

Meeting Minutes for September 6, 2016

Diane Fenton called the Recreation Commission meeting to order and welcomed everyone

In Attendance: Mike Harris, Jim Williamson, Tonia Winn, Diane Fenton, Cord Hall, Mike Saylor, Matthew Davidson, Brad Epperley
Last month's minutes approved

Diane Fenton called the meeting to order

- Cord Hall made a motion to modify the agenda to discuss proposed park property earlier in the agenda.
- The Public Comment Section of the agenda:
- The first person to speak was Justin Griffith he lives across from where the park will go. He stated that his family likes how John Lemley Lane is isolated and it is perfectly quiet. They didn't choose the neighborhood based upon the possibility of a park being placed across from them. They do not want to live in front of a park; they are overwhelmed with the idea. They want to know if the new playground can replace an existing park or if there is any way we could delay putting the park in there.
- Julie Sink who lives right beside the property where the park is proposed. She is not opposed to serving the community kids, but she wants to know what the design will look like. She wants to know what parking would be like because it is a tight dead end road. She asked if this would cause a sidewalk issue. Will it create more traffic? She wants them to delay the park until they see the plans.
- Josh Beaver likes the idea of the park in the neighborhood, but wants to see the plans with parking. It is something that their street and nearby streets could enjoy. It would be a good place to hang out and be outside with kids and other families.
- Kevin Hamm was one of the first people to move into the John Lemley neighborhood, of 30 houses there are many kids. He picked the lot across from the open lot in hopes for park to go there one day. Most of the money in the past for those hopes went to roads and drains. Over the last 4 years their neighborhood has stabilized with neighbors, he mentions he would now want to take stable neighbors without an park over mad neighbors that want to leave over a park being built.
- Paul McKeg does not have kids but thinks that having this will promote interaction between neighbors and there are lots of kids that could use this park. The only concern was causing more traffic.
- Cord Hall asked what is it going to look like? Brad provided some playground pictures. It is close to an \$80,000 playground that is not the taxpayer's money. This park is a mini park that will serve a quarter of a mile, it will be placed on less than one acre of land. This particular park will primarily serve the people in John Lemley Lane area. It will not be a destination park such as Depot Park.
- Brad has a rough sketch of what it would look like with a parking lot. This sketch is passed around so the guests could view it. The actual playground equipment is 40x45ft. On this piece of property there will be at least a playground, a picnic table and a bench.

- Moving into the Directors Report:
- For this month the attendance was 9,435 and that is just membership scans. We helped with Heritage Day by providing the stage and some tables; they had over 400 guests that attended. In the Community programs our early morning P90 had 20 participants, Beginning Evening Yoga had 19 participants and Puppy Obedience had 11 dogs/owners. We held our annual Hunter Safety Course this past weekend we had 25 participants for that. We had a Mystery Tour Trip last week. We had 33 participants that went to the Tennessee River. This trip was co-sponsored with Montgomery Co. and Blacksburg Parks and Recreation.
- The Senior & Special Populations had a Blood Drive with 25 participants, Evening Blood Pressure check had 18 people participate. We held a Life Well Lived seminar; this is a seminar that talks to people about how to prepare for end of life decisions. We had our annual Triad SALT picnic and had 36 people come out for that. Traid SALT is made up of our Recreation Department, Christiansburg Police Department, Montgomery County Parks & Recreation, and Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.
- In Adult Athletics and Special Events we have 24 volleyball teams, 20 in Church League and 4 in Open League. On, September 18th we are having our annual Punt Pass and Kick at Harkrader Sports Complex. On, October 1st we will be hosting the Tony L. Huddleston fishing rodeo at Izaak Walton. Tony's son and family will be in attendance.
- In Youth Athletics we have 2 Mite Football teams, 3 Junior Football team, 2 Senior Football teams, 6 Flag Football teams, 2 Mite Cheerleading teams and 2 Junior Cheerleading teams. In our Fall Baseball and Softball League we have 2 Angel teams, 2 Ponytail teams, 1 Coach Pitch team, 1 Ozone team and 1 AAA team. Youth Volleyball registration is going on now.
- In Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks, we held the Fallen Officers Tournament; we had 9 officer teams participating. This is something we enjoy doing by giving back to the Law Enforcement Community. We had 23 teams in the NATIONS Back to School Brawl. Teams were from West Virginia, Covington and Wytheville. There is a new expansion of the Huckleberry Trail that goes from Providence Street to behind Food Lion. It has not officially been announced that it is open but there are people using it. The next phase will be from Food Lion to the Oak Tree area. There will be a Stream Restoration Project at Depot Park that will close the park down from November until February. We are hoping that this timeframe will provide less of an impact on people. During this time they will place a service road from Depot Park to the Skate Park entrance that can later be used as a trail connection.
- Brad Epperley introduced the student representative Matthew Davidson. He is a lacrosse player and came highly recommended from the Athletic Director at the High School. Our other student representative is Nicole Diloia she plays volleyball and soccer. We had 3 people apply for the spots on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, John Neel, Robin Boyd, and Rich Polikoff. Each of these guys bring different items to the table. Cord Hall mentioned that all of them deal with some type of recreation. Cord's idea was to bring all 3 applicants into the next meeting and interview them. Brad said he would reach out to them and let them know about next month's meeting and in the meantime we would contact their references.

- Old Business: The Recreation Commission understands everything that was stated in tonight's meeting. Cord Hall went to the see property that the proposed park was going to be on and he says it is a good size lot. Earlier Town Resident Justin Griffith mentioned he was worried about having the park there as it would bring out the wrong people. Chief Sisson provided data from September 2011 till now for the parks in the area. Cord Hall read the last paragraph from the police report. "Statistically our parks can be deemed very safe. The implementation of additional parks within the community and especially our residential zones can benefit those who live close to the park itself. None of the statistics available show a propensity for criminal behavior beyond that of normal daily life. Mini-parks can beautify the existing properties and give those residents a sense of community and pride in their neighborhood. These feelings can attribute to an actual reduction of crime by creating a family friendly environment and an area which residents are more aware of activities that are occurring within." The report does not state any of the concerns that he had. Another concern was cleanliness, but Cord Hall said since Brad's leadership, we wouldn't have that problem. The Parks & Recreation Department takes pride with the parks. We need to put that vacant property to use and make it beautiful. The other proposed area on 3rd and Phlegar is in the flood plain area. Cord Hall feels by what the Master Plan shows, that the park should go to John Lemley Lane and this will help beautify the area.
- Brad mentioned there is a volunteer group that wants to give back to the community and they would help us make it beautiful. Just as we did at Depot Park and Summit Ridge Park, we are going to make it much more than just a grass lot.
- Brad reached out to Andrew Warren our Planning Director. He provided confirmation that a playground can be established under the current zoning without any further changes to the district or need for a conditional use permit.
- Mike Saylor mentions that between Summit Ridge and Circle Park he uses them with his grandchildren and they are kept clean. The park can be an asset to the neighborhood and get neighbors to become one. He thinks this park is a move in the right direction. This is geared as a family park and everything is spaced out. Cord says that the John Lemley Lane community isn't enjoying what others are enjoying and he feels it's long overdue for them to have a park. Brad stated the last paragraph of the police report. "Statistically our parks can be deemed very safe. The implementation of additional parks within the community and especially our residential zones can benefit those who live close to the park itself. None of the statistics available show a propensity for criminal behavior beyond that of normal daily life. Mini-parks can beautify the existing properties and give those residents a sense of community and pride in their neighborhood. These feelings can attribute to an actual reduction of crime by creating a family friendly environment and an area which residents are more aware of activities that are occurring within." This report came from a good leader of our community and after seeing this report in Brad's opinion this is the best place for the playground to go.
- The Recreation Commission is following the direction of the Master Plan. Tonia Winn stated that as a community we need to move forward. Cord mentions that we are building a nice park and we will maintain it like we say we will.

- Diane Fenton makes the motion to resend the earlier decision to put the new mini park at John Lemley Lane. Cord Hall seconds that motion. Cord Hall makes a new motion after hearing citizen's comments and staff reports to place the new playground equipment and develop a mini park on the town owned property on John Lemley Lane. Mike Saylor seconds that motion.
- A unanimous decision in favor of the motion by all commission members in attendance.
 - Jim Williamson- Yes
 - Tonia Winn- Yes
 - Diane Fenton- Yes
 - Mike Harris- Yes
 - Mike Saylor- Yes
 - Cord Hall- Yes

Absent

- Mary Critzer
- Doris Oliver

- Mike Harris mentions that he appreciated being a member of the Recreation Commission. When he came in he thought of recreation just as sports but he learned it's more than just sports. The Parks and Recreation Department does a wonderful job and everyone that works here cares about what they do. Cord Hall thanked the student representative for coming and he would like an update with information for the High School and the athletic activities. Matthew Davidson thanked the commission for having him.
- Meeting Adjourned. Next meeting is October 3, 2016.