

**Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes – January 28, 2019**  
**Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center**

The regular monthly meeting of the Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation Commission was held on Monday, January 28, 2019 at 7:00pm at the Community Activities Center. The meeting was called to order with the following commissioners present: James Logan, Kevin Gibson, Daniel Martonik, Obie Hill, MuAwia DaMes, Deanna Reed, Chance Ebersold, Donna Armstrong; present from Parks and Recreation: Luanne Santangelo and Erik Dart.

1. Meeting Called to Order-The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Welcome- Commission/Parks and Recreation members introduced themselves to the group and briefly discussed why/how they became involved as commissioners.
3. Approval of October 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes- The October 15, 2018 meeting minutes were approved with a unanimous vote. Commissioners discussed an alternate meeting day due to Federal holiday of upcoming meeting (i.e. February 18, 2019- President's Day) Commissioners unanimously agreed to reschedule next month's meeting to February 25, 2019- 7 p.m.
4. Nomination of new Chair- MuAwia DaMes nominated Kevin Gibson as new Chair, seconded by James Logan. Nomination was unanimously approved. Nomination of new Vice Chair- Deanna Reed nominated Dan Martonik as new Vice Chair, seconded by MuAwia DaMes. Nomination was unanimously approved. Chair and Vice Chair solicited volunteers to record meeting minutes; Obie Hill volunteered.
5. Report, Kevin Gibson (Chair) and Dan Martonik (Vice Chair) /
6. Group Discussion- Commissioners discussed the role of Parks and Recreation Commission (PRAC) as an organization. Commissioners discussed whether PRAC would be an *active* or *passive* organization. Commissioners agreed that PRAC has assumed a passive role. PRAC members solicited and offered ideas that would steer PRAC into an active organization. PRAC members offered several ideas that would position its members to become legitimate advocates for PRAC such as: members advocating to City Council for their support in Park and Recreation initiatives, creation of events to garner community support, ideas for Research and Development, commissioners to report to City Council completed Parks and Recreation projects. Luanne Santangelo provided the historical role PRAC played in the Harrisonburg community since its creation. Ms. Santangelo informed PRAC that its body of members is an advising authority. Ms. Santangelo reminded PRAC members of the recent revision to the ordinance and creation of bylaws. Chair recommended a revision to bylaws at the discretion of commission members; members were in unanimous agreement. Chair agreed to present proposed amendments at next month's commission meeting. Chair suggested commissioners attend events produced by Parks and Recreation. Erik Dart informed commission that all events are listed in Parks and Recreation Activity Guide. MuAwia DaMes cautioned commissioners to be mindful not to "overreach" during events and to be unassuming when present for events. Deanna Reed agreed that PRAC should assume an active rather than passive role as a commission. Chair commented that he would present the commission members' recommendations as a proposed amendment to bylaws for next month's PRAC meeting.
7. Boys & Girls Club No Smoking in Parks Initiative /
8. Director's Report & Project Updates- Project updates- Luanne Santangelo

Ms. Santangelo discussed a grant from the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) that the Boys & Girls Clubs of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County received last summer. The grant received from VFHY is a three-year grant and would initiate change in the city by banning smoking and tobacco use in or near city parks and grounds. Ms. Santangelo informed commissioners that the Boys & Girls Club is scheduled to present to Ms. Santangelo on February 13<sup>th</sup> and PRAC at their upcoming meeting on February 25<sup>th</sup> or March meeting; Simms Center Supervisor, Stephanie Howard sits on the Boys and Girls Club Committee. Commissioners discussed some of the difficulties in enforcing the smoke-free policy on the trails, but agreed that specific areas where people congregate would be controlled. Donna Armstrong commented on the importance of parent involvement and education if conflict arises with adults in the

community who are smokers/ tobacco users.

The Parks and Rec dive pool renovation is mostly completed and included in-pool lights; deck lights will be installed soon, however inclement weather halted its completion until March. Splash Pad construction is underway; colors have been selected; projected opening day of Splash Pad is set for Memorial Day- May 27, 2019.

The grant from the Department of Conservation and National Resources has been approved; this grant will provide \$370,000 toward the construction of the Cale Trail. Combining the Cale Trail and the Garbers Church Shared Use Path together would connect Westover Park, Thomas Harrison Middle School, Heritage Oaks Golf Course, Harrisonburg High School and Bluestone Elementary. Construction would take place late 2019-early 2020.

The Dog Park has been reopened. Plans are being considered to renovate current dog park and build a second enclosed area on flat higher ground in same area as present Dog Park is prone to flooding, which is unsafe for dogs. The gravel in Dog Park is difficult to plow/scrape when it snows. Also, there is a sinkhole in the current Dog Park. Ms. Santangelo submitted her budget last Friday and will meet with City Administration in mid February. Final budget approval by City Council will happen in May.

9. Action Items- Obie Hill attending Daddy/Daughter Dance- February 9, 2019, Kevin Gibson attending Black History Month – Educational Series, and Deanna Reed attending Not Made For This- February 16, 2019.

Ms. Santangelo announced that Harrisonburg Parks and Rec (HPR) will be hosting in 2021 the Virginia Recreation Parks Society (VRPS). HPR will be partnering with JMU, Rockingham County, and Harrisonburg City to coordinate event. It would be HPR's 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on June 1<sup>st</sup>; Cecil F. Gilkerson was one of the original founders and would be recognized as an Honorary Chair at the event.

10. Adjourn-Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

**The next Commission meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2019 at 7:00pm at the Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center.**