

The Richlands Recreation Commission held a regular meeting at the Richlands Recreation Park on April 17th, 2017 at 7:00PM with the following present:

Recreation Director: Fred Phillips

Other Town Staff: George West (Street Department), Tim Taylor (Town Manager), Frank Dorton (Chief of Police)

Richlands Town Council Members: Mary Ann Strong

Recreation Commission Members: Frances Meadows, Ronnie Cordle, Craig Earls, Joe McCall, Tony Cordle, Jeff Hurst

Mary Ann Strong opened the Richlands Recreation Commission meeting and welcomed everyone to the April meeting. The new conference room is very impressive and everything looks installed and ready to go. You guys have done an excellent job on this room.

Fred Phillips- We need to get and install a new conference table which will also include new chairs.

Ronnie Cordle- When will the Internet line be run and installed?

Tim Taylor- The town is working on right of ways to get the new line ran to the park. As an in the interim solution we can get Time Warner if needed.

Mary Ann Strong- Do we have any corrections to the March meeting minutes? In one case we need to correct "John McCall" to "Joe McCall". Also, on the February meeting minutes, I discussed sending a text message to Brandon Smith and not an email.

Craig Earls- Thank you, I will correct both.

Tony Cordle- Motion to approve the March meeting minutes with requested changes. Joe McCall seconded the motion. Mary Ann Strong- Any further discussion on minutes? No discussion, approved 6/0.

Fred Phillips Recreation Report

Fred Phillips- The bathroom down stairs is coming along and the conference room is nearly complete. When we get the concrete into the floor it will go a lot quicker. We will have the detainees to put up the new walls for us downstairs. Chief Dorton and I went to Critterville to locate designated smoking areas. We ordered the signs and will put them in for the designated areas. One location will be beside the Sr. League baseball field and softball field in the back near the walking trail. A second location is between the T-ball and Minor softball field across the walking trail area. We will have posts with signs, and cigarette dispensers to collect the waste. We ordered signs and the materials will be here next week. The third location is between the picnic shelter and the basketball court. The walking track is close, but we think it will not cause problem. It is hard to put on the other side of the road because it is close to fields and people watching. When people come into the park we will have a large sign letting the public know that we have no smoking except in designated areas.

Mary Ann Strong- Do the signs mention a fine?

Fred Phillips- No, the fines are not listed.

Jeff Hurst- It is way harder to find an area than you would think.

Fred Phillips- Yes, the areas must be well outlined for enforcement.

Tim Taylor- It would be good to lock down the dispensers etc. if possible.

Fred Phillips- What about chewing?

Tim Taylor- The ordinance defines what is "smoking" and that is all that is enforced. This includes eCigs as well, but does not include chewing, dipping, etc.

Fred Phillips- What about smoking in cars? For example, if someone drives into the park smoking with the top down, how do we handle that?

Tim Taylor- We may need to get a legal opinion on that. Are we also putting designated areas in Britts and Lake Parks?

Fred Phillips- Yes, we are designating smoking areas there as well. We need Little League to designate spots at Flanary.

Craig Earls- Yes, we will work with the town to get the appropriate areas. We are thinking that the dumpster area and the outfield of Flanary in the trees will be good options.

Traffic Flow Update

Fred Phillips- The new signs are working well to direct traffic around the Rec Park. We have had a few that have missed it, but overall it has really helped the situation. Also, the pool will be starting soon and the new traffic flow will really help.

Ronnie Cordle- Once the parking and lane lines are down we should be finished with that project.

Fred Phillips- We also hired a seasonal guy to help with picking up Critterville trash and other items. It is a hard job, and a lot of items, but he will be there every morning. He will clean bathrooms etc. as well.

Middle Aged Rec Activities

Ronnie Cordle- Something that has come up and asked about is do we have any areas or activities for our senior citizens.

Mary Ann Strong- I have also been asked about these types of activities.

Ronnie Cordle- The average age in Richlands is in the 40's. If you are not into other sports what do you have to do here? I know we are planning to have the landing area for kayaks at Critterville.

Craig Earls- Where are we with that project?

Tim Taylor- The town is planning and working on a landing area for access to the river and we are going to put a gravel road down to it near the sewer plant.

Mary Ann Strong- Ginger Branton also asked me about what we have available for senior citizens. I can also ask her if she has any suggestions.

Ronnie Cordle- Things like pickle-ball and other types of activities would be good.

Tony Cordle- Volleyball used to be a good option, and I am one of the youngest for cornhole here. We had a great turnout for the regional tournament that was held here. We had players that came from pretty far away to attend.

Ronnie Cordle- Do you have any local tournaments?

Tony Cordle- We do have one at Freedom Ford that is coming up soon.

Mary Ann Strong- Frances Meadows will do some research on this for our next meeting.

CRSA Project Update

Jeff Hurst- We have engineering topographic map of the proposed field and layout. We had one issue with drainage. The distance between the road and home plate on the softball field is 11 feet in elevation difference. We also found a big box drain that is coming straight off the hill. That box drain will really help with water run-off for drainage.

Tim Taylor- Looks like drainage may not be a big issue.

Jeff Hurst- We talked about timelines with them, but we are still waiting on money etc. Before you can do anything you need a storm management permit before you can do anything. One donor asked us if the location was in flood plain. It is in the 500 year plan, but not 100 year plan. For lighting on the field, if we use LED lights we may be able to use less poles and lights.

Tim Taylor- The lighting company will do a study for you so you know what you are dealing with.

Ronnie Cordle- I have heard some concerns about losing the lights and wiring for the them.

Tim Taylor- If you have the money etc. and you need them down we can take them down. It will be a timing issue. We can take them down anytime.

Jeff Hurst-The main thing is that if we can use LED that will be a huge help.

Tim Taylor- If we can superimpose the picture on the blueprint and locate the poles. We can have Kevin take this to a lighting company to figure out what the design needs to be. If they are LEDs we can probably put the switch inside the rec park building as well. They can even give a cost quote for what you may need. We need to move the electrical boxes anyways due to the age and bring them up to code.

Jeff Hurst- The next step is to budget it out and figure fund raising next steps. We can talk to Jim Ball with Cumberland Plateau to see what is available.

Mary Ann Strong- We need to ask Brad Ratliff about the lease agreement as well.

Jeff Hurst- We are looking at some matching grants through Conservation Group. The town may have to apply for some of them.

Tim Taylor- I know those types of groups have helped in the past with these types of recreation projects.

Other Discussion:

Craig Earls- Richlands Little League had our season opening and ceremony on Saturday, April 8th. We had an excellent crowd for the ceremony and the parade went very well. I would like to thank Chief Dorton and his crew for blocking the roads and making it safe for all our players and parents during the parade. We received great feedback from the group and hope to do this again next year. Overall, the season is going well and we are just getting things kicked off for the regular season. We do have several tournaments that will be held here in Richlands. We have an interdistrict 9/10 here in a few days, and the 3-district tournament of champions for 11/12 and 9/10 baseball will be late May. We will also host the 7/8 coach-pitch softball district tournament, 9/10 all-star baseball and Sr. League softball State tournament this year. We have a lot on our plate, but look forward to hosting these for our kids.

Chief Dorton- About the question earlier for drivers who come through the park while smoking; Yes, you will get a ticket if you drive through and smoke. Also, they cannot sit in their car and smoke. That is a violation.

Ronnie Cordle- We had a complaint of car getting hit due to baseballs hit across road. Can we look at getting nets on that field?

Craig Earls- Yes, the first-base side is pretty much wide open for foul balls. I think the league would support putting extra netting on this side to help protect against foul balls. I have seen several balls land in the road while traffic is coming through. I am glad to see this field being used by our 8th grade, JV and Jr League teams this year. I will bring this up with our board for discussion.

Fred Phillips- Yes, I think we need a fence/netting or separation due to hitting baseballs etc.

Tony Cordle- Can we have double bases for all divisions in Little League? We have had some collisions over on the minor softball field and the double base may help.

Craig Earls- We have the double bases on both majors divisions. We actually have a lot of opposition to double bases by the umpires, but we can look into this for minors as well.

Mary Ann Strong- Do we have a possibility of playground equipment for Lake Park? Is that an option for Lake Park with the practice baseball field? It could be something a civic club would sponsor.

Fred Phillips- We should have an area large enough to fit playground equipment up next to the volleyball area and in that open space. If we get the money, who would install it? That is probably a few weeks to put it up. There is room at Lake Park to do that.

Mary Ann Strong- Can we have stations along the trail at Critterville for people to sit etc?

Fred Phillips- We can probably make some and put them along the trail.

Mary Ann Strong- It would be good if town could help with that.

Fred Phillips- We do have an option in the gym for volleyball if we change out from tennis. We don't have much support for tennis any longer and we have had people ask about volleyball. This year the Tennis Tournament will be June 18-20 at the YMCA at SWCC.

Ronnie Cordle- We are still staying on top of the utilities usage from the fields, \$1,200 for the entire group of fields. Also, this room is saving us money. LED lighting is the way to go and we are having someone come out and check lights to see what we can save. When Little League is playing who makes the call if it is a safety issue and games should be cancelled.

Craig Earls- Larry Meadows is our Safety Officer and he works with me to determine if field conditions warrant a cancellation.

Fred Phillips- Yes, that is handled through Little League while they have the fields.

Craig Earls- I would like to discuss the field usage during off-times for Little League. We don't need to make any decisions now, but we do need to be thinking about how the commission wants to handle this.

Ronnie Cordle- We requested to use the fields last year at Flanary for a tournament and we were asked not to play on those fields. As a tax payer we should have access to those fields.

Craig Earls- We generally request that co-ed not be played on Flanary fields. We have had issues in the past with trash, cigarettes, drinking and people messing up the fields. Unfortunately, a few bad apples have ruined it for the group, but we are concerned about making sure the fields are in good condition. We are putting a lot of money into these fields and want them to stay good for the kids. I do generally allow them to play on the Critterville softball fields, assuming the weather is fine. Those fields are better suited for adult play.

Mary Ann Strong- Traditionally, we do not let co-ed play on Flanary fields.

Craig Earls- I often allow co-ed tournaments at Critterville, but we do need the authority to make them cancel when the fields are not in condition to play due to rain etc.

Fred Phillips- Ronnie called me and I told him he could use it, and then Little League requested they use Critterville.

Craig Earls – Yes, we made that request. However, we have allowed them to play at Critterville in the past. Again, our only goal is to make sure the fields are taken care of. We don't want to spend thousands of dollars on upkeep and have them damaged.

No action was taken on topic.

No further comments.

Next meeting - May 15th 7:00PM at the Richalnds Recreation Park

Mary Ann Strong- Adjourned meeting.