

The Richlands Recreation Commission held a regular meeting at the Richlands Recreation Park on February 20, 2017 at 7:00PM with the following present:

Recreation Director: Fred Phillips

Other Town Staff: Kevin Blankenship

Richlands Town Council Members: Mary Ann Strong

Recreation Commission Members: Frances Meadows, Craig Earls, Ronnie Cordle, Tony Cordle, LaRhonda Lindsey, Anthony Cox, Jeff Hurst

Other Participants: David & Cecilia Lamie, Bobby Holmes, Stanley McGlothlin

Richlands REC Commission Mary Ann Strong opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the February Commission meeting.

Mary Ann Strong- I would like to discuss a member that is currently on the Commission, Brandon Smith. Based on what I have heard he is living in Honaker, VA. I sent text message to Brandon to confirm if he is living in Honaker. He did not respond to my request on Monday. Just as a reminder, if you miss 3 consecutive meetings without contacting the commission you can be removed from the commission. I would like to add Brannon Breeding to the commission, but we need an extra spot based on people outside of the town limits. At the last town council meeting I recommended, and it was approved with council, for Jeff Hurst to be added to the commission.

Frances Meadows- We did not discuss taking Jeff Hurst to the council meeting at the January meeting. I feel we should have discussed this at the meeting.

Mary Ann Strong- As a council member, I am responsible for recommending positions to commission. Jeff Hurst was discussed with several members and he was approved by the council.

Frances Meadows- We did not discuss, as a commission, a recommendation for the opening at the last meeting. I think we should discuss this as a group before recommending to the council.

Mary Ann Strong- This same approach has happened in the past. I asked Jeff and felt that I was following what was done in the past. Going forward, we can bring to the commission before going to the council. It will be an insult to Jeff if we remove him. No action was taken. Mary Ann opened the floor for public discussion about the Recreation Park Softball Field.

Guest Discussion: Bobby Holmes- We are trying to continue with RMS softball and we would like to use the softball field here at the Recreation Park. Stanley and I would like to work with Mike Bandy (JV Soccer Coach) to work out field access.

Stanley McGlothlin- We discussed with Mike and he wants us to take up the fence each day and it is not really feasible to do so. It takes a lot of effort to put up the fence and to remove it daily. He practices from 6-7:30 and he wanted RMS softball to practice 4:45-6. This is difficult for our parents that work during the day.

David Lamie- Can we leave the fence up during the season, and until the new soccer complex is paid and ready build? The concern is that we would like to leave it (the fence). We would like to use the field it while it is still there.

Fred Phillips- I have coached middle school baseball and we did not use a field. Mike Bandy came to me about using the field. This technically (RMS softball) is not designated as a sport by RMS (it is a club team). I was not for sure who/if was doing the RMS club softball this year and what field we have for that team. I wanted them to work with Mike on an acceptable schedule if they are going to use the field.

David Lamie- Due to not having lights, it is hard to play all up at the high school.

Fred Phillips- Just plug them into the Critterville schedule and have a similar agreement as we did before.

David Lamie- This issue with Critterville is that the JV Softball practices on that field.

Craig Earls- We are projecting to have 8 softball teams and JV softball at Critterville.

David Lamie- In the past, JV soccer uses the inside of the field at the high school and down here they would have an entire half if they turned soccer the other way instead of log ways to the field. This would allow us to have the fence and them to have a practice field.

Anthony Cox- Richlands does not recognize these as official sports.

Cecilia Lamie- We are not an official sport for RMS, but we would like to use the field as we have in the past.

Fred Phillips- I brought the RMS baseball here, and I understand that it is not recognized. However, I don't think Mike was demanding you to remove the fence, but I don't have any dog in the race. As a solution, I think the field should be turned the other way instead of the way that it is arranged towards the softball field.

Cecilia Lamie- The reason we want to fence up is that without the fence it becomes a safety issue.

Mary Ann Strong- We as a commission will work with the RMS softball group to use the field during the season.

Bobby Holmes- We want to compromise and have a solution for everyone.

Craig Earls- Is there a plan B if you cannot use this field? Guests: No
I know that Varsity will always play at the high school and the first three JV games at Critterville.

Ronnie Cordle- We will look into it and figure out if we can make a compromise. Thank you for coming and we will let you know the outcome after this meeting.

LaRhonda Lindsey joined commission meeting.

Kevin Blankenship Update- We are renovating the small room here to a conference room and it will locally be state of the art. The town is also bringing fiber optics for WIFI and 70' TV for PowerPoint

presentations etc. You will be able to use computer and hook up to it. We installed cabinets, small sink, and mini fridge. We are also putting carpet in and finishing the walls.

Fred Phillips- Projects Update: We are slow on raising funds, but the switch between the weight room and bathroom is still on. Ronnie Cordle really helped us come up with the idea for the switch. We have a couple of maybes on grants in June. We are looking to postpone the switch and construction until the pool season is over. Kevin suggested going forward with bathroom, and just using the existing weight room. That will be about \$7K and we have the money for this phase of the project. This is a two month project for labor that will come from town. We are paying for showers, baby change station and other amenities. We are just finishing up Rec Ball league this week. Jeff Hurst with RYBL is buying a couple of things for the project and donating money to the Rec Department for the phase II project. We are also looking at getting a cleaning machine for the gym floor.

Jeff Hurst joined commission meeting.

Mary Ann Strong- We now have a quorum.

Kevin Blankenship- Hopefully we can meet next time in the meeting room when we get it finished.

Ronnie Cordle- Do we have padding under the carpet?

Fred Phillips- We can get the padding if we need it.

Craig Earls advised the commission that the meeting minutes from the January meeting were ready for approval. Motion for approval for the January meeting minutes was made by Ronnie Cordle, Frances Meadows seconded the motion. Mary Ann Strong- Any further discussion on minutes? No discussion, approved 6/0.

Tony Cordle joined commission meeting.

Traffic Flow at the Recreation Park

Ronnie Cordle- The traffic flow around the Rec Park should be looked at. Most people look, and if anything is not coming they dart left instead of going around. Ball games are always tough for parking and traffic flow. We have suggestions, and the best we have is double yellow lines down the middle. Also, when you go up the hill there needs to be a barrier to prevent people from going left.

Tony Cordle-The main road is scary to come across, due to size of road.

Fred Phillips- Addressing the main road is tough, but we do have some ideas to keep it a lot safer and keep traffic going around the building. Do we have any ways we could force them around?

LaRhonda Lindsey- We could put a physical concrete barrier like a Cedar Bluff school.

Kevin Blankenship- We can use markings and signs to make sure to outline the flow of traffic.

Ronnie Cordle- We had the idea for the physical barrier, but the issue is that tractor trailers need to come in here sometimes. So, it must be removable.

Kevin Blankenship- We should mark them for parking, and paint arrows to show flow of traffic.

Fred Phillips- That is a great idea and what we would like to do anyways.

Mary Ann Strong- How do we get permission to do that? DO we need VDOT approval?

Kevin Blankenship- We should not need VDOT approval. We just need to give it to the council for approval. Then they can give it to George to implement. This is our road so we should be able to address that.

Craig Earls- Do we need Ronnie to go to next town council meeting?

Kevin Blankenship- I think it would be good to have him attend.

LaRhonda Lindsey made a motion to approve for Ronnie Cordle to attend the council meeting to ask for approval to put parking spaces beside the tennis courts to address traffic flow. Tony Cordle seconded the motion. Mary Ann Strong- Any further discussion on the motion?

Tony Cordle- I think we also need a sign at railroad track, and top of Virginia Avenue to show where Rec Park is located. Kevin Blankenship- We had signs before, maybe they were removed when we had the bridge repaired. Fred Phillips- Can we add this to the motion? LaRhonda Lindsey- Please add sign requests for council to my motion. Tony Cordle seconded the motion. Mary Ann Strong- Any further discussion on motion? No discussion, motion carries 7/0.

Utilities Discussion

Ronnie Cordle- I have been looking at trying to conserve energy and how to make things more efficient. This meeting room, can we get meter readings for breakouts to show usage. If you put LED lights in, show the efficiency gains. We can save money with the LEDs.

Fred Phillips- The new foam in the ceilings will save on energy some as well. I would like to see the breakout. We are putting LEDs, but how much is the savings. If we show savings maybe we can put them down on the ball fields.

Ronnie Cordle- We should be able to show for our benefit that we are saving money. It is good to have the data, to show how to bill, look at other things.

Kevin Blankenship- The new ballasts for LED's are \$100 each, \$1600 for whole room. We replaced some for street lights and we have not been back to fix them, they are super reliable and durable.

Fred Phillips- This room will be used for the town as well, so they are helping with funds. Every department is kicking in money to help finish it.

Mary Ann Strong- It would be good to discuss with the Council about the LEDs and business meetings only (no birthday parties etc.)

Ronnie Cordle- We should show we are being proactive, and that we are doing great things over here. We would like to see and show the data to prove it.

Kevin Blankenship- I can help with that.

Middle School Softball Discussion

Ronnie Cordle- We had Stanley McGlothlin, David & Cecilia Lamie and Bobby Holmes come to the meeting earlier about working together with Mike Bandy on sharing the Rec Park field. They want to put the fence up and leave it for practices etc.

Fred Phillips- Mike Bandy asked me about using the field first and I approved for him to use the field for JV Soccer practice. Stanley came to me and asked about using the softball field. JV had already asked, so I told Stanley to get with Mike to see about sharing the complex. I did receive a text that it was ok from Stanley.

Craig Earls- The issue is the fence and early schedule. Mike is requesting them to take the fence up and down each day which is not really possible. It takes a while to put up and down and multiple people.

LaRhonda Lindsey- Can they put cones down for the marking the field?

Craig Earls- The issue will be that the balls will not have a barrier when they are hitting. They do not want anyone to get hurt etc. So it is a safety issue as well.

Mary Ann Strong- With the season starting we appreciate working to settle it tonight.

Jeff Hurst- Middle School softball is not a recognized sport.

Group- Agreed, this is not recognized.

LaRhonda Linsey- The issue is that JV does not have a good spot to practice at the high school.

Fred Phillips- Softball is getting a full field, and soccer already getting a short field.

Tony Cordle- They should be able to work it out. If they want to use it, work it out.

Craig Earls- The softball group is asking to keep the fence up. If soccer moves the field the other direction they have as much field as Varsity has at the high school. They also mentioned that Mike wanted them to have the field early and that was not feasible for their parents to show up that early.

Fred Phillips- How big is the field, 100yards long, 50 yards wide? Could you turn the field that way so they could leave the fence up? I feel bad about turning the field the other way for Mike. I am not a fan, but it could fix the issue.

Tony Cordle- They just need to meet in the middle and come up with schedule based on the current layout.

Kevin Blankenship- A long term solution is to get lights on minor softball field at Critterville. If we had that we could put them there.

Craig Earls- Kevin, I agree. That is a good long-term solution. I think the big issue currently is the time and the fence, how can we fix that?

LaRhonda- The kids could ride the bus down to Rec Park to help with timing.

Fred Phillips- The ideal solution is to move the Soccer field sideways and do both.

Jeff Hurst- You would want it long ways to get full practices on the field for JV. Let me call Mike and see what he says.

Ronnie Cordle- Jeff Hurst contacted Mike and he would like them to leave the fence down for practice but can have it up for games. They need to work together to work around games etc. He also agreed to move his practice time up by 30min and warm-up on the far end so that any fly balls do not become a safety issue. I will reach out to Stanley on the resolution to the schedule.

Clinch River Soccer Discussion

Mary Ann Strong- In looking into the leasing of the field it does not look like a 30-year lease will be possible. Most likely it could be a 5-year agreement with 5-year renewals.

Jeff Hurst- We are continuing with the survey and we are meeting next week about fundraising for the project. We are looking as part of the fundraising to build bleachers all the way down the length of the field on the hillside. No further updates.

Anthony Cox- We are purchasing clay for the senior league field at Critterville. The cost will be about \$1000. Do we have any money in the Recreation Park budget for these items?

Fred Phillips- No, we do not currently have budget for field materials like that.

Mary Ann Strong- It is important that we establish a schedule going forward. Is everyone ok with scheduling the 3rd Monday of each month at 7PM for this meeting? Everyone agreed.

Our next meeting will be Monday, March 20, 2017 at 7PM at the Recreation Park.

Meeting adjourned.