

The Richlands Recreation Commission held a regular meeting at the Richlands Recreation Park on November 20th, 2017 at 7:30PM with the following present:

Recreation Department: Dave Ascue

Other Attendees: Mark Gillespie, Philip Lowe, Mike Duty, Ricky Barton

Richlands Town Council Members: Mary Ann Strong, Larry Johnson

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

Mary Ann Strong opened the Richlands Recreation Commission meeting and welcomed everyone to the November Meeting. Mary Ann introduced Mark Gillespie and Ricky Barton and that they would like to speak to the commission.

At the October meeting we did not have a quorum. We need to approve the September meeting minutes. Does anyone have any corrections, additions, or deletions? Jeff Hurst made a motion to approve the September minutes. LaRhonda Lindsey seconded the motion. No further comments, motion carries 8/0.

Old Business:

Recreation Park Road

Mary Ann Strong: Originally the rec park road didn't appear to be wide enough to be declared a street, but at the Town Council meeting we discussed that it still may be possible. The town is looking at the widths and they would like to get the designation to get additional funds from VDOT.

Larry Johnson: It was my understanding that they can make those areas wider to meet the VDOT standard.

Ronnie Cordle: I can talk to Rick Woods on the street committee about seeing what else we need to do to get the road in. After we get this, we can look at and make sure we are getting the best use out of the spaces we have.

Jeff Hurst: Most people are getting the best of it and it seemed to work well during Soccer.

Mary Ann Strong: Please include Vickie England as well, she is on the road committee.

Recreation Park Bathroom and Weight Room Update

Dave Ascue: The town employees work hard and they have been working as much as their schedule allows to get the updates complete. The bathrooms are coming along really well and we hope to get them complete here soon. They are doing a great job as they can.

Mary Ann Strong: It is being done right, so it will be worth the wait. We are saving a ton of money by having them do the work.

Ronnie Cordle: Once the tile is complete they can do the electrical and get it wrapped up.

Cornhole League:

Tony Cordle: We have made a lot of great progress in getting the cornhole league started. We have scheduled a Christmas tournament and December 3rd is the official start date for the league. We had 17 come up to play this last week and we have had a lot of interest from a wide array of ages. We are hoping for 20 or 25 to show up, we have about 16 or 17 so far. We are excited about the league and the match ups will go by luck of the draw. The money that we raise a third will go back to the rec park, a third to the Black Diamond organization for use the boards and supplies and a third for prizes. We are

also looking at a toys-for-tots tournament as well to give back to the kids in the community. The league is on Sunday's.

Mary Ann Strong: That is very exciting. You can also put the information on the town information channel to get the word out. Just talk to Sue Wade and she can get it added for you.

Richlands Little League (RAL) Field Use Agreement:

Mary Ann Strong: This is a subject that can take a while and we may need a sub-committee to look at this.

Ronnie Cordle: I went through 7 years-worth of documents at the town, but could not find an agreement for field use. The recreation commission meeting notes are not available either. It is in the best interest for everyone to find a good solution to this problem with field use.

Joe McCall: What is the issue?

Craig Discussed: This is an issue that I brought up back in the spring. For the past 4-5 years I have been responsible for fielding requests to use the field. Per past agreements, little league has the fields from March to August and I get requests to use the fields after August. I think the agreements are past 7 years ago, so we may need to look further back in the records. I received a few requests in the past to use Flanary field and I have denied those. I have let co-ed play at Critterville as those are softball complexes. We are ok with teams playing there after August as long as it is not wet. Current signs also indicate that no play can happen on wet fields. I brought this up so that we can get a process down to request fields. Traditionally, little league does not let groups play on Flanary due to them messing up the fields etc.

Dave Ascue: I think we have 2 agreements, one with little league and one with high school to use it.

Mary Ann Strong: When the land was donated to the town I think the Williams fields are also named in the agreements. However, we have never officially named those fields. I think we should create a sub-committee to look into the issue and come up with a proposal for the commission to consider.

Craig Earls, Tony Cordle, Jeff Hurst, and Joe McCall agreed to be on commission sub-committee for field use. They will meet and propose a solution to the commission.

New Business

Rick Barton – Outdoor Adventure Centers (OAC)

Mary Ann Strong: Ricky is great and I have been with him on a lot of meetings regarding outdoor recreation. He is very knowable and wanted to come speak to us today about outdoor recreation activities.

Rick Barton: Our group works with a lot of outdoor activity groups and we currently do land management for the spearhead trails and RDA. We worked with Dominion on a downhill bike trail, other hiking trails and rock climbing routes. I am here to discuss a bike trail for Richlands and discover some good options for locations. Where would be the best place for a bike trail? I know the field at the old airport there is a double loop option. Any other places that would be away from traffic?

Tony Cordle: On the back side of the airport we had some good areas to ride. That option comes in from hidden valley or Mr. Kirby's land. We rode bikes back along with river quite a bit and that area has access a lot of local spots.

Rick Barton: A bike pump track could be another good option and they take a lot out of you, but they are great options for smaller spots. You basically ride up and down short hills and they are great exercise. We thought Critterville could possibly be a good location for a pump track. I just want the commission to know we are looking to do some cool things here in Richlands. We appreciate any support the commission can give on these projects.

Mary Ann Strong: Thank you for your support and we look forward to helping. I will send his email out to everyone. Rick, you are invited to our meetings anytime.

Mark Gillespie/Philip Lowe/Mike Duty - Richlands Little League Building Project

Mary Ann Strong: Last month we had Mark Gillespie come to the commission meeting, he is the new President of RAL. Mark and Philip also came to the town council meeting this month to discuss a new project. The council advised Mark and Philip to discuss the project with this commission first. We would like to welcome them to discuss some new proposed projects.

Mark Gillespie: We are looking at upgrading the existing batting cage at Flanary Field. We want to expand the current cage and enclose it for all year use. The handout shows the existing structure and how we plan to expand it. The road at the top will still be there and we will get rid of the small parking area to make room.

Mike Duty: Our programs have grown and we want expand this for the kids. This handout is just a rough draft on what we want to do. This would add pitching and hitting lanes for both softball and baseball.

Philip Lowe: We have some not making all-stars and this will help make us competitive with other leagues in the district. This will give us enough spots for baseball and softball to hit and pitch and this will help move the program move forward.

Mary Ann Strong: What about the funds, completion date, etc.?

Mark Gillespie: I would like to get on it quick and get it started as soon as we have the approval. I would like to put Mike Duty in charge of it and oversee it. He has a lot of knowledge and could really help. It is all volunteer work to get this done. David Lamie has have been raising the money since 2011 to construct the building.

Philip Lowe: We also want to use some of the space at Critterville to create a covered outdoor hitting cage for softball. We would like 2 there if possible, but 1 for sure.

Mark Gillespie: That would be if we have the money left over after building the indoor facility.

Ronnie Cordle: There is a good place at the Critterville to put the indoor facility.

Mark Gillespie: It floods there often and it will be hard to build with that being in a flood plain.

Craig Earls: Are you planning on the indoor facility to be powered by the town?

Phillip Lowe: Yes, it will be a powered building. We don't think it will be that much to power the facility.

Mark Gillespie: It will be powered for lights and heat only.

Mary Ann Strong: The next step will be for us to approve a recommendation for RAL to move forward with discussing this with the town council.

LaRhonda Lindsey made a motion that the commission approve the request for the powered RAL batting facility project to move forward and to be brought to the town council for approval. Joe McCall seconded the motion. No further comments. Motion carries 9/0.

Mary Ann Strong: Ronnie and Tony can attend the next council meeting to discuss on behalf of the commission.

Craig Earls: I will be in attendance as well.

Larry Johnson: Note, I will not be at the next town council meeting.

Larry Johnson – Hometowns of the Clinch

Mary Ann Strong: We had a few commission members ask about the launch pad at Critterville and we were not invited to the launch celebration. I was personally invited as a council member, but I did not send the invitation to this group. My apologies for not inviting Larry earlier to our monthly meetings and for not sending the invite out to the commission. We appreciate Larry attending and he would like to discussion the Hometowns of the Clinch.

Larry Johnson: Rick and I have worked on the access points in Richlands for kayaking. We have also worked with Cedar Bluff and Richlands on getting the designations from the Hometowns on the Clinch.

The county also got the designations. After the state approves it we may have access to some grants through home town revitalization. We are planning on doing 3 access points. The old swing bridge behind the Richlands Mall, McDonalds and Critterville. We were able to do this very quickly and we have a grant to get some money to do the swinging bridge access point. I spoke with the council and did some fund raisers to bring in \$2.5K, but no one ever requested to help. We will take any help we can get in helping with the new access point.

For the recreation department, I spoke about the budget and it gets tighter each year. We have talked in the past about tournaments to help with fund raising. Between now and June, I challenge this commission to put your heads together to do something every weekend. It will greatly help offset the expenses.

Tony Cordle: I think it is important to have everyone to help, even the council members. We have a lot of opportunities and also obstacles. I think we need to give credit to Fred Phillips about getting the facility updated and things. As far as the access points, we cannot help if we don't know about it. We welcome you come and discuss with us. We are all here to help.

Larry Johnson: We have about \$300,000 deficit for recreation department per year, so this may help offset some things. We are spending about \$28,000 a month.

Jeff Hurst: What is that spending for?

Ronnie Cordle: The hold up for tournaments is the completion of the bathrooms and carpeting for the facility. Once these are complete we can offer more. I do think they we need to have tournaments.

Mary Ann Strong: We talked to Fred about doing tournaments. And I think he is open to that.

Ronnie Cordle: We have looked at ways to cut expenses and the heating is ancient. We have not looked at man power, but we have looked up how we fix it. We talked about LED lighting etc.

Rick Barton: You need have someone represent you at the Recreation Development Authority. They meet the 1st Thursday of the month at 8:00PM

Mary Ann Strong: Before we had good town representation, but not recently. This is all excellent discussion, any other new business?

Dave Ascue: I help Fred with the pool, but it may be wise for us to look at the pool early this next year. There is going to be a need for pool maintenance. We want to look at short/long term project on how to budget that. The paint is peeling and we should get a pool consultant down to look at what we need to do.

Mary Ann Strong: Ronnie Cordle, can we look at this in January? We need to address this before we open in the summer.

Ronnie Cordle: Yes, we can look at this in January.

No further comments.

Next meeting - December 18th 7:30 PM at the Richlands Recreation Park

Mary Ann Strong - Adjourned meeting.