

**CITY OF MONROE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
OLD ARMORY COMMUNITY CENTER
500 S. JOHNSON STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2022
6:00 P.M.**

AGENDA

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- Item 1. Approval of Minutes – January 4, 2022**
- Item 2. Belk Tonawanda Park Phase 1B Project Update**
- Item 3. General Program Updates**
- Item 4. Other Business**

ATTENTION COMMISSION MEMBERS: Please contact Angie Sustar at asustar@monroenc.org or 704-282-4651 to confirm your attendance. Thank you.

CITY OF MONROE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
JANUARY 4, 2022
MINUTES

The Parks and Recreation Commission of the City of Monroe, North Carolina met in the Old Armory Community Center at 500 S. Johnson Street, Monroe, North Carolina at 6:00PM on January 4, 2022.

Present: Chairman Rhonda Griffin, Vice Chairman Tiffany Wilson, Commission Members Debbie Dillion and John Thomasson

Staff Present: Ryan Jones, Fred Baber, and Angie Sustar

Chairman Griffin opened meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Item No. 1. Approval of Minutes from December 7, 2021

Member Debbie Dillion moved to approve the Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting of December 7, 2021.

Vice Chairman Wilson seconded the motion, which unanimously passed with the following votes:

AYES: Vice Chairman Wilson, Chairman Griffin, Members Debbie Dillion, and John Thomasson

NAYS: None

Chairman Griffin recognized and congratulated Ryan Jones as the new Director of Parks and Recreation.

Item No. 2. Belk Tonawanda Park Phase 1B

Parks and Recreation Director Ryan Jones provided a brief project update. This project includes a “Splash” pad, renovation of the trail, an outdoor fitness area, relocation of the Bocce courts, installation of permanent corn hole boards and ping pong tables, and a new shelter with adjacent restrooms. Mr. Jones advised the project was over budget and that a Budget Ordinance and award of contract for the construction of the Belk Tonawanda Renovation/Expansion Phase 1-B request has been approved by the General Services Committee to go before Council at the January 11th meeting for their approval.

Item No. 3. Senior Center Renovation Project Update

Mr. Jones provided a brief project update. He advised that progress is being made and construction is underway. Mr. Jones stated the new facility space will provide opportunities to diversify program offerings. Discussion followed.

Member Dillion asked how long will the streets be closed around the construction site. Mr. Jones advised the streets would remain closed through the duration of the project.

Mr. Jones provided an update on an item from the December meeting, as a follow up to Vice Chairman

Wilson's concern about Wi-Fi access at the J. Ray Shute Community Center gym. Mr. Jones advised that a request had been submitted to IT and Wi-Fi access points have been ordered for the J. Ray Shute and Winchester Community Centers. He advised that there is a delay in product availability due to supply chain issues and as soon as the equipment arrives, it will be installed.

Item No. 4. General Program Updates

Mr. Jones provided a brief update of activities that took place at the Community Centers over the Christmas break. He advised that Vice Chairman Wilson was involved with an event at the J. Ray Shute Community Center along with other community organizations with 125 participants. The "Hoops for Hope" event paired the Monroe Police Department against Monroe Middle School for a fun and competitive game. The children in attendance received toys among other things. The Winchester Community Center hosted the "Santa Clause is Coming to Town" event, and the Dickerson Center hosted the "Cookies with Santa" event. Mr. Jones stated the focus of the Community Centers is to partner with community organizations with like goals to combine resources to offer quality programs.

Events:

Mr. Jones advised that the bands for Music on Main ("MOM") should be finalized soon and he will provide an update at the next meeting. He advised that some changes considered for the MOM event are to move the event to Friday. As well, consideration is being given to shortening the season to five months to avoid possible conflicts in the fall especially when moving to Friday. Discussion followed.

The Easter Eggstravanga is scheduled for Saturday, April 2nd at the Parks Williams Athletic Complex.

Parks Maintenance:

Mr. Jones provided a brief update on projects that are currently underway. He advised that loose leaf collection continues to be busy. He advised that leaf truck drivers are working an extra hour daily and on Saturday mornings to keep up with the amount of leaves. Also, staff is in the process of taking down all Christmas decorations. He advised that the outdoor basketball court at Dickerson Recreation Complex has been resurfaced. The court will feature two half courts and a full court. The half court goals will be installed this week and goals for the full court are on order and will be ready for play soon.

Athletics:

Mr. Jones provided updates on athletic programs currently offered. Registration is open for Baseball and ends January 31st. He advised that youth basketball is underway. Also, this year there are three all girls' basketball teams and we are also offering an all girls' youth softball league.

Monroe Aquatics & Fitness Center:

Interim Director Fred Baber provided a brief update on special events and programming. Swim lessons will begin soon and Weight Watchers is coming back. He shared some marketing techniques being used to attract membership. Discussion followed.

Member Thomasson asked when do they plan to begin the advertising push. Mr. Baber advised it would begin mid-January beginning of February.

Member Thomasson stated with Covid being a big concern for fitness centers and being about at the peak, he made the suggestion to consider extending a couple of weeks. Vice Chairman Wilson stated

according to the CDC our peak should be in the month of January and should decrease in February. Member Thomasson stated that South Africa dropped fifty percent in two weeks.

Item No. 5. Other Business

There was further discussion about the Music on Main event.

Member Thomasson asked if the Golf Course position vacancy had been filled. Chairman Griffin stated that at the November meeting it was announced that the Golf Course was no longer under the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Jones advised that interviews have taken place but is not aware if someone has been hired. He advised that Parks and Recreation still handles Ballroom rentals and once the Golf Course Manager is hired that will transition as well. Member Thomasson asked if it would be under a separate department. Mr. Jones advised the Golf Course is now under the Tourism Department.

Vice Chairman Wilson asked if “Movies in the Park” will resume. Mr. Jones advised that this event is a partnership with Union County Parks and Recreation. He advised that due to hot weather they are looking to move the event to April, May, and September in hopes to increase attendance. Discussion followed.

Chairman Griffin stated she hasn’t attended the “Movies in the Park” event and asked if there was popcorn or food available. Mr. Jones advised that Union County has a popcorn machine and popcorn is given out and there is also a food truck.

Vice Chairman Wilson stated that she wasn’t sure if this was for Parks and Recreation but didn’t the City vote on food trucks downtown? Mr. Jones stated that would be the Downtown Monroe department and Matt Black, Director of Downtown.

Vice Chairman Wilson stated she was wondering if that is the case would it be possible to have food trucks in the lower parking lot while showing a movie. Discussion followed.

Vice Chairman Wilson asked if there were plans to offer Robotics this summer. Mr. Jones advised that part of the approach to the programming at the community centers is vocational and to expose children to things that they can take as a hobby and turn in to the next step in their education. He advised that before Covid we had a full summer Robotic Camp and it will be offered again.

Vice Chairman Wilson asked for an update on the teaching garden. Chairman Griffin advised that the garden is dormant at this time and will reopen in the spring.

Member Dillion asked if there were any plans to add a skate park? Mr. Jones advised that would be something we would need to have community input. At this time, there are no current plans for a skate park.

Vice Chairman Wilson stated that someone said there were talks about a skate park and then there were talks about vandalism taking place at the Waxhaw Skate Park they were deterring. Chairman Griffin stated it seems that it would be a huge liability.

Mr. Jones stated with his experience when you put an amenity in a park where there are things that aren’t supposed to be happening there, the people doing bad things will leave. Certain amenities lend

themselves more to vandalism but that is part of putting an amenity in a public park. He stated that what he tries to look at is he doesn't want to take an opportunity away from people just because there may be a certain group of people that may go out and vandalize the park. If it's out there, we have staff that are there to take care of it and we rely on the community to say when there are issues. We try to be proactive but there are certain things that are unavoidable but we try to be as proactive as we can to address them before so we're not reacting all the time.

Vice Chairman Wilson stated there is space over behind Dickerson where the baseball fields are and there's a lot of open space there. She asked if the parking lot at the baseball fields was going to be fixed.

Vice Chairman Wilson asked if the park at J. Ray Shute was being replaced. Mr. Jones stated it will be replaced but it's taking longer due to working with insurance. He advised this is the highest priority playground to be replaced.

Vice Chairman Wilson asked that the past Chairman Dan Shive and Vice Chairman Moya Saltzgaber be recognized by City Council for their long service to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Vice Chairman Tiffany Wilson made the motion to recognize past Chairman Dan Shive and Vice Chairman Moya Saltzgaber for their long service to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Member John Thomasson seconded the motion, which unanimously passed with the following votes:

AYES: Chairman Griffin, Vice Chairman Wilson, Debbie Dillion, and John Thomasson

NAYS: None

There being no further business, Vice Chairman Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Debbie Dillion seconded the motion, which unanimously passed with the following votes:

AYES: Chairman Griffin, Vice Chairman Wilson, Debbie Dillion, and John Thomasson

NAYS: None

Respectfully Submitted,

Angie Sustar,
Administrative Assistant II
Parks and Recreation Department