

The Richlands Recreation Commission held a regular monthly meeting on August 17th, 2020 at 7:30PM with the following present:

Recreation Department: Fred Phillips, Jessica Reynolds

Other Attendees: Ashley Ward, Lisa Cordle, George Brown, Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens (and others supporting the handicap accessible playground initiative).

Richlands Town Council Members: Mary Ann Strong, Jeff Hurst

Recreation Commission Members Present: Corey Whited, Craig Earls, Ronnie Cordle, Joel Horn, Frances Meadows, Tony Cordle

Recreation Commission Members Not Present: LaRhonda Lindsey, Joe McCall, Mike Webb

Mary Ann Strong welcomed everyone to the Richlands Recreation Commission August meeting. Ronnie Cordle is our Commission President and we will open with a prayer from Joel.

Ronnie Cordle: We have several public speakers tonight and we will let you guys speak after we get through the old business.

Old Business:

July 27th Meeting Minutes Approval

Ronnie Cordle: For old business, we need to approve the July 27th meeting minutes. Does anyone have any corrections, additions, or deletions to the meeting minutes? Corey Whited made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Tony Cordle seconded the motion. No further discussion, motion carries 6/0.

New Business:

Public Comments:

Travel Softball Field Usage – Ashley Ward

Ashely Ward: We (Lady Crush) have 5 teams, and we may have one more team for my youngest daughter. Little league wraps up this week and we would like to use the fields for practices and maybe one-day tournaments. A lot of the Tennessee tournaments are canceled and we are playing outside of the area. We have played with social distancing and keep with the same rules. We would like to possibly hold a few tournaments. We have 2 18U teams down to 8U, and will be close to 80 kids. We practice 3 days a week and we want to play locally if possible. We are traveling to Hendersonville, NC and we have teams that would like to play. We have bases, we just need access to lights.

Ronnie Cordle: Are you having any conflict with Little League?

Ashely Ward: We have practiced there for years, and they want us to wait until they are finished. We are good with that and understand they get the fields until league is over.

Ronnie Cordle: We just want to make sure we don't have any conflicts.

Tony Cordle: We voted at our last meeting to extend Little Leagues field agreement to September 1st due to Covid, and them getting a late start. We don't have an issue with turning over the fields if all-stars is finished.

Corey Whited: I will make a motion to approve the fields for practice and tournaments with access to the lights. Frances Meadows seconded the motion.

Fred Phillips: We have just a couple of concerns with Covid. We had a fall basketball league setup and the Health Department shut it down. They did not want people coming in from out of town. We need

to look at that. Second, are we giving it to the organization (Lady Crush) or one team? What if someone else wants to come in? I am all for it as long as we don't have issues with the Health Department etc.

Ashely Ward: We have to sign Covid waivers, and we can do that as well. These will be primarily local teams.

Fred Phillips: I know that the local Health Department did not want local teams coming as well, but I will research it.

Ashley Ward: We will go by guidelines for practice and games. Teams from Tazewell, Bluefield, Lebanon etc. want to play.

Tony Cordle: I know Fred has the concerns, but if we can get by with it under the rules then I think we should.

Ashely Ward: We can coordinate with other teams like we have done in the past with Lisa Cordle.

Ronnie Cordle: He is trying his best to keep us in the rules and making sure we follow everything. We want the kids to play, and at any time we don't have control of the rules for Covid. If there is not any conflicts with Little League, then I support the motion.

Tony Cordle: We need to call the Health Department, but assuming it is good, then I think we approve.

Jeff Hurst: We should run the scheduling through the Rec Park like last year.

Tony Cordle: We have a lot of teams, so we need everyone to work together.

Fred Phillips: If we are good from the Health Department, then we can post on Facebook to see who needs it.

Mary Ann Strong: I am all for this. They will come here and eat, buy gas, and it is all good for our local economy. It is good to have them close because family can visit as well.

Ashley Ward: We will need to charge entry fee, but not admission. We know that you can't charge an admission at a gate and we will work with the Rec Park to get everything scheduled. It worked well last year.

Mary Ann Strong: I talked to Mr. Taylor, and we need to get activities approved through the Health Department.

Ronnie Cordle: We have the motion on the floor, any further comments? None: Motion carries 6/0

Volleyball League (Lisa Cordle)

Lisa Cordle: We had the volley ball league for the first time last year and we had about 120 kids, and turned away 50 others. I have been asked if we can have volleyball this year. Last year, we could not make a donation back to the Recreation Department, and I have a printout on what we had to pay to get started. I worked the door, and I collected the admission. We had pay the referees, buy the equipment and overpaid some on t-shirts. I know it will depend on the Health Department, but we would like to do this again this year. We would actually like to see it under the Rec Park and I just coordinate it. When they get to middle school they do not have any volleyball experience. Several don't make the school team and they want to play. We want to charge \$35 per child, and give back \$10 per child to the Rec Park for the facility use, which would be about \$1000

Mary Ann Strong: When do you want to do it?

Lisa Cordle: We would like to do it after the soccer season if they have it. But, I would like to have it under the Rec Park.

Corey Whited: I know we are going to have to check with the Health Department to see if we can.

Lisa Cordle: Yes, and I would like to do the little kids first through 4th grade, then older kids to make it more competitive and to split it up. I have prepared for each levels to make sure they learn, and we are going to get volunteers to help with expenses. I figured we may have 4 older teams but it could expand out quickly.

Group: We love the idea.

Lisa Cordle: Last year we didn't leave any mess, and we marked the courts.

Mary Ann Strong: So, we did not have any other costs to Rec Park?

Ronnie Cordle: So no revenue was given to the Rec Park?

Lisa Cordle: No, due to equipment expenses, insurance, shirts, referees we had to buy from scratch. So, we should be able to this year. \$10.00 per kid will be over \$1500 possibly for the Rec Park.

Frances Meadows: I think it is wonderful idea

Fred Phillips: It went well last year and we didn't have any extra costs to the Rec Park.

Jeff Hurst: Soccer is planning to spread the games out so we have limited matches, so that we don't have a lot of people here at once. We are going to have to look at spreading out matches. We may have to extend basketball out a few months as well.

Lisa Cordle: We can make accommodations as needed.

Ronnie Cordle: Fred, do you know all the rules?

Fred Phillips: Everyday it is different. The big thing now is that they don't want people coming in from out of the area.

Ronnie Cordle: Everyone is ready to play. At any time the town could be fined as well, so we need to make sure we are in the guidelines. As a town, we have to follow these. Fred talks to them daily. We can check and hope that we can do it.

Lisa Cordle: We just want to make sure that if we can do it, then we will be able to here. We want to do it here.

Fred Phillips: I seriously doubt youth sports will open before VHSL, but I will check. I often get complaints from people who want to come in and cannot play due to the gym being taken up. The tax payers want access as well, so we want to make sure that we are giving as much as we can.

Ronnie Cordle: We don't want to turn anyone away and you are doing a great thing. Sometimes you will have conflicts, but we should be able to work together.

Fred Phillips: Things like Jeff and Lisa does take a lot of hours, and they get volunteers a lot. If I take it over, we will have to hire them, like officials etc. So that is a challenge. You are doing a great job, but I think that is a concern.

Mary Ann Strong: The council would like the Rec Park to run all of the programs, but we do not have the staff to run everything.

Lisa Cordle: We can work through it, and I understand where he is coming from.

Tony Cordle: I make a motion to approve the volleyball league with player donation back to the Rec Park, if the Health Department approves.

Fred Phillips: I will call tomorrow.

Ronnie Cordle: I second the motion to approve. No further discussion. Motion carries: 6/0.

Handicap Accessible Playground Equipment for Critterville (Rusty)

Rusty Hess: I have some grant writers, and we have AASC (Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens) and we have someone kind enough to give us \$25K to start the process. In 9-days we caught a vision to put in handicap accessible equipment and begin discussions to get this moving. We also want to look at putting a few docks so that some veterans can fish. We have the starter money now, and we would like to get moving on it. We also have Gods Rockstars, and they have been trying to build a field behind the Anchor at Souls Harbor church. Instead of building we would like to get permission to use the minor league field at Critterville to get the games going for players with special needs. We will make sure that they are taken care of with shirts, trophies, etc.

George Brown has 4 acres behind Roses and he would like to rent it to us for a \$1 for 100 years, if this is something that can be put to use for the town recreation. We would like to start with some grants and get something going.

Regina Sawyers (AASC): When Rusty called me, he wants to put a handicap accessible area for seniors and children at the playground at Critterville. These are vulnerable populations. We have several here

and we want it to be interactive for adults and children. Sensory perceptions, and interaction is key for us. We have some material for this and we have a lot of support. This will be the first of its kind in our four-county area and it will be a showcase for Richlands. We also may have some money, if we need to match. We have other organizations that will be looking at helping with funds. This covers a wide area of our community. We would like to put together a sub-committee to help our team. We want to work as a team with everyone. By spring, we may be able to get a lot of this finished. We do want to look at the flood situation at Critterville as well. That is a concern. This is a great opportunity for all the community.

Group: This is outstanding and will be great for the community.

Rusty Hess: We want to do a small committee and have Jessica appointed to work with us from the Rec Park. We want to get to work quickly and keep it small to get it going. We want to do something different and make this for our seniors and children with needs.

Missy Joyce: Just in Richlands you have 910 children with IEPs at the school. They need somewhere to interact with sensory activities and items. The playgrounds are great, but the sensory items will be great for them.

George Brown: I was talking with Rusty, and Mr. Blankenship was looking at this for Tazewell. We made a trailer court before with some land and I am interested in maybe working to donate/lease for something. There are a lot of things you can do with it. I had the vision for fields, or some recreation use for it. It is 4-5 acres, but could have some uses. Rusty mentioned maybe making some camp sites for ATV riders. If it would help the town we would like to use it. If we have some interest we are very interested in providing the opportunity.

Group: Thank you.

Fred Phillips: I have been down there, it is a pretty big area. I know it used to be a trailer park, but several have mentioned about using it for ATV trails. On Facebook, there were some suggestions about building a dog park. That could be a good area for a dog park. That could be quick. Whatever we do, we want to make sure we have his blessing and use it for the proper purposes. Regina, what are you thinking on the costs?

Regina Sawyers: We think it will be \$30K-\$50K, depending on what we need. We are doers and we want to work to make it happen. We have a lot of resources, and we have a lot of people we can call on. That is a typical cost though. We have a lot of fund raiser ideas, as well as grants.

Fred Phillips: I think \$100K is a great start, and we may be able to do it quickly. We need to find the location though. Lake Park is an option, but Critterville we have flooding issues, so we need to figure that out as well.

Regina Sawyers: Flooding and access was a major concern on location for us. We have looked at 2-3 of them.

Ronnie Cordle: So, we need a committee is the main thing.

Rusty Hess: We want Jessica for sure.

Jessica Reynolds: Yes, I would love to help.

Mary Ann Strong: Do you want to have a meeting at the agency?

Regina: Yes, so they can see what we have done so far.

Mary Ann Strong: We can work on names for you. You guys are excellent, so I know this will be great.

Ronnie Cordle: Any further issues for discussion before we adjourn the meeting?

Corey Whited made a motion adjourn the meeting. Tony Cordle seconded the motion. No further discussion, motion carries 6/0.

Next meeting – September 21st 2020, 7:30PM

Ronnie Cordle Adjourned meeting.