

The Richlands Recreation Commission held a regular meeting at the Richlands Recreation Park on August 20th, 2018 at 7:30PM with the following present:

Recreation Department: Fred Phillips, Jessica Reynolds

Other Attendees: Tim Taylor

Richlands Town Council Members: Mary Ann Strong

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

Ronnie Cordle opened the Richlands Recreation Commission meeting and welcomed everyone to the August Meeting.

Public Comments – Richlands OutKasts and Richlands Lady Crush Softball Teams, other public attendees:

Williams Field Usage Concerns:

Shannon Fuller: We each here want our softball teams to have our own group affiliations and we have groups that have the fields now for practices. Back in June, we were trying to practice over here at the Rec Park field, but we wanted to practice at the Critterville Park. We have the Outkasts softball group with multiple teams that are 8U, 10U, 12U, etc. We started practice at this Rec Park field and Mr. Ward came over and told us that the Middle School team had the field for practice. There is no middle school affiliation. We left, and found out that field had the field reserved for a month. You play like you practice and all we had is a grass infield to practice on.

Fred Phillips: We recognized that the field was reserved all the time and it should not be reserved that far out.

Shannon Fuller: We need to have guidelines and things in place. How do you reserve the fields? There is no transparency to the process and we don't know how many have the fields. When you call and reserve the field, you should reserve the name, who team etc. The system could be abused. Whoever signs them up it needs to be documented and it has to be fair and balanced. There is no process and guidelines in place now. I think you go to other towns and recreation controls all the fields. We travel to play, and Lady Crush does too, and we want to try and hold tournaments here some. Who manages that process? You have to let people see the rules and abusers should be accountable. There has to be a process in place. We just want it to be fair for everyone.

Fred Phillips: I have been here for 8 years and all the checks and balances are in place except for softball. It seems like a power struggle within softball, how does the process work for all the other sports, but not softball? When there is a process in place it should work.

Tony Cordle: To be fair, we have to be committed to finding the solution. I have been on the board for 6-7 years. This has just become an issue this year. Little league has it during a period and we (the recreation department) should have it the other periods. We do want to make it better and resolve the issue. We are trying to come up with some ways to resolve the issue so everyone can see it. For example, Facebook, a book for the fields etc. We meet once a month, and we are trying to work on the problem. Fred has done a great job, this is just something we need to address.

Shannon Fuller: We have a lot of teams now.

Tony Cordle: Let's keep on working on the issue and not butting heads.

Heather Barnett: We called this week and the field was not available.

Fred Phillips: It was our fault that it was booked out, and we need to do it weekly. The employees here booked it out too far.

Heather Barnett: The majors softball field (the one on the right when you go into the Critterville Park) is the most popular field. If you schedule it, then it should be in place. If you schedule, you should be there. We also would like to hold tournaments. It will help bring money in if we hold these tournaments. It will be great for the town.

Mary Ann Strong: This is a great problem to have, we have these teams that want to use the fields. We do want to have tournaments. People are critical that we don't hold tournaments.

David Lamie: You cannot charge down there, and the people will not make money. When holding tournaments you have a lot of expenses and we can't charge gate fees etc.

Mary Ann Strong: That is a good point, but it does make an impact to the town. The girls would like to play home and more people attend. I can understand that for sure.

David Lamie: It will be great for the town, but if you can't make money the tournaments won't work. You have to pay umpires etc.

Fred Phillips: Is it ok if one group can have the field Tuesday/Thursday one week, then the next week Monday/Wednesday/Friday the next? The minor league field and the Tball field can also be in that reservation.

Brad Ward: We do have groups that play that are 8 years old to 18 years old. The older girls cannot use the Tball field.

Mary Ann Strong: You can use the Tball for some basic infield for the smaller kids.

Tom Cordle: We may end it up having 4 fields.

Tony Cordle: So, will having the field Tuesday/Thursday one week, then the next week Monday/Wednesday/Friday work for everyone? Outcasts only wants it 2 days a week.

The group stated they would rather flip flop.

Brad Ward: Another issue, you have some co-ed teams and adults that want to use the fields. We are afraid they will mess up the field as they have in the past.

Cecilia Lamie: On Sunday's Renegades use the fields as well. They are 18U softball.

Tony Cordle: Is everyone good with the solution, we can start this next week.

Fred Phillips: Who wants Mondays?

Tony Cordle: Crush will take Mondays starting next week.

Tim Taylor: What about the maintenance of the fields?

Brad Ward: We (Little League) have some issues with this. We have access to the equipment, etc. to work the fields. We picked up cigarette butts all over the place. How do we enforce the rules?

Fred Phillips: There are plenty of signs.

Tim Taylor: If you see anyone smoking the police can enforce that ordinance.

Mark Gillespie: We need to do something with the bases and the adults that wear spikes.

Tony Cordle: We don't have a lot of man power to work the fields, and people needs to sign for the fields so they are accountable.

Mark Gillespie: Do we have anything on the baseball field at Critterville?

Fred Phillips: Yes, 13U Baseball and youth Football.

Larry Meadows: The last several years the Little League is doing all the work and the men (playing co-ed) are messing up the fields. You let men play on it and it ruins the fields. What safeguards are we putting in place?

FP: We want tournaments and we want that in.

Tony Cordle: I understand tearing the fields up. I am for both using the fields. Mr. Meadows has a good point. When it rains, people want to finish especially if you are ahead etc.

Craig Earls: I have had situations down at Critterville where the fields were absolutely demolished due to playing in the rain. If the recreation park is going to take over assigning the fields and letting co-ed play then the town must be responsible to also tell them to cancel due to bad weather. Little League should not be held responsible if they mess up the field. The last time they messed up the field it took me around 20 hours to fix it and Mark also had to purchase several thousand dollars of field mix.

Ronnie Cordle: We are going to work on establishing the lines.

Brad Ward: The fields at magic mart, can anyone use those? Is that in the deed or something? What is stopping co-ed teams for going over there?

Ronnie Cordle: Early on a few years ago, Craig and I had an issue with scheduling that field. We were going to hold a co-ed tournament at Flanary and we were told to not use that field and to go to Critterville.

Fred Phillips: The town does not take over the Flanary fields.

Ashley Ward: Those are some extra fields to help with the issue.

Brad Ward: We also wanted access to the batting cage at Flanary and was told we could not use them.

Craig Earls: I always gave access to the hitting cage at Flanary.

Brad Ward: That is not the case now.

LaRhonda Lindsey: That is an issue that Little League needs to discuss.

Mark Gillespie: You are always going to find trash, etc. that people leave behind. Nobody is perfect.

David Lamie: Who is mowing the fields?

Fred Phillips: The town contractor is already mowing the fields.

Larry Meadows: We have a lot of fields, but we do not have enough fields.

Ronnie Cordle: Is everyone satisfied with the solution? Group: Yes. We will go ahead and start the new schedule next week. Thank you for coming to discuss this with the commission.

Mary Ann Strong: Yes, thank you all for coming and discussing with us. You have a great looking group of girls over there and we look forward to seeing them succeed.

Commission Meeting - Old Business:

July Meeting Minute Approval

Ronnie Cordle: We need to approve the July meeting minutes. Does anyone have any corrections, additions, or deletions to the minutes? Tony Cordle made a motion to approve the July minutes. Joe McCall seconded the motion. No further comments, motion carries 8/0.

New Business:

Field Usage at Williams

Tim Taylor: There was so many things with building that field and the money used to build it. The biggest deal is with charging gate fee. You can do a damage deposit. Nobody wants to be risky and allow something that could get the town in trouble.

Craig Earls: Can you charge people team fees to play?

Tim Taylor: Yes, just not gate fees. You can make deposit fees, maintenance fees, etc.

Tony Cordle: It is hard to get staff to do everything that needs to be done.

Craig Earls: Someone needs to be able to cancel the tournament due to weather so the fields do not get damaged.

Tony Cordle: If you have the tournament then you should pay the fee.

Fred Phillips: If it is pouring down the rain then it should be canceled.

Craig Earls: I agree, the Recreation Park needs to have the authority to shut the tournament down due to rain to avoid damages.

Jeff Hurst: Some fields up north that we have played on, they have a policy that if you have more than 11 you need a permit to play.

Tim Taylor: The town could do something like that.

Tony Cordle: We need to fix up a form that I am responsible for XYZ. The form that you sign, and it must be on file.

LaRhonda Lindsey: They could sign that the first time and it could be done.

Tony Cordle: We could put the weather issue and that they must cancel if it wet.

Tim Taylor: We can get the attorney to draft it up after Jessica/Fred designs it. We just want it to be structured.

Ronnie Cordle: That is a short term item. Next spring we need to do that.

Mary Ann Strong: Yes, I agree.

Clinch River Soccer Update

Jeff Hurst: I have the site plans here for the soccer field. They came out really well. Our next thing is to get Tazewell County to approve and waive the fees for planning, etc. After approval of the land disturbance permit it will go to the State for approval. We are almost shovel ready. The next phase is raising money. When you have the plans, permits etc. it is more serious. Kevin Blankenship called today and we are on the same page for lighting. We want to remove the existing lights.

Mary Ann Strong: This is very exciting Jeff. We are glad to see that this is progressing.

Archery Ordinance

Ronnie Cordle: Did the Archery Ordinance come up at the Town Council meeting?

Mary Ann Strong: It was brought up, and we had one change that Brad Ratliff will make.

Tim Taylor: It should be approved next month with those changes.

River and ATV Trails

Tim Taylor: It is a county function and the trail project looks promising. The money that is coming in from the Shot Foundation may help us with the river trail and ATV trails. Larry Johnson helped us with access points to the Clinch and secured a 25K grant. These look really promising. The Washington Square clinic spot for Clinch access we are dealing with 3 private land owners. There is a place behind grants, or River Street and that street goes right down to the river. The council voted to allow us to use that place for a river walk. The swinging bridge area could be donated. Both properties has some issues that we need to address. We also have to go through all of the permitting process. That would help do the work with the \$25K grant money. The trails look good, The Spearhead trails are looking to come in. We should get Shawn Lindsey here to talk to us about the project. Some may not like 4-wheelers on the roads, but it will be an economic development boost for the town.

LaRhonda Lindsey: What about the Doran red light?

Tim Taylor: Depending on the circumstance it could move due to the traffic count

LaRhonda Lindsey: That could help with ATV access down in that area of town.

Tim Taylor: Yes, that area will be tricky because of crossing 460. That will be an issue that we will need to work on.

Update on Short/Long Term Improvements Fred Phillips/Jessica Reynolds

Fred Phillips: Jessica Reynolds is the Recreation Supervisor and she is fulltime with us now. She has done an excellent job. On the activities, we have the calendar of events and we have added some great things. After the first home football game we are going to have a swim, singing and bonfire. We are talking up registration for men's league basketball as well (18 and over.)

On Wednesday, the trails are getting dedicated at Boissevain. We have filled out a Skewes Family Foundation grant for the weight room, and \$200K for the water park. They are voting and they need some grants down our way. They seem positive about the grants.

We are also closing down the pool, and the pool was very popular this year.

Mary Ann Strong: The hospital was very happy with the facility that they rented all day.

Fred Phillips: We are still waiting on the donation and they were very happy. We have a sample of the tile downstairs as well. Jessica will be make up the forms to sell them.

Other

LaRhonda Linsey: The Kiwanis Club would like to do a run before the haunted trail at Critterville.

Fred Phillips: We will have the haunted trail as well.

LaRhonda Linsey: We want to do it before the haunted trail.

Fred Phillips: That should not be a problem at all. We are also working on the middle school basketball tournament and it will be a week long. We want 12 girls and 12 boy's teams.

Jessica Reynolds: We had a big success on the back to school swim and communities in school event.

Tim Taylor: Can we get the numbers of how many was served over here for the year?

Fred Phillips: Yes, we can.

Tim Taylor: This will help us with our budgeting.

Mary Ann Strong: Alice has been great here and we have a great team.

Jessica Reynolds: Yes, they all are fantastic.

Fred Phillips: We are going to have concession for Soccer and Basketball this year. That will help for people that have not ate yet. September 8th is the town clean up, we are trying to get teams to work here and work our way around. We would like the Rec Commission to help.

Tim Taylor: Yes, we are also going to have trash cleanup that day for anything that is collected on the clean-up.

Jessica Reynolds: We have had 3K-8K views on some of our Facebook events. They are very popular.

Tony Cordle: If you could, starting in September we are having corn hole 6-9PM on Sundays here at the Rec Park.

Fred Phillips: We are also going to host a county RDA meeting here.

Mary Ann Strong: It was great to have attendance tonight. Also, Young Life is going to start clubs on Monday nights. I want to bring them over here and hold the meetings.

No further comments.

Next meeting - September 17th 7:30 PM at the Richlands Recreation Park

Mary Ann Strong - Adjourned meeting.