

# **Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission**

## **Minutes**

### **April 15, 2018**

The Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) met at 7:02 p.m. on April 15, 2019 in the Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center.

#### **Commissioners**

##### *Present:*

Kevin Gibson (Chairman)  
Dan Martonik (Vice-Chairman)  
Chance Ebersold  
Obie Hill  
Deanna Reed  
MuAwia DaMes  
James Logan  
Dr. Donna Armstrong

##### *Parks & Recreation representatives:*

Luanne Santangelo, Director, Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation  
Brian Mancini, Asst. Director, Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation  
Erik Dart, Athletic & Special Events Manager

#### **1. Call to Order**

Mr. Gibson called the meeting to order.

#### **2. Approval of March Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Gibson thanked Ms. Armstrong for edits to the March meeting minutes, which more accurately reflected Ms. Santangelo's message to Harrisonburg City Manager, Eric D. Campbell about PRAC discussion; Mr. Gibson will add Dr. Armstrong's amendments to March meeting minutes and seek approval of minutes at next PRAC meeting scheduled at 7 p.m., May 20, 2019.

#### **3. Update on PRAC Bylaws and Ordinance**

Mr. DaMes and Mr. Martonik stated the objective of PRAC is to be more engaged and active, which guided their rationale behind their suggested amendments:

- **Attendance** – commission members who miss more than two (2) consecutive meetings may be dismissed at the discretion of commission members **or** commission members who miss more than four (4) meetings in a calendar year may be dismissed at the discretion of commission members.
- **Meetings** – current PRAC meetings are scheduled on the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Monday of each month (with the exception of July and December); suggested meeting change from third Monday of each month due

to MLK, Jr. Day and President's Day occurring on a third Monday. Last year, a PRAC Monday meeting was cancelled because it was scheduled during the week of Thanksgiving.

- **Rates for Visa Charges / Fee Resolution** – PRAC having the ability to review / provide input and offer recommendations / revisions to the Parks & Recreation rates for Visa charges.
- **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)** – PRAC would be included into the discussion of the Parks & Recreation CIP prior to CIP's approval by Parks & Recreation. PRAC would be informed one (1) to two (2) months in advance of the CIP with input provided by the Director of Parks and Rec.
- **Community Engagement** – currently PRAC Bylaws indicate that Commissioners are to report on their experience after attending no less than two (2) or more related events/ activities/ functions per year; suggested amendment to include Commissioners visiting two (2) Parks and Recreation facilities or parks and report experience to PRAC. The two (2) additional visits could consist of service level visits that could involve checking restrooms, water fountains, park/facility equipment needed repairs and/or tours e.g. Fitness Center, Westover Swimming Pools, Harrisonburg Parks, etc.

Mr. Gibson reflected on PRAC's January meeting and Mr. Martonik and Mr. Gibson's meeting with Ms. Santangelo in January (2019) and the discussion about the role of PRAC and the level of active engagement PRAC would like to assume. Mr. Gibson referred back to the amendments suggested at PRAC's February 25, 2019 meeting, which were:

- i. We help drive what the department wants to do with City Council (policy and decision making).
- ii. We attend events (with report), assist in fundraising efforts of the department, bring ideas to the table and implement them.
- iii. We put ideas forth for research and development.
- iv. We report annually to city.
- v. We develop interactions with other commissions.
- vi. We elevate the department to an essential component of our city.

Mr. Gibson suggested Mr. DaMes and Mr. Martonik offer additional amendments to fully explain PRAC's role and the suggested amendments offered in PRAC's February 25, 2019 meeting. Mr. Gibson requested that Mr. DaMes and Mr. Martonik email in draft form their suggested amendments to refresh PRAC members on current Bylaws and proposed changes.

Mr. DaMes requested clarification on the research and development amendment. Mr. Gibson explained that PRAC could offer ideas and be a part of the research and development with Parks & Recreation. Ms. Santangelo stated the research

and development initiative would consist of PRAC offering ideas, centered on the development of the Harrisonburg city parks. Mr. DaMes commented that research and development could provide input to the CIP. Mr. Gibson offered the idea of establishing a PRAC meeting that is devoted toward the CIP. Mr. Gibson inquired if an action would be needed for the CIP by PRAC. Ms. Santangelo explained that PRAC would submit their action to the Planning Commission and to City Council for final approval. Currently, Parks and Recreation administration submits CIP, which is managed by Community Development.

Ms. Santangelo commented that the fee resolution or anything related to policy resolution that would be presented to City Council by Parks and Recreation would be presented to PRAC. Ms. Santangelo informed PRAC of an upcoming fee resolution proposal for next year that will be presented to PRAC for recommendations/ revisions before it's presented to City Council. Mr. DaMes inquired if fee resolutions would fall under a budgetary item rather than a fee resolution as charging additional fees by PRAC would be a budgetary matter. Ms. Santangelo responded that Parks and Recreation fees have not been reviewed in a long time.

In Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation's (HPR) current budget process, anticipated revenue is not provided by HPR, but provided to Parks and Recreation, which Ms. Santangelo affirmed, has been average over the course of a few years. Ms. Santangelo commented that over one (1) year ago, HPR had a graduate student from the University of Colorado complete a Capstone project for a master's program. This student conducted a fee evaluation of HPR and compared HPR's fees with surrounding organizations similar to HPR. However, the fee resolution for the research acquired by this student has not been completed. In addition, a fee resolution could not be added into HPR's current budget as HPR next year's budget has been submitted. Ms. Santangelo concluded that typically fee resolutions would be included into HPR's budget.

Dr. Armstrong noted that CIP and suggestions for research and development by PRAC are two separate items in that research and development involves programming and should not be considered as capital improvements, but suggestions. Dr. Armstrong noted that prior to joining PRAC, she submitted a project proposal for a demonstration food forest in Purcell Park to teach food growing in a forest context similar to a native forest of Virginia. Dr. Armstrong expressed approval of Ms. Santangelo's letter to Harrisonburg City Manager, Eric D. Campbell and expressed that her letter provided broad opportunity for program suggestions.

Mr. Gibson inquired about the possibility of changing PRAC's third Monday meeting times, but the majority of PRAC informed Mr. Gibson that the third Monday meetings are favorable. Mr. Gibson thanked Mr. DaMes and Mr.

Martonik for the work that they are devoting to this project and requested that they email in draft form their/PRAC's suggested amendments.

#### **4. Director's Report & Project Updates**

- **Harrisonburg Tobacco-Free Parks initiative discussion / updates:**

Mr. Gibson requested that Ms. Santangelo include in her director's report the outcome of the Harrisonburg Tobacco-Free Parks initiative proposal by Lori Kizner former Boys and Girls Club Executive Director and information regarding the proposals failure to be included on City Council's agenda.

Ms. Santangelo commented that no one from the Boys and Girls Club organization requested to add the proposal to City Council's agenda, as there was miscommunication with Boys and Girls Club staff.

Ms. Santangelo explained that she was not fully confident in the presentation proposed by the Boys and Girls Club organization as Ms. Santangelo and PRAC had unanswered questions about the proposal. Ms. Santangelo noted that she sent a memo to the City Manager's office to make him aware of HPR's Health and Wellness initiative, which will include Tobacco-Free Parks and signage. Ms. Santangelo commented that the signage could be completed at any time and that signage did not have to be approved by City Council. HPR would inform the City Manager and the City Manager would inform City Council of HPR's initiative. Ms. Santangelo is optimistic about the signage initiative as HPR has a new brand logo that the new Director of Communication would utilize for HPR's Health and Wellness initiative.

Ms. Reed inquired if the Boys and Girls Club were planning to present to City Council. Ms. Santangelo did not believe that the Boys and Girls Club were planning to present to City Council. Ms. Santangelo met with the Interim Director of the Boys and Girls Club, Greg Lunsford and was informed by Mr. Lunsford that he would like a member of his board, himself, and the JMU professor who wrote assisted in writing the grant to meet with Ms. Santangelo. Once this meeting is scheduled, Ms. Santangelo plans to inform Mr. Lunsford, the Boys and Girls Club representative, and the JMU professor of HPR's plans to pursue the Tobacco-Free Parks and signage initiative. Ms. Santangelo expressed that Mr. Lunsford likes the idea of HPR's Health and Wellness initiative and would like to continue to work with HPR on this initiative. Ms. Santangelo noted that HPR needs to fully develop its Health and Wellness initiative and desires for the Boys and Girls Club to collaborate with HPR and jointly present this initiative to City Council. Ms. Santangelo has identified a HPR staff member who is leading a team to execute the Health and Wellness initiative.

Mr. Hill inquired about the role of the Boys and Girls Club in the Tobacco-Free Parks and signage initiative as HPR has the capacity to produce their own signage without assistance from the Boys and Girls Club. Ms. Reed inquired about the purpose of the Boys and Girls Club's grant i.e. Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth. Ms. Santangelo asked the former Boys and Girls Club Director, Ms. Kizner for more details about the grant and monetary commitment toward the Tobacco-Free Parks initiative. After reviewing the grant proposal, Ms. Santangelo did not discover any funds allocated toward signage. The Boys and Girls Club, assumed that they would use signage provided by the Public Works Department that banned smoking or other tobacco use, but under the Dillon Rule, which stipulates that local government powers are restricted to those granted by the commonwealth, the Boys and Girls Club realized they could discourage smoking through creative signage and had planned to approach HPR and City Council for potential funding for signage. Ms. Santangelo noted that the grant funds were allocated to educate the students of the smoke-free initiative and the Boys and Girls Club program in Harrisonburg. Ms. Santangelo commented that the Boys and Girls Club could contribute to assisting in creating the signs, but more clarification would be needed once she meets with the Interim Director and the Board of Boys and Girls Club. The Boys and Girls Club is currently in search of a new Director; this position is open for the next two (2) months.

Mr. Dart commented that HPR's objective in the Tobacco-Free Parks initiative as presented by the Boys and Girls Club and its link to HPR's larger Health and Wellness initiative will ensure the Tobacco-Free Parks initiative does not fall falter. Ms. Santangelo noted that HPR's connection to the National Parks and Recreation Association provides validity and credence to its ultimate objective of the Harrisonburg community.

Dr. Armstrong inquired about HPR's involvement with the County Health Department as HPR's initiative could likely partner with the Health Department and JMU's Department of Public Health. Ms. Santangelo would inform her staff leader of these potential partnerships.

- **Purcell Park request for written proposals**

Ms. Santangelo informed commissioners that there were eight (8) responses. Ms. Santangelo, Mr. Mancini, and Ms. Erin Yancey (Public Works Dept.) are on the evaluation team and will select a consultant and issue contract for the Purcell Park Master Plan; PRAC will be involved in this process as a key stakeholder consultant.

- **HPR Budget**

Ms. Santangelo informed commissioners that the HPR budget was submitted to the City Manager, which was presented to City Council last week.

Ms. Santangelo is optimistic about budget proposal. Public hearing for the budget proposal is scheduled for next week, Tuesday, April 23, 2019, City Council Chambers at 7 p.m.

- **Upcoming Summer Events**

Ms. Santangelo requested for PRAC to attend ribbon-cutting ceremony for Westover Pool and Splash Pad on Monday, May 20, 2019, 6 p.m. (prior to PRAC meeting at 7 p.m.).

Also, PRAC was requested to attend the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration of HPR on June 1, 2019, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. HPR plans to formally announce the Virginia Recreation Parks Society (VRPS) conference, which HPR will be hosting in 2021. June 1, 2019 would be HPR's 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; the first Director was hired on June 1, 1954. The State Executive Director of the VRPS organization will be is scheduled to attend this event and present to the first Director, the Honorary Chairmanship of the 2021 conference; activities/games will follow the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

- **Project updates** (presented by Mr. Mancini)

Dream Come True Playground:

- Train installation is due for completion by the end of April (2019).
- Vomit Comet installation is in process.

Roofs in several park shelters have been replaced.

Pool project is about 75% completed (ahead of schedule).

HPR will install decorative black lamps along the road at HPR; permits to complete this project were acquired.

Smithland Barn is undergoing restoration for HPR maintenance workers to store equipment.

HPR received its third quote for SIMMS audio; three (3) quotes were needed. HPR will select one (1) contractor to install new audio, speakers, and screen system for users and city staff.

Liberty Park will become Harrisonburg's pollinator's park.

HPR will be responsible for some of the landscaping in the city; HPR is in the process of identifying locations that fall under their jurisdiction.

Skate Pipe in the Skate Park has been refinished.

Dog Park an electric box is in the process of being installed for future lighting e.g. shelter, roadway, and the entire park.

Parkview Shop Office renovations are in process (presented by Ms. Santangelo). The administration staff at HPR will move to the Parkview location. Ms. Santangelo, Systems Analyst, and Human Resources Specialist positions will be relocating to Parkview location once renovations are complete. Renovations will

allow HPR staff to utilize the new space available at HPR Community Activity Center (CAC). Mr. Mancini commended staff worker, Lisa for the favorable work that she is providing in the renovation process.

## **5. Action Items**

### **i. Event attendance / Advocacy opportunities**

Mr. Gibson inquired if PRAC attended any event since last committee meeting. There were three (3) events: Prom Dress Giveaway - 4/6/19, Easter Egg Hunt – 4/13/19, and Blacks Run Clean Up – 4/13/19. Ms. Armstrong noted that she attended the Prom Dress Giveaway and donated several accessories and enjoyed her time at this event. Ms. Santangelo informed PRAC that there were favorable turnouts to events. Mr. Dart added that the number of participants for events were not overwhelming to the kids. Mr. Gibson informed PRAC of upcoming opportunities to attend events. Ms. Santangelo commented that the upcoming Activity Guide would be a Throwback edition, which will include photos from the past. Mr. Gibson encouraged PRAC to attend ribbon-cutting ceremony for Westover Pool and Splash Pad on Monday, May 20, 2019, 6 p.m. (prior to PRAC meeting at 7 p.m.). Mr. Gibson will not be present for next PRAC's upcoming meeting.

- **Food Truck Rally – 5/11/19 at Simms Center has been cancelled.**
- **Superhero Four-Mile Run – 5/18/19 at HPR-CAC, 8:45 a.m.**

## **6. Meeting adjourned.**