

Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes – September 19, 2016
Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center

The regular monthly meeting of the Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation Commission was held on Monday, September 19, 2016 at 7:00 pm in the Community Activities Center. Chair D. D. Dawson called the meeting to order with the following commission members present: Joe Riley, Ritchie Vaughan, John Marr, Abe Shearer, Chris Pipkins and Brent Holsinger. Absent was Deanne Reed. Also present were Luanne Santangelo and David Wigginton from Parks & Recreation and Eddie Bumbaugh from “Plan/Build our Park Project.”

- Welcome – D.D. Dawson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.
- Approval of the August 15, 2016 meeting minutes – Chris Pipkins motioned to approve the August meeting minutes, seconded by John Marr. Minutes were approved as written.
- Upcoming Special Events and Noteworthy Numbers - David Wigginton highlighted upcoming events and news for the months of September and October. He covered Parks & Recreation upcoming events as well as City wide events. David also covered highlights from Parks & Recreation staff events and activities focusing on enrollment and participation numbers for summer events.
- Presentation by Eddie Bumbaugh – “Build our Park” - Eddie presented the history, current status and future plans for “Plan our Park”. From the initial Build our Park committee a new Plan our Park board with a Board of Directors has been established. The new Board of Directors is pursuing designation as a non-profit organization but until that time they have set up a fund with the Community Foundation. Eddie presented a new theme for the playground that he would like the Recreation Commission to consider. Eddie stated that the project will not work without Parks & Recreation Department and Parks & Recreation Commission’s cooperation.

Councilman Abe Shearer spoke from City Council’s perspective. He highlighted the fact that support and endorsement of this project would take priority over current CIP projects, many of which have been needed and requested for years. He also reminded the Commission that essential services, police, fire, rescue, public works, public utilities’ needs will take precedence in regard to CIP and any funding that might be available.

Parks & Recreation Director Luanne Santangelo talked about the importance of maintaining and enhancing existing facilities prior to development and construction of any new. It is important to maintain what we currently have for the long term enjoyment of those in the City. Consideration also needs to be given to the additional operating costs to the budget for new facilities.

The Parks & Recreation Commission liked the conceptual idea of a new downtown park but hesitated endorsing or approving a concept plan if it meant that a downtown park would be given priority over other CIP items that Parks & Recreation currently has within its department. Some of these CIP items have been submitted consistently over a 10 + year period and the Commission felt the departments CIP needs should take priority.

The Parks & Recreation Commission did agree that looking at another theme for the playground was probably a good idea. Currently it is a “boat” theme and the committee/board is considering a “rock” theme to coincide with the city / county’s biggest topography and outdoor activity features.

Also, John Marr agreed to serve as the liaison between the Board of Build our Park and the Parks & Recreation Commission; Abe Shearer motioned that John Marr serve as liaison between the Board of “Build our Park” and the Parks & Recreation Commission, seconded by Ritchie Vaughan and the motion was approved by the Recreation Commission.

- Updates, Comments, Questions – Our next meeting will be held Monday, October 17 when we will discuss the upcoming CIP submitted to the City Manager.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center