

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Board
Online WebEx Meeting
March 25, 2021
Board Meeting Minutes**

Board Members: Tom Lynch, George Sushinsky, Chip Boylan, Bob Taylor,
Absent: Maryann Kearns, Dirk Whatley,
Staff: Chris Henry, Karla Sheehi,
Councilmember: Mark Pierzchala
Guests: No guests

Meeting commencement: 7:06 pm

Re: Approval of February Minutes

The minutes were approved as amended.

Re: Community Forum

No guests in attendance.

Re: Council Report - Councilman Mark Pierzchala

Art in Public Architecture

Mayor and Council approved the art in public architecture for the Swim Center as part of the budget amendment at the March 22 meeting.

Montgomery County Pesticide Ordinance

Mayor and Council will bring back the Montgomery County Pesticide Ordinance revision to review pesticide use on resident lawns as well as parks.

Re: Staff Reports

Senior Center ADA Renovation

Phase 2 of the Senior Center ADA renovation started this week.

City Hall Bathroom Renovation

Renovation of the second-floor bathrooms in City Hall to make them ADA compliant, has started.

Spring Maintenance

Spring maintenance contracts will be underway in a few weeks.

Spring Projects

Repairs to our athletic courts will begin. We will be milling and overlaying the courts within the next week or two. Courts will be closed during the repairs.

EV Charging Stations

Recreation and Parks is working with Public works to get additional charging stations for electric cars, as part of Mayor and Council initiatives. Currently there is a charging station at Thomas Farm Community Center and we are looking at additional parks. Twinbrook Community Center and Dogwood Park are two locations being considered as part of this project. This would be a partnership with PEPCO, as a sustainable project.

RedGate Reimagining Project

Outreach has gone out about RedGate Park's online survey allowing community members to provide their feedback. The survey collects feedback and distinguishes residents vs nonresident input. The project website is engagerockville.com which gives you high level updates of overall project status.

Camp Registration Opening

April 6 is the opening day for Camp Registration. A Summer Camp Guide will be mailed out as well as available online.

Arbor Day

We will hold an Arbor Day event on April 6, which involves our City Forester planting a tree at Chestnut Lodge Park. The planting will be videotaped, and our City Forester will share Do's and Don'ts and tips of tree planting to air on our Facebook Page and our Social Media. There will also be an Arbor Day Proclamation presented by Mayor and Council at the April 12 meeting.

FY22 Budget Work Session

Budget points for Recreation and Parks were presented by Stephanie Pankiewicz at the March 1st meeting on behalf of the R&P Advisory Board. She did not however, get through all of the points. R&P staff is looking for what she sent it to Mayor and Council but cannot locate it. Chris will request that someone forward Stephanie's written statement so it can be part of the budget testimony. George testified as well at the budget work session. With both Stephanie and George mentioning the minimum wage concern, Mayor and Council have added the \$67k increase to meet the minimum wage of Montgomery County.

There is another budget public hearing on the April 12 and another work session on April 19.

Chip pointed out that there is still a concern about the staffing reduction, in particular the Recreation Program Coordinator. Chris confirmed that with activity now ramping up as Recreation and Parks prepares for 790 Summer programs being offered, the Program Coordinator position will be critical to providing services. Chris also pointed out that there are two other positions that are currently frozen; one is a tree climber and the other is the Senior Construction Project Manager who will oversee and manage all of our Maintenance Projects and new Capital Projects such as Skate Park, pervious pavement at Thomas Farm and Athletic Courts.

Chip volunteered to take these staffing points to the Mayor and Council budget work session on April 19. The board voted for Chip to represent the board in doing so. A motion was made by George for Chip to represent the board and present these important budget points. Bob Taylor seconded the motion and all board members voted in favor.

Earth Day

Croydon Creek Nature Center is preparing for Earth Day activities being held April 22.

Community Centers Re-Opening

Community Centers are working on their re-opening plans, with a staggered opening approach. With one center opening one week then the others one week at a time.

Twinbrook Community Center Supervisor Vacancy

Khali Isreal has been promoted from assistant supervisor to supervisor of Twinbrook Community Center. Khali has been with the City of Rockville since he was a kid and his family is the Isreal family which Isreal Park was named after. We have permission to fill the vacancy of the assistant supervisor for Twinbrook Community Center.

Parks Maintenance Specialist Vacancy

Robbie Bielder (Bobby) joins the Horticulture staff as the Parks Maintenance Specialist position that was left vacant by Paula Perez when she was promoted to City Forester.

Plans for Re-Opening

Management wanted to ensure staff was comfortable re-opening so the reopening will be a slow approach with Twinbrook Community Center being the first to open soon. Then the other centers will follow and the approach to accessing the centers will be by reservation, similar to how the swim center is operating today.

George inquired what the plans are for the **Special Events** this year, like **Hometown Holidays**.

Special Events for this year was presented to Mayor and Council and instead of holding Hometown Holidays, we will have a 4 -day event a RedGate with marked areas on the ground that identify where groups will sit so, they can spread out. We will have local bands, maybe a puppet show for kids and try to spread out the crowd an hour in between for cleaning and regrouping.

The **Memorial Day** ceremony will be filmed and pre-recorded so that it can be aired on Memorial Day, to include some of our previous troops and marching bands. There will be in in person ceremony for Memorial Day, which we may have one of our board members participate in.

July 4th event, this year was the end of our contract and went out to bid and only received one bid. Mayor and Council decided that we want them to sign the contract. We may however postpone the July 4th event – perhaps

for Fall timeframe. Montgomery County took their fireworks out altogether. Gaithersburg is looking at doing smaller activities and will not be doing fireworks. So, there is concern that if we are the only agency doing fireworks, we will draw more people to one spot.

Suds & Soles

This run normally takes place in Town Center. We are looking to move this to RedGate with staggered starts and limit the groups depending on the restrictions in place.

Staff is also considering that this year we expect an invasion of cicadas, which will not stop our events, but Maryland is supposed to be the epicenter so we are trying to balance events in between this time period.

Re: Subcommittee Reports

- a) **Glenview Mansion (Tom)**
No new updates
- b) **Swim & Fitness Center (Bob)**
- c) The Swim center has been busy. There has been success on how to get more patrons and getting family units together. As the weather gets warmer, we will prepare to open the outdoor pool as soon as possible.
- d) **Recreation and Parks Foundation (Chip)**
The Foundation has started a blog and Chip has offered to subscribe our board members. The first topic on the blog was about good walks in The City of Rockville.
Every year for the past four years, The Foundation has recognized individuals or organizations who have made significant contributions to Rockville Recreation and Parks. Staff have started the nomination processes to identify who these will be and will share with the Foundation.
- e) **Arts**
Gateway Art Project (Tom):
Per Councilman Pierzchala, the site is encumbered as a result of a gas pipeline running through the original location of the unicycle.
Swim Center Art Project (Bob):
No new updates
- f) **RedGate Park (George)**
Our City Project Page: [Engage Rockville](#) houses the survey for communities to provide feedback on the Reimagining RedGate project. George encouraged all the board members, if they have not already to register for their survey and submit their feedback.

Re: Old Business/New Business

Old Business

Board vacancies: George asked if we have had any applicants for the vacancies.

Karla has received correspondence from two interested citizens advising they had submitted an application of interest. Karla has inquired about their applications with the City Clerk's office and will invite them to our April meeting.

New Business

Spring Stream Cleanup – Karla to send out two weekend dates as options to schedule our stream cleanup behind Glenview Mansion.

Re: Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm

The next meeting: April 22, 2021 at 7 p.m. Via Webex