

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

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2022
12:00 P.M.**

AGENDA

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- Item 1.** Approval of Minutes – October 4, 2022
- Item 2.** New Staff Introductions
- Item 3.** Park Shelter Usage
- Item 4.** General Program Updates
- Item 5.** 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
OCTOBER 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 6:00P.M. on October 4, 2022.

Present: Chair Rhonda Griffin, Vice Chair Tiffany Wilson (arrived at 6:09pm), John Thomasson, Debbie Dillion

Staff Present: Assistant City Attorney Ashley Britt, Ryan Jones, Darren Baucom, Fred Baber, Rae Moore, Thomas Latimer, and Angie Sustar

Chair Rhonda Griffin called the meeting to order at 6:02pm and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Member Thomasson stated that he would have to leave at 7:00pm.

Item No. 1. Staff Notes for Information Purposes Only – August 2, 2022

Item No. 2. Approval of Minutes from June 7, 2022

Chair Griffin called for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting.

Motion: John Thomasson moved to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2022 meeting.

Second: Debbie Dillion

Action: The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Debbie Dillion, Chair Rhonda Griffin, and John Thomasson

NAYS: None

Chair Rhonda Griffin announced a change in the order of the Agenda and that she would start with Item No. 7 since Member Thomasson has to leave early and she wanted all members present.

Item No. 7. Other Business

Chair Griffin stated that the original meetings were a Noon meeting on the second Tuesday of every month. She stated that she and others have noticed that attendance has been off at the evening meetings and also the meeting being the first Tuesday of the month sometimes conflicts with holidays and programming.

Chair Griffin called for a motion to move the meeting to the second Tuesday of every month at Noon.

Member Thomasson stated that he was indifferent.

Motion: Chair Rhonda Griffin made a motion to move the meeting to the second Tuesday of

every month at Noon.

Second: Debbie Dillion

Action: The motion to move the meeting to the second Tuesday of every month at Noon passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: Chair Rhonda Griffin, Debbie Dillion, and John Thomasson

NAYS: None

Item No. 3. Belk Tonawanda Park Phase IB Project Update

Parks and Recreation Director Ryan Jones provided a brief project update. He stated the bottom portion of the construction project is completed. He advised that there have been delays in completing the splash pad due to supply chain delays of essential construction materials. He stated the initial projected completion timeframe was late summer however, due to the delays the splash pad will open late Spring 2023.

Item No. 4. Phil Bazemore Active Adult Center Renovation Project Update

Mr. Jones provided a brief a project update and stated the facility looks outstanding.

Mr. Jones announced that Aleshia Holland has been hired as the Active Adult Center Supervisor and she will be introduced at the next meeting.

Chair Griffin stated that when driving by the new facility it looks as if there is an outdoor space and asked what would the outdoor space will be used for?

Mr. Jones advised that the area is for future outdoor usage which could be picnic tables, pickle ball courts, or whatever the community would like to see there. He advised the administrative offices for Parks and Recreation will move to the new facility as well.

Chair Griffin mention that it would be nice to offer a virtual video tour of the facility.

Mr. Jones advised that staff are working on marketing plans as well as ideas for soft openings.

Vice Chair Wilson asked what was the projected opening date.

Mr. Jones advised that the tentative date was late October but that it could possibly be near the end of the year. He advised that the administrative offices for Parks and Recreation will move in first and then transition the senior center over once sufficient staffing is in place for programming.

Item No. 5. Parks Improvement Updates

Mr. Jones advised that Parks Maintenance has been very busy with the remodeling of basketball courts and new dog park at Sunset Park and remodeling of basketball courts at Creft Park. Mr. Jones advised that a shelter would be installed there as well before the end of the year.

Vice Chair Wilson asked, “where’s the dog park at Sunset Park?” Mr. Jones advised it’s located near the trees beside the playground. He advised it was an ideal location and the trees will provide shade for the area.

Vice Chair Wilson stated that the location is good since they meet out there with their dogs already. Mr. Jones advised that the restrooms at Dickerson Park have been remodeled and control link would be installed on the doors to allow automatic locking and unlocking of the doors.

Mr. Jones advised that a grant received through GameTime Incorporated allows the addition of a more inclusive playground at Creft Park.

Vice Chair Wilson asked if it would be handicap accessible. Mr. Jones advised that yes and moving forward the vision is to ensure inclusivity and adapting programs to be accessible and all included not to be separate. Mr. Jones advised that at a later date he would share opportunities for accessible playground amenities at all Parks and Recreation facilities especially the ones that aren't due to be replaced but that amenities could be added to those areas to add to their ability to be inclusive.

Vice Chair Wilson asked for clarification of when the bathrooms at Belk Tonawanda Park were open. She stated that several times when she has been in the park they are locked. Mr. Jones advised that the doors are on an automatic schedule to unlock at sunrise and lock at sunset. Vice Chair Wilson stated that they weren't. Mr. Jones stated that he would check in to it.

Parks Maintenance Superintendent Darren Baucom advised that there had been a power issue at Belk Tonawanda Park on Monday and every bathroom had locked. Vice Chair Wilson stated that it was during the summer and every day it locked at 5:00pm so she thought it was set to lock at 5:00pm.

Item No. 6. General Program Updates

Parks Maintenance:

Parks Maintenance Superintendent Darren Baucom provided an update on special projects that are currently underway. He advised that the loose leaf collection starts on Monday, October 17th and runs through February 24th.

Member Dillion asked if any trees had been affected by Hurricane Ian. Mr. Baucom stated the storm did not cause any damage to the trees or parks.

Athletics and Special Events:

Athletic and Special Events Coordinator Rae Moore provided an update on athletic programs and upcoming events. Ms. Moore advised that youth baseball and softball would be wrapping up by the end of the month. Youth soccer begins on Saturday and will go until mid-November. Youth basketball registration is currently underway and runs through October 31st. Basketball practice will begin before Thanksgiving with games to begin the first Saturday of December and that is based on the County schedule. The basketball season typically ends mid-February.

Vice Chair Wilson asked when's the deadline. Ms. Moore advised that registration ends October 31st. Vice Chair Wilson asked what's the youngest age? Ms. Moore stated four years old is the youngest.

Ms. Moore advised that in partnership with Special Olympics of Union County there will be a kick-off event at Belk Tonawanda Park on October 16th @ 2:30pm. She advised the athletes haven't participated in in person activities since 2019. She stated that our goal is to build this relationship and offer inclusive programming opportunities.

Ms. Moore provided an update on Special Events. She advised that the Latin festival was postponed and the rescheduled date is TBD, the final Car Cruise In of the season is on Friday, October 14th, Halloween Happenings is Saturday, October 15th, the Downtown Ark Walk is also on October 15th, Special Olympics kick-off on Sunday, October 16th.

Member Thomasson asked if the Latin festival was in need of sponsors. Mr. Jones advised that this year they weren't but that this is a partnership that he looks to continue and there would be opportunities in the future for sponsorships.

Discussion followed.

Vice Chair Wilson asked if planning for the Christmas event had started and if there was going to be snow for the Christmas Tree Lighting. Mr. Jones responded, yes there will be snow.

Monroe Aquatics & Fitness Center:

Interim Director Fred Baber provided a brief update on programs, membership, and necessary facility repairs. Mr. Baber stated that he has been encouraged by the consistent increase in membership numbers. Mr. Baber announced the promotion of Leann Yandle as the Membership and Marketing Division Supervisor. This year the MAFC celebrates its 25th anniversary and a marketing campaign is being built around this celebration.

Vice Chair Wilson asked what was MAFC's official opening date. Ms. Moore believes it was May 13, 1997. She believes there was a soft opening in April and the grand opening in May. Mr. Baber will confirm the date at the next meeting.

Chair Griffin asked if the MAFC Arts and Craft Show was taking place this year. Mr. Baber advised that it will return next year and that plans are underway for October 2023.

Recreation:

Mr. Jones recognized Thomas Latimer and announced his promotion as Recreation Division Supervisor. Previously Mr. Latimer was the Center Supervisor at the Sutton Park Community Center. Mr. Jones advised that Ashura Colquhoun is Center Supervisor at the Sutton Park Community Center, Reginald Cummings is Center Supervisor at the Winchester Community Center, George Massey is Center Supervisor at the J. Ray Shute Community Center, Hope Tanner is Center Supervisor at the Old Armory Community Center, and Kimberly Scott is Center Supervisor at the Dickerson Community Center.

Mr. Jones commended the community center supervisors for their work and all the programs they offer to the community.

Chair Griffin congratulated Mr. Latimer on his promotion. She stated that he had worked hard and deserved this promotion.

Mr. Latimer stated he was very happy to be here and contribute to the community centers. He advised that currently partnerships have been established with South Piedmont Community College (SPCC), the Monroe Police Department, Monroe Fire Department as well as Union Diversified Industries (UDI) to offer programs to the community. He advised that by partnering with Monroe Middle, Benton

Heights Elementary, Rock Rest Elementary, and the YWCA, after school programming is offered to students. He stated that a music camp offered for the first time this summer was a huge success.

Mr. Jones advised that when the community centers had to close due to Covid-19, you could see the impact immediately. He stated that typically a student would go to school and then they would get off the bus and then there was the time between 3:00pm – 6:00pm when negative influences can happen. He stated that community center staff are looking for ways to coordinate with schools near the community centers for their buses to drop off students at the center. For example: Rock Rest Elementary a lot of those students go to the Sutton Park Community Center, East Elementary and Walter Bickett Elementary a lot of those students go to both the Winchester Community Center and the J. Ray Shute Community Center.

Vice Chair Wilson shared concerns about previously suspended individuals and their ability to return to the facility.

Mr. Latimer explained our procedures and approach to dealing with such issues.

Discussion followed.

Chair Griffin commended staff for their work. She stated that over the past couple of years being a part of this committee she has seen so much improvement and growth.

There being no further business, Chair Rhonda Griffin called for a motion to adjourn this meeting.

Motion: Vice Chair Tiffany Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Member John Thomasson

Action: Motion to adjourn passed unanimously with the following votes:

AYES: John Thomasson, Debbie Dillion, Vice Chair Tiffany Wilson, and Chair Rhonda Griffin

NAYS: None

Respectfully Submitted,

Angie Sustar,
Administrative Assistant
Parks and Recreation Department