

**KANAWHA COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
COMMISSION MEETING
October 19, 2022
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Kanawha County Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Wednesday, October 19, 2022, at Coonskin Park in the Oak Room. This is the monthly meeting of the Kanawha County Parks and Recreation Commission, and President Tackett called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Allen Tackett, Dave Pope, John Robertson, Andrew Jordon, Chris Hamilton, Karen Haddad, Stuart Smith (phone), John Huddleston (phone), Steve Koepsel, Janet Drumheller

ABSENT: Pat Donahoe,

OTHERS

Jeff Hutchinson, Director

Leslie Koepsel and Megan Estep

Brad Maschari, Sarah Menefee, Eddie Amburgy, Jeremy Phillips

Jordan Herrick

Margret Zaleski

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Huddleston made a motion to approve the minutes from September and Commissioner Hamilton seconded the motion. All were in favor.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Commissioner Drumheller reported that everything is OK with the personnel.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

Jeff reported that the golf course is done.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Sarah reported that since the pre-meeting we got approval for the Audit. They will do a site day on November 2-3 and everything is uploaded for them. We will work with them for the next two months.

Sarah reported from July-September all facilities had a total income of \$624,610 with a gross profit of \$604,270. The total expenses were \$572,113 with a net income of \$32,156. The other income is ARP funds for the golf course and non-reoccurring for the stolen vehicle and capital outlay with the DEP permit gives a net income of \$979,386. Big Bend had a total income of \$164,778 with a gross profit of \$147,200. The total expenses were \$123,936 with a net income of \$23,263. Add back the insurance and the income is \$31,676. September alone had a total income of \$200,752 with a gross profit of \$194,453. The total expenses were \$233,935 with a net loss of \$(39,481). September was a three-payroll

month, and you can see that increase. Commissioner Koepsel questioned how green fees were down and sales were up. Sarah said that was from pro shop sales for shoes, hats, and balls. Commissioner Koepsel hopes to stay on that path with pro shop sales and then asked about shelter rentals being down. Sarah said a lot depends on the weather and they like the bigger shelters with the kitchen. Commissioner Robertson made a motion to accept the finances and Commissioner Drumheller seconded the motion. All were in favor.

GOLF COMMITTEE

Commissioner Pope reported that the golf course at Coonskin is done. They sodded the greens and approaches and seeded the rest of the course. Commissioner Pope stated that we did not go over budget and that the project was done in 52 working days. Commissioner Pope said when he talked with Kelly Shumate back in December 2020, that we needed to do something with our par 3, since we last a lot of golf in the valley. Kelly came up with a plan and it exceeded our expectations. The greens are to USGA standards, and we have a state-of-the-art irrigation system. The approach areas and the greens are top notch and something you haven't seen on a golf course in WV. The irrigation can be operated by a smart phone, and it will take rain into consideration when watering a certain amount and can't be over watered. Each hole will be a theme. Hole #1 is a Willie Park design complex that we liked. Hole #2 and #8 are square greens and is what they used back in the 30's. Hole #3 and #5 are double greens with a hump in the middle. Hole #7 is a redan, hole #6 is a catcher's mitt, and Hole #9 is a punch bowl. These greens are so big that we can have dozens of hole locations. Commissioner Popes biggest fear is, we screw it up. We have a great piece of property, and we need to make sure we have competent people and that they are paid fairly, and we have the equipment to take care of it. Commissioner Pope stated right now that we have neither. We don't have the right equipment and we need to get it now and not wait until spring to take care of it. We need to get the people in there now, that know what they are doing and pay them a fair wage so that we can keep them.

Commissioner Pope reported that we got the report from the USGA and it is online and sent it to the board. They did a great job and checked everything out and told us what we needed and what chemicals were needed and when to apply them. The bad news is that we need a new pump house and irrigation system. The pump station hasn't worked in a year and it won't be cheap to replace. With the USGA suggestions Commissioner Pope said that we need to have water put on the greens and need to watch what we do with the algae, crab grass, and dollar spots. We have all that at Big Bend. Commissioner Pope said the golfers at Big Bend are not happy and upset that we spent all this money at Coonskin and not at Big Bend. Commissioner Jordon said everyone is complaining about Big Bend. With all that, we were only down 14 rounds in September. Commissioner Pope stated that we need to put our efforts into Big Bend now and we are in the same situation as Coonskin in needed equipment and personnel.

Jeremy has a list of equipment that we need at Coonskin and if we find it off lease and we can afford it at \$3,000-\$4,000 a month. We are expected to get possibly 30,000 rounds and what we need to do is to take and estimate how many rounds we can get, at what price, and that would give a gross for the year and we can back off that to decide what to put into equipment and chemicals. Green fees now are \$10 on the weekend and \$11 on weekdays.

We need to sit down with the committee and talk about rates and address a fair rate. Commissioner Pope said that it could be spaced out with busy and non-busy times with different rates, and we don't want to charge too much or too little. The green fees will go up from what they were before. Commissioner Haddad asked what type of personnel we need at what expertise. Commissioner Pope answered that we need people on grounds and the people we have are great, but we need more of them. Then we can train them and pay them fairly so that we keep them. Commissioner Drumheller asked about equipment and leasing the equipment instead of purchasing. Commissioner Pope answered that he doesn't know how we can afford new equipment at \$300,000 or lease it for \$3,000 or \$4,000 a month and that is paid for by green fees when setting the price. Jeremy said that he would love to have four people dedicated to the golf course and another two people working in the park, making six total employees. He said when we get the course done in the morning the people can work on the rest of the park the rest of the day.

Commissioner Jordon said that we need a plan for Big Bend as well, as they need people to keep up with that course. Commissioner Pope said that we have volunteers mowing the greens at Big Bend and that's a problem. Commissioner Jordon added that we can't do much at Big Bend until we get water and doesn't see putting money into it unless we have the proper irrigation to keep it watered. President Tackett said that we discussed this last week and Commissioner Wheeler is supposed to take the plan from the USGA to the County Commission to try to get the money it would take to get new irrigation. Commissioner Robertson said, wouldn't it be best to do the irrigation plan when they do the FEMA work in the winter months. Jeff said the FEMA work wouldn't be done this year but that's the time to do it, when FEMA is here and only tear up the area once. Jeff said the greens at Big Bend are getting better and we are working on them, and the crab grass is getting better. We are having a problem with black algae and it's something we fight all the time, especially with a wet July. President Tackett said that we kind of got our hands tied with the FEMA work and their survey's and they are backed logged. There is no sense to do the irrigation before the FEMA work and we need to get a committee together to prioritize what needs to be done. Commissioner Haddad added that it also gives more time for the County Commission to look for funding for this project. President Tackett said that Commissioner Pope did a great job overseeing the Coonskin project and taking care of what needs to be taking care of. He said that it really does look good and will be a big improvement for golf in the valley. President Tackett said every time he was out here Commissioner Pope was too, making sure the operation went as planned.

COONSKIN FOUNDATION

No report

PUBLIC SAFTEY

Chief Amburgy reported that he got a call from the Sherriff's Department for assistance on our Holiday Lights Event on December 1, 2 and 3. He said that we will now have someone for all three days of Santa. Officer Moss is doing another scavenger hunt on October 31st to search for pumpkins to win a gift card.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jeff reported that Commissioner Pope gave a pretty good update on the golf course and grass is now growing out there. They seeded two weeks ago, and those areas are coming in. We posted a lot of pictures on Facebook, but pictures don't do it justice and you need to see it in person. Jeff said that Kelly did a wonderful job and is exactly like we wanted, and he was very happy with the outcome. He said there are plenty of hole locations, and lots of tee movement that can be done on the tee boxes. Jeff said Jeremy and his guys have been working hard after the sod was laid getting it into shape. They are watering now, and roots are starting to take. Jeff said that the greens at Big Bend are getting better, and they said we just have to wait until it turned cold, and it has turned cold now, and stuff has been seeded. We are borrowing a seeder from Little Creek that we are going to use to work on the crab grass and seed around the greens. At the driving range, we got the pad poured for the restroom and will be getting rid of the port a john.

Jeff reported that we are working on the Holiday Lights, but we still have a lot to do. He said that we will have fixtures put out, but a lot of them have broken over the years and it takes lots of time and effort to fix these displays and replace the lights. Leslie reported that on December 3rd we will have a large event with the Marine Corps, doing Toys for Tots, Santa Claus, Charleston Metro Band, hot chocolate, bake sale, and more. This will be on Thursday, December 1st and we will run the train on this day and on December 2nd and 3rd we will run a KRT Trolley, since the train will be in various Christmas Parades. Leslie said the Junior League will be here and will have a coat drive, the Sherriff's Department is bringing a mascot, the Boys Scouts will serve pop corn and have bake sales, hot dogs, and drinks. She said she is still working on a Christmas Tree sale and other things to have a big celebration. Commissioner Haddad asked about gift certificates for the new golf course since it will be around Christmas.

Jeff said that he had given Commissioner Wheeler options for a new playground at Meadowood Park, and all of our playgrounds are 20-25 years old, and they all need to be looked at and updated. Jeff said that we will see what happens with the airport and we need to update all parks. For now, Commissioner Wheeler is working on the playground at Meadowood.

Commissioner Jordon asked about the pump. Jeff said it should be here the first part of next month and we are good for now running off the hydrants and it has worked well. The power company needs to run power for the pump house. Commissioner Jordon asked if it was cost effective to run off the fire hydrants. Jeff answered, "were ok for now but we can't do it year-round." We used approximately 500,000 gallons of water in three weeks. Commissioner Jordon asked again about equipment and Jeff said that he is doing things a little differently. Jeff said that the problem right now being new or used equipment is that you can't get it. People are waiting 6 months to a year out on new equipment. Some of the stuff we can get off lease from Toro and because of 1st Tee, Toro has agreement with them. Jeff talked with the WVGA and they are working on it since Coonskin is the home to 1st Tee and they use the driving range and the golf course so we will be able to save a little bit of money. Jeff said that we should know something in a couple weeks. Jeremy

said at this point anything new this year is not going to happen because everything is a year out. He said the problem he has with leased equipment is that we have to get on a list that is first come, first serve and unless we get on that list, we will be further down the list. Jeremy has a list of the bare minimum that we need to keep up with the course and the only way to get that is to get on the list ASAP and even then, we may get it by spring. Commissioner Robertson asked if this would require a three-bid proposal which could delay things. Jeff said that he will call and talk to Jerri and this equipment is coming off lease and is four years old. So, it's used equipment we are going to lease and not new and he doesn't know how that works by leasing used equipment off of a vendor. There are only two vendors, which is John Deer and Toro.

Commissioner Robertson encouraged people to drive to Meadowood Park, since we spent a lot of money there with regard to paving and see what a valuable resource we have with that park and look for possibility for improvements. Commissioner Robertson would like to make a motion that we replace the signage at the entrance of the park because there is nothing there that indicates that it's under the jurisdiction of the Kanawha County Commission or the Parks and Recreation Commission. He said that now it looks like it's the Coal River Group's Park. The park could use some attention and he encouraged the board to drive down there with a fresh set of eyes. Commissioner Drumheller said it's a great little park and would make a great RV or camping spot. Commissioner Robertson said that Commissioner Haddad attended a walk on Sunday and there was a discussion on what is going to happen with the FAA and Coonskin Park. Commissioner Robertson reported that there are two public scope meetings scheduled for November 2nd and 3rd from 6:00-8:00pm at the Embassy Suites and it will be conducted like an open house. He understands they would have some posters up and stuff and you can speak with representatives from the FAA and the Airport, and from the looks of it will be pretty significant to Coonskin Park. Commissioner Robertson suggested that the park send out a memo on these meetings that week to encourage people to show up and know what is going on. Then on November 7th there will be a Zoom meeting. Commissioner Jordon expressed the positive impact that this could be for the parks and what it would allow us to do. President Tackett said that we need to educate ourselves on what is going on and recommends that everyone attends.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

LEGAL REPORT

Jordan reported that the women who fell on the railroad tracks near Columbia Shelter hired an attorney and is filing a suit against the park. He said we will handle it from there.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sarah said that she sent out an email about the website and would like for everyone to look at it and send back corrections, additions, and stuff. She would like everyone's input before it gets published. Sarah added that this week is sectional finals for Class AA soccer.

Commissioner Haddad added that going to the walk she thinks we really have to do a good job presenting the positive aspects of the airport project. She said the general impression

is that we don't care about how they use the park and need to have positive reinforcement and be careful how we present it, and that we cannot exclude anyone that uses the park. Mrs. Zaleski said that many years ago there was a hiking club, and they had their headquarters in the office building and they used to maintain trails. She said that one day the president was thrown out of the building and the hiking club was super friendly with the parks after that and they feel like they don't care about us. Commissioner Haddad said that everyone needs to do their part and be aware of what's out there.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Pope made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Haddad seconded the motion. All were in favor.

President Tackett called the meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 16, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Jeffrey K. Hutchinson, Director