

Parks and Recreation Meeting
Monday, February 23, 2015
Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center

The regular monthly meeting of the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Monday, February 23, 2015. The following commissioners were present: Chair John Marr, DD Dawson, Dany Fleming, Joe Riley and Abe Shearer. Also present were Lee Foerster, David Wigginton and Wanda Jones from Parks and Recreation.

1. Welcome, Introduction of New Commissioner – Chair John Marr welcomed all present, and introduced Dany Fleming, the new School Board Representative.
2. Consider Approval of January Meeting Minutes – With no additions or corrections, the minutes of the January meeting were approved.
3. Consider Election of Officers – The Commission decided to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair. DD Dawson was elected Chair and Ritchie Vaughan was elected Vice Chair.
4. Discussion of LWCF Grant Application – Parks and Recreation is in the process of filling out the application for a Land & Water Conservation Grant. This grant will be used to continue work at Smithland Fields. With this grant and money from the City, we should be able to construct two fields, a parking area, water lines and a trail. A restroom and paving of the road will be done at a later date. Work should start in late winter, early spring of 2015/2016. If we do get this grant, we will have to do an easement stating “according to the Land and Water Conservation Act, this acreage will remain in outdoor recreation use in perpetuity”.
5. Youth Football Program Transition Process-Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation has made the decision to move the youth football program to a board led program. This board consists of 11 members, including Tommy Thomas and Erik Dart, Athletic Specialists from Parks and Recreation. This board has one goal in mind, making the league fun with an emphasis on teaching the fundamentals of football and sportsmanship with safety a top priority!
6. Odds and Ends from Director – The Dog Park is currently closed due a water line installation. The dog park could use the break from the overwhelming use. We may have to chip the entire area. We are in the process of having new lights installed in the parking lot at the CFG/CAC. The tennis court gates are currently being locked due to a dog walker letting her dog use the courts as a restroom. Hopefully, they will find somewhere else to go, so the gates can be unlocked. The new vendor for Heritage Oakes is Prosecco’s from Bridgewater. They will start mid March. A vote was taken to cancel the March meeting as it is only three weeks away.
7. Comments, questions from Commissioners – The Commission was very fortunate to have John Marr as Chair. We do not want people on the railroad tracks at Smithland. With three separate park areas and shrubs, poison ivy, etc. growing along the tracks, this will be discouraged. It is great that departments work together on these projects. Mayor Chris Jones stopped by with glowing comments about Parks and Recreation. Why did Athletics want this transition now? With security issues, parent/player/coach issues, it was time. This also opens up time for Athletics to work other programs. One commissioner commended Tommy and Erik for stepping up and doing this transition and one congratulated them for getting ahead of these problems and putting some responsibility back on the parents and community. Any other big changes coming? Will start a draft for the Pee Wee league, like the Junior League, to split up diversity, etc. Hopefully the second dog park at Ramblewood will take stress of the Smithland Dog Park. We have gotten comments regarding putting the little dogs with the bigger dogs.
8. Adjournment – With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

**The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 20, 2015 at 7:00pm
At the Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center.**

