mr. Bayse said he is not aware of any improvement to the complex since Pete Peters left the department. If we're just going to maintain it, it is going to deteriorate. Field 5 is a nice addition, but the Complex needs to be improved. In the past, you could not find a weed even around the outside of the fields because they were so well cared for.

Mr. Hackett said he believes the Complex is showing some age. It makes him question whether we even have the money to maintain the facility properly given what is being seen. Mr. Hackett commented that Salem is putting 27 million dollars into their Moyer Complex. He continued by adding that Botetourt only has one chance to provide a first impression when people see the Sports Complex. It should provide a good impression when people visit. Every team that plays Roanoke College this spring represents new eyes on the complex and potential future tournaments. He added that field 5 is nice but maybe we need to use that money to make the main fields shine because lots of new eyes will be on the complex in the next year.

Mr. Clinton commented that he believes those comments are all accurate and the facility has declined over the last eight years or so. Mr. Clinton added that finances are tight for the next few years because of the Courthouse building and public law enforcement activities, new ambulances and fire equipment. Mr. Clinton believes the Complex has been neglected and that the Commission can play a role in fixing this. Mr. Clinton cited county budget data which showed from FY14-FY21 the Parks & Recreation budget without the Sports Complex had a 24% increase over 7 years, 3.4% per year. With the Complex added in, the operations budget from FY14-FY21 declined by about 3%. He clarified that those figures do not include any capital improvement funds.

Mr. Clinton summarized by stating that during a period where the county budget increased 48%, the Parks & Recreation budget increased only 24% and the Sports Complex declined 3%. Mr. Clinton says he believes that advocacy from the Commission to the budget committee is necessary. Mr. Snyder asked Mrs. Adkins for her thoughts on the topic. Mrs. Adkins indicated she advocates for funding in the budget taskforce and that having additional advocacy come directly from the commission wouldn't hurt.

Mr. Bayse commented that a 3% decline in sports complex funding over the last seven years seems to explain the maintenance issues the Commission has been discussing.

Mr. Hackett said that obviously the County has limited funds, but what the County does with them is a reflection of what is important. He added that it is easy for the County to ignore funding for Parks & Recreation if no one but the Director is advocating for it.

Mr. Snyder suggested creating an annual report, and attending Board of Supervisors meetings. Mr. Clinton suggested the Commission consider a resolution supported by data.

Mr. Hackett explained he believes there is a big desire for sports to grow in this region. The County has the facilities to host events. He continued that there is only one facility in the area to host a National Championship football game and that is in Salem. The county has to adequately maintain it's facilities.

Mrs. Adkins agreed that there is a huge demand for sport tourism in this region. USA cycling is a great example, Botetourt County has some opportunities other areas do not. Mr. Hackett said we need to fill the gaps of what is not available. Pickleball could be a good example of that, Botetourt could be the place that people come to play.

Mr. Hackett continued that it is hard to do that in an environment where the Parks & Recreation budget increased only half of the overall county increase, 24% vs 48%. That clearly doesn't show a commitment to recreation. In order to compete, we have to pay. Mr. Hackett expressed the need for better advocacy for this department.

Mr. Bayse stated that when the complex was built, it was said that the facility was the best for softball east of the Mississippi. The frisbee course was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the country, now it has deteriorated. If the Complex is only maintained, it will deteriorate over time, and it has not even been adequately maintained.

Mr. Bayse added the concession stand at the sports complex should bring in a considerable amount of money, even if prices need to be raised. The upstairs facilities in the complex are talked about amongst umpires. Mr. Bayse wants the county to be known for their facilities. He added that companies look for quality facilities for their employees and families when deciding to make investments. The facilities need to make money for the county, and they will not do that if we don't draw people to them.

Mr. Snyder asked to follow up on this conversation with Mr. Clinton. Mr. Hackett added he would support a resolution from the commission on this topic.

Mr. Snyder said he looks forward to next month's meeting when the incentive fund applications will be presented. He asked Mrs. Adkins for an advanced look at those applications as they come in so commission members can come prepared. Mr. Snyder stated the goal will be to approve applications so that they can be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for approval and that it will be an important meeting.

### **Locality Reports**

There were no locality reports.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Hackett moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bayse seconded the motion. Mr. Bayse, Mr. Snyder, Mr. Hackett vote aye, motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 7:48pm.