

Meeting Minutes for March 7, 2017

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

In Attendance: Tonia Winn, Cord Hall, Brad Epperley, Charlton McCoy, Mike Saylor, Jim Williamson, John Neel, Diane Fenton, Robin Boyd, Richard Polikoff, Matthew Davidson

Last month's minutes were approved.

Diane Fenton turned the meeting over to Brad Epperley.

- Citizen Comments:
- John Yearick, wants to speak a few minutes about the quiet time issue. He knows that it has come up with the Commission in the past but he sent an email to Brad Epperley and he wanted to go over with Commission about the votes. He mentions that some many people have gone out and solicited votes outside of the cardio room and he asked the gentleman if he was doing that and why he was doing that and he in fact said yes he was, so they could win. Mr. Yearick mentions that there is about 12-15 people in that room on regular basis. The people who are included in that were here when this first came about a few years ago and don't really care if there is music on or not. He mentions that the vote in itself is very unreliable. Second of all that quiet time only consists of hour and a half of the day, all other times people are allowed to listen to music. People who don't want quiet time can have ear buds. A few years ago the Recreation Center gave people ear buds who didn't want to listen to the TVs, as he mentions not everyone likes the same music. You can change the time but that will make those people unhappy. He thinks that the people who want to listen to music have a very good alternative, either use ear buds or come in at a different time. He thinks the vote was unfair.
- Carolyn Antonio said she came to hear the votes. Brad mentions to both Mr. Yearick and Ms. Antonio that the emails that was sent to him was forwarded to the Commission. The Commission has copies of them.
- Cord Hall mentions that the rule will stay in place until the commission comes back in April or May to discuss the issue. There will be some discussion tonight but the bulk of the discussion will be in April.
- Directors Report:
- Attendance for the month of February was 11,102, which is an increase from last year at this time. Some of our more popular programs that we had this particular month in our Adult Programs, was Zumba we had 24 participants, and Beginning Yoga had 25 participants. A new program we started recently was Morning Tabata and Evening Tabata. The Morning Tabata had 10 participants and Evening had 16 participants.
- In our Special Interest Programs one of the items that stuck out was the Affair of the Heart. February was heart awareness month and we partnered with the Holiday Inn. They provided a heart healthy lunch for the participants for free and then Amy Epperley, Assistant Director of Hokie Wellness spoke about heart health and things to do to become healthier. There were 36 participants for that program.

- In our Senior and Special Population Programs our Senior Motions class has done well with 23 participants, we did a Candy Bar Bingo that had 22 participants. One of our new trip adventures was visiting the VT Robotics. The group went to the Virginia Tech Engineering building and did a tour there. We are currently still doing things with the Lifelong Learning Institute of Virginia Tech that allows us to do a lot of different programs and activities with them that we wouldn't be able to offer if it wasn't for them. For the month of February, 336 folks came in for the AARP Tax Aide. They absolutely love the service and we are almost completely filled up. The AARP folks have added additional appointments so we can fill the needs of the community.
- Another item that Brad mentions is the RU Community Health Fair had 165 folks in attendance for the fair. The RU Nursing Students did a great job with it.
- Special Populations: we did a Sweetheart Dance partnered with IDA. We had 185 participants in attendance. A couple other items that we have become involved with from a Special Populations stand point is basketball, as well as bowling and we have also started a walking club. We have been helping out with that and the numbers have been really well. Special Olympics has reached out to use athletic fields and we will be doing our same partnership with them, where they will be using Harkrader Sports Complex. We are one of the few Recreation Departments in our area that works closely with Special Populations. We do craft classes, cooking classes and as you can see we have started doing athletic programs with them. Going back to the Special Olympic item Brad mentions that he looks for us not this year but maybe next year to host a Special Olympic Tournament.
- Adult Athletics: there were 2 different Adult Basketball divisions this year with Fastbreak and Slow break. We are down to 2 teams in Fastbreak and their Championship game is Thursday. Slow break is still in their regular season games. They will start their tournament play after the Home Expo, they got started a little bit later. We have 8 teams in the Slow break division. We have Church Volleyball that will be starting relatively soon and then a little bit later we will have an Open League. We are also this summer marketing an Adult Basketball League. A number of the adult basketball teams have reached out to us and asked if we would be willing to do one.
- Athletic Special Events: We have already confirmed our Cheerleading, Volleyball and Football Camps. We have been working with the new Football coach at Christiansburg High School for the Football Camp. Being prepared right now is the Archery Camp, as some of you remember last year was our first year doing the camp and we ended up with 20 participants. Something else we are thinking about is an Outdoor Adventure Camp. We have been working on it and working with Radford University Outdoors with activities such as rope courses, caving and kayaking. The one thing Brad recommended to Nick is he would love to make it a parent/child camp just for the simple fact that some parents don't know how to do those activities. It's an opportunity to teach the parent and the child. Tonia Winn asked what would the target age group be for this camp, Brad says they would look at 11 years old and above. The only way he would consider dropping the age is if there was a parent there.
- Outdoor Facilities: Falling Branch Ball Fields now have concrete slabs that go around the dugouts. The Fence should be starting this week. Brad had mentioned previously that we were holding off on the small field until we got approval from the School System and Engineers that they would not be taking up any of our property on the small field. Brad had a meeting last week with the Engineering Firm as well as

the School System both parties have confirmed that they will not be doing anything at either of the fields. We will move forward, we made some changes with our fencing contract so they can get started on that. Bathrooms have been brought up for Falling Branch one thing Brad found out was that we do have an easement of water and sewer that runs right along the outfield fence area of the small field. It can be very viable to tap into the easement down the road. This is one of our capital improvements in the future. Brad also learned during the meeting that we will not need to shut down during the expansion of the school. We will need to make sure our groups know that there is construction going on there. The goal to start is November of this year and go through the following year. John Lemley Park now has picnic tables, trash cans, and holders. Brad has talked with Michael Huesman who is our new horticulturalist for the town. He has given Brad a layout without the elevation of the hill. Brad has reached out to Andrew Warren and he spoke with Ms. Sowers the realtor in the past about community projects. If everything goes well we would plan to purchase the plants, trees and everything like that, as well as dig the holes and prep them. Then their group would come in and plant them and spread mulch etc. Hopefully once the weather changes and the pavement plants start opening up and we can get the actual parking area paved along with the trail down to the handicap access. The goal is right now we would like to do a dedication sometime in May, we have reached out to Ms. Lemley, John's wife. She has had some health issues and not sure if she is going to make it up. He also has some children in the area and they will be invited as well. Once we get to that point we will send out invitations to folks. Michael Huesman seems to think that by the middle of May the grass should be filled in pretty good. Brad mentions that we have also done some improvements to Wayside Park. We have went through and taken the old concrete tables out and installed concrete pads and put 2 new picnic tables that are level. We also have done some road work because the road had eroded from the water, rain and everything else. So we did some road work to make it smoother and more appealing. We will also be doing our Major League Pitch Hit & Run Clinic that will take place Monday, April 10 at Harkrader Sports Complex.

- Youth Athletics: We have recently finished up Youth Basketball. Chuck Muncy has made it through his first youth season as Youth Athletics Supervisor. He was the Youth Supervisor years ago and then went to Outdoor Facilities, with the restructure of our department he has come back to Youth Athletics. The main registration for Baseball/Softball registration has come to an end. We are in the 2 week late registration. One thing that becomes difficult with Baseball/Softball registration is it based upon boundaries. We have folks that participate in Youth Athletics while living in other areas and we allow them to play but they have to pay the out of town fee. In Baseball/Softball starting at age 9 that is not allowed because we are affiliated with a national organization and there are certain boundaries that are set for Christiansburg and those players have to live in those boundaries. We have had a few people that have called in regards to this regulation but for the most part everyone understands. We do have our placement practices set up for our Baseball/Softball, Tball and Coach Pitch. These practices are designed to evaluate the players that are participating and try to place them where we can have equally talented teams.
- Coming up this weekend Charlton is getting ready for the Home Expo. Wednesday is when we will start shutting down the gym area and things will start for set up. They are doing a great job of trying to do different things to bring people in, they are doing cooking demos and contests. They are doing items for younger age groups, they are really trying to do different things to bring people in. It's a great thing for

us because there are people who come to this Home Expo that might not normally come through the doors of the Recreation Center. And if they come through the doors for the Home Expo then they might think about coming to our facility. The Recreation Center will be closing at 2 p.m. Friday and this will give them time to finalize everything and they will open up at 4 p.m. on Friday. The hours will be Friday 4-8 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. - 7p.m., Sunday Noon-5p.m.

- Our Department is going to be involved with the Wrestling Parade, Councilman Collins and Town Council have been looking to do something to recognize the 16 straight years of victory. One of the items that came up was the parade so we are going to be involved with that, the parade will take place on Thursday, May 4. The CHS Principal and Athletic Director has been asked to reach out the wrestlers and coaches from the past 16 years to bring them back to the area. We hope to have the Marching Band and Cheerleaders involved as well. The goal for the Thursday is it is the grand opening for the Farmers Market, we felt like if we could tie them both in together we could cross market for both of them. We are hoping to get Coach Dresser back for the day since he has moved out of the area. We are going to do a preparation meeting with police, rescue and fire involved. From our Department perspective we will do the same thing Charlton does with any of our other parades. The other part will be taken care of by Christiansburg High School and Councilman Collins will be taking care of other items as well.
- We are working with Christiansburg Elementary School and we plan to have all their 3rd graders here at the Recreation Center on March 30 and March 31. We are going to have them in the gym area and promote active and healthy living. We are going to have all four courts going, one will be volleyball, one will be basketball, one will be obstacle course, and the other will be other recreational items such as baton, gymnastics and those types of things. Our goal is to promote an active and healthy lifestyle as well as to introduce them to our Recreation Department. We have confirmed Jill's Buddy Camp for this year. This is for children with development delays that are paired with a high school student. This camp is for 2 weeks, 8:30-12:30 p.m. we handle more of the gross motor skills. Montgomery County Public Schools provides professional therapist. We work with arts and crafts, music, reading, and gross motor skills each day. Every day we go on a field trip, in the past during some of the trips we have taken them fishing, fire station, bowling, Mill Mountain Zoo, and putt putting. It should be June 19-22 and June 26-29.
- The last thing Brad wants to mention from the report is our Regional Bike Share, he mentions some of commission may have seen in the paper where they were talking about a Bike Share through Blacksburg. It wasn't exactly portrayed like it should have been, it's not just Blacksburg it is a Regional Bike Share. There is a committee that is comprised of Brad from Christiansburg, Lisa Wilkes from Virginia Tech, Steve Ross from Blacksburg, Tom Fox and Erik Olsen from Blacksburg Transit, and Tom Brugh from Montgomery County. Their goal is to provide a bike share program among our community. It will be paid proportionately by the number of bikes and bikes share areas we have. Probably 80% of bike stations will be at Virginia Tech so they will be 80% of that cost and we will probably be at 10% of that. Early on we will probably have 3 stations. Currently we are looking at NRV Mall area, Recreation Center, and Oak Tree area as those locations. We have currently put a grant in for this and ran it through Blacksburg Transit because they are our transportation right now. We should hear back sometime in June. Brad has placed this in his budget in case the grant is not accepted so we can cover that transportation cost. The

goal is to hope to have this in place by August prior to Virginia Tech starting school. We are currently putting a RFP out to the different bike companies and we have been presented a few different ones. We did the RFP as a group so that it will meet our needs. One of the important needs is the balancing of the bikes. Part of the companies' responsibility is the balancing with the bikes.

- We are also doing a sponsorship opportunity for businesses and individuals that want to purchase amenities along the Huckleberry Trail. We have areas that are set up and we have sponsorship items available. So far Walmart has given us a commitment that they want to do something big and our local VFW has also come on board and done a bench. Our next step in the process is our Public Relations Department is going to do a video of the trails we have so people have an understanding of what we are talking about.
- Student Report:
Matthew Davidson mentions that they moved the weight room to the auto garage area at the High School. The school's lacrosse team started up their practices about a month ago and won their first game.
- Tonia Winn mentions that at the Christiansburg High School tennis courts have pine trees in that area causing issues with the falling needles. The pine needles are always in the way and a pain. Someone asked if the Recreation Center guys could possibly cut them down below the courts. Tonia asked Brad if he would think about or even see if they would just blow the courts off. Brad said he would look into it.
- New Business:
- Cord Hall wanted to mention 3 things, 1 being that he is glad that Brad brought up the May 4 parade, they are still in the planning phase for it. It is going to include Fire Department, Police Department, and Rescue. It is also going to be coordinated with some food trucks, and also the opening of the farmer markets. Hopefully it is much more than just a parade and maybe a good destination point in downtown for people. The wrestling team broke the record of the most consecutive wins. Secondly, he wanted to pass on from council that the new quiet area has been great; nothing negative all positive. The changes that we have made have worked to the satisfaction of those citizens who were effected. Lastly, Cord wanted to invite everyone to the Child Abuse Seminar on April 27 at second floor at the Montgomery County Courthouse at 6p.m. They will be hosting this in Pulaski the first Thursday of April. Brad mentions the Parks & Recreation Department was involved last year and plan to be this year, for the month of April for Child Abuse Awareness.
- Mike Saylor has two things he wanted to bring up, one is about a blood borne pathogens training. He seen one of the workers on the court one day and he asked them if they knew how to use what is in the first aid kit or if they were trained. Mike mentions that the training is an OSHA required and Brad is checking with Human Resources Department to find out the information. Robin Boyd mentions he doesn't think it would be a bad idea for the coaches to be CPR trained. Brad is going to talk to Joe with Rescue about this. The other thing is that Mike had a question about scholarships and kids playing sports. He wanted to know if we had a defined scholarship program or guidelines for our programs. Brad mentions that we do not and don't promote it. We have talked with other Recreation Department, sometimes when it is promoted it is abused, so we have not promoted it. What we do if parents come to us and say they are financially unable to afford, we put their child on a waiting list then we contact the civic clubs that we reach out to and let them know of the situation. If

needed Brad will reach out the principal of the school and see if this is a valid need but in most cases they don't have to go that route. This is just not for sports, it's for other items for the Recreation Center as well. In most cases we have not turned away scholarship needs as we try to find a way to do it. We just don't promote for fear of abuse of it. Montgomery County has a policy that they use and they actually promote it. It is something we could look at, so far things have gone quite well, with the way we have been doing it. We have been able to monitor the situations and we don't want to turn kids away from the sport because of financial situations. Mike was talking about having guidelines to be able to give to people who ask questions, and he asked if it was worth having something. Brad said we could put guidelines in there but everybody's situation is unique and they may not fall into that guideline. Brad is open to what commission thinks, what we can do is look at what the County does and see what they have, as well as look at other areas. To the best of Brads knowledge Blacksburg does not do scholarships, Diane Fenton mentions when she worked at Eastern Montgomery, if they got free or reduced lunch they got to play.

- Our Junior Robotics Lego League went to Virginia Tech for competition for their robot and they came in first place.
- Old Business:
- Quiet time discussion each of you have a copies of the emails that were sent last week and we have heard the comments from the citizens here. Mr. Yearick came and expressed his concerns about the voting issue on the first day. We had 3 folks that wanted quiet time to remain and 14 that did not. The comments we received from the people who were for quiet time were: We need some time; People can use their ipods. The comments we received from people who wanted to do away with quiet time: It's a community area; there should be noise; It's a gym and we need music. We separated that first day after Mr. Yearick talked with us we tried to do things different. We can't control what people do by going out talking to people and those types of things. From the number of votes we have it exceeds generally the number of people in the cardio room during that time frame. After the first day basically we had 11 votes that were in favor of the quiet time and we did this for 2 weeks. Comments from the ones who want quiet time: Some people are too loud; Talk too much; it's peaceful and enjoyable. We had 21 folks that wanted to do away with quiet time, comments were: I've never been to a gym that has quiet time; not greatly necessary keep volume in check; there's headphones and earbuds; Music helps your get your mind off of it, provide low volume and listening type of music. The ballots were kept behind the front desk and they had to ask for a ballot and they were only allowed one vote. Cord Hall mentions that this has been in place for over 5 or more years since before Brad got here. He asked if the quiet time was specifically with the cardio room or weight room, it's just the cardio room. It's from 8-9:30 a.m. it's not overly busy at this time. The voting only took place during the quiet time. Brad did have 2 patrons that came in his office that could not be here for the meeting and they felt that we needed to do away with the quiet time. Cord mentions that he hopes in April that the commission could give Brad and the staff the direction that they need and that way it can be done. Richard Polikoff asked if it is on Saturdays as well, quiet time takes place every day we are open. Mr. Neel came by for 10 minutes of quiet time and there were maybe 10 people in there trending toward the older population. 2-3 people had earbuds in and atleast 4 people were reading, John mentions he can see where the music could distract them from reading. It's a small percentage of the day to have a little bit of peace and quiet for those folks. Diane Fenton asked commission if

they are in agreement to not take action tonight and have discussion about it. Brad ask that they think about it, we have gotten mixed signals from other departments. Radford had music playing all the time and then went away from it completely. Radford University can't do it without music. Blacksburg does not have music, and Wytheville does play music. Tonia Winn mentions that what they are asking is not out of the normal, different community events have quiet times. The Parks & Recreation Commission all agreed that no action would be taken tonight but would plan to take action the next couple months after more thought and consideration.

- Robin Boyd is speaking on behalf of the Christiansburg High School Softball team as they very appreciative of being able to use Harkrader Sports Complex and the work Randy and Nick does there. They are very fortunate to be able to use that field.
- Meeting adjourned, next meeting Monday, April 3, 2017.