

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

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2020
12:00 P.M.**

AGENDA

www.monroenc.org

In order to comply with the need for social distancing and to limit mass gatherings in accordance with Executive Order 176, total attendance at the meeting will be limited to ten (10) people which includes the members of the Committee and City Staff. Once total attendance reaches ten (10), no additional persons will be allowed into the meeting room.

Item 1. Approval of Minutes – October 20, 2020

Item 2. Update on Kenneth Graham – Tree Dedication

Item 3. 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
OCTOBER 20, 2020
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 12:00 Noon on October 20, 2020.

Present: Chairman Dan Shive, Vice Chairman Moya Saltzgaber, Commission Members, Rhonda Griffin, and Tiffany Wilson

Visitors: Debbie Dillion and Council Member Angelia James

Staff Present: Tonya Edwards, Ryan Jones, Darren Baucom, Vicente Massey-Fletcher, and Angie Sustar

Parks and Recreation Director Tonya Edwards welcomed and introduced visitor Council Member Angelia James.

Chairman Shive welcomed and introduced visitor Debbie Dillion.

Chairman Shive welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

Item No. 1 Introduction of Vicente Massey-Fletcher, Center Supervisor at J. Ray Shute Community Center

Recreation Center and Program Operations Director Ryan Jones welcomed and introduced Vicente Massey-Fletcher as the new Center Supervisor at the J. Ray Shute Community Center. Mr. Massey-Fletcher previously worked for the Winston Salem Parks and Recreation Department.

Item No. 2. Approval of Minutes from September 15, 2020

Vice Chairman Saltzgaber moved to approve the Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting of February.

Member Tiffany Wilson seconded the motion, which unanimously passed with the following votes:

AYES: Chairman Shive, Vice Chairman Saltzgaber, Member Rhonda Griffin, Tiffany Wilson

NAYS: None

Item No. 3. Program / Facility Updates

Recreation:

Recreation Center and Program Operations Director Ryan Jones provided a brief update on programs and events. A modified Halloween Happenings Spooktacular “drive thru” event took place on Saturday. The Recreation Division and MACF joined forces in this event which was a great success and took place in the MAFC parking lot. Mr. Jones commended staff on their work in planning and the smooth execution of this event.

Athletics:

The fall baseball season is finishing up and Adult softball is underway. We are adhering to all COVID-19 safety protocols and guidelines. We are following guidelines for the sports that we are allowed at this time based on the NCDHHS recommendation and requirements.

Mr. Jones provided an update on the Remote Learning Sites. With elementary students returning to school for additional days, our sites are adjusting as well. He announced that we have received a grant (Coronavirus Relief Act 3.0) in the amount of approximately \$195,000. This grant will allow our department to be reimbursed for some of the additional expenses incurred due to the operation of the Remote Learning Sites.

Member Wilson asked what age of students were participating at the Remote Learning Sites.

Mr. Jones shared that elementary aged K – 9 year olds make up the largest percentage of the participants currently attending.

Member Wilson asked if they were planning on changing when middle school doesn't return but elementary does return.

Mr. Jones shared that the Remote Learning Sites would work to accommodate the needs of children of all ages.

Ms. Edwards shared that the Remote Learning Sites are a partnership with the UCPS and that we rely on them to identify families that need this service. These may be families that do not have access to wifi or need assistance. She shared that when elementary students return to the classroom, that we can reach out to see if there are additional needs that UCPS can identify for middle school aged students for our Remote Learning Sites. She expressed our desire to serve the middle school and older students. She shared that this age demographic is a challenge and that we would love to serve more students in this age group. She shared that currently the Old Armory Community Center (OACC) offers a Remote Learning Site targeting the middle and high school age group.

Ms. Edwards shared that we have a partnership with the YWCA to house one of their two Youth Learning Centers in Monroe. This partnership has been in place since the opening of this facility. At that time, they were utilizing space provided by the Union County Housing Authority near the J. Ray Shute Center and were in need of a larger area to expand this program. When the OACC opened, this partnership was formed to provide both After School and Summer full-day programming for elementary aged children in this community as well as the surrounding area. This allowed the Center Supervisor at OACC Hope Tanner to focus her program toward the middle and high school aged students in the community as well as rental needs. Ms. Edwards shared that when the shut down due to COVID-19

took place in March, the YWCA closed their youth learning sites and unfortunately have not reopened for on-site programming at this time. She shared that due to the needs of the community, the Parks and Recreation staff made the decision to utilize the space used by the YWCA for our Youth Learning Site until the Y returns for on-site programming. It was felt strongly by our staff that we needed to be providing on-site services in this community as we were offering in other locations. She explained that staff saw children in all of our communities congregating in front of recreation centers and at the adjacent playgrounds every day even though they were closed. The children were not wearing face coverings or practicing social distancing. Staff felt that opening these Centers would provide a safer environment for the children than what was being witnessed outside of our facilities. At least we could provide masks, put social distancing measures in place, and ensure that they were getting food each day. At this time, the schools were providing meals but some of these children did not have the transportation to the schools to pick up the meal provided. The Parks and Recreation staff felt it was essential to open our programs and buildings. The community center staff will provide programming until the YWCA returns to on site programming.

Member Wilson shared that the children she has spoken to want to return to school and have struggled with virtual learning.

Parks Maintenance:

Parks Maintenance Superintendent Darren Baucom provided an update on projects that are currently underway. Loose leaf collection began last week and will run through February 26, 2021. He provided information on where loose leaves are to be placed in order to be collected. The Solid Waste Department collects all tree branches, limbs, and bagged leaves. There was discussion about the placement of bagged leaves and loose leaves to be collected. He shared that staff is transitioning to servicing equipment and preparing for the winter projects.

Council Member James shared a compliment she received from a resident on Zephyr Circle off Olive Branch Road. The resident stated that, when leaves were collected, the leaf truck operator leaves the area spotless.

Ms. Edwards further explained the leaf collection process and how routes are followed.

Monroe Aquatics & Fitness Center:

Ms. Edwards shared that the repairs to the pool liner are scheduled to begin today. She shared the urgency of this project's completion and having the pool be operational.

Member Wilson voiced a complaint that only one Racquetball court was opened.

Ms. Edwards shared that this protocol was put in place as a part of the COVID-19 guidelines and protocols. It was put in place to keep people from congregating together in that area. She shared that as restrictions ease up, changes may take place. Ms. Edwards provided a detailed description of the restrictions that are currently in place.

Ms. Edwards shared an update on the MAFC reopening. She shared that membership numbers have dropped approximately 25%. Ms. Edwards commended the staff for the tremendous job they have done providing a safe environment for the members.

Golf Course:

Ms. Edwards provided an update on operations at the golf course. She shared that the golf course has continued to experience a tremendous increase in business since the pandemic began in March. She reported the course had experienced back to back months of 5,000 rounds played in June and July. She announced the resignation of the Head Golf Professional Nick Jacobi effective October 31. Ms. Edwards announced that Matthew Bunch the former Golf Course Manager for many years who retired from the City with thirty years of services will be the Interim Golf Course Manager. Matthew has worked as the Golf Course Superintendent at Edgewater Golf Course for the past ten years.

Member Wilson asked about the open position for Winchester Center Supervisor.

Mr. Jones advised that advertising for this position had closed and there are approximately 140 applicants that applied for the Winchester Center Supervisor position. Interviews are currently taking place and there is a very strong pool of candidates for the positions.

Overall Department Update

Belk Tonawanda Park Phase IA

Ms. Edwards shared that parking lot construction is underway and the sign will be installed soon. The sign will announce the amenities that will be coming in Phase I-B

MAFC-Parks Williams Greenway Connector

Ms. Edwards provided an update on this project. She shared that there are a few punch list items to be taken care of as this project is nearing completion. She advised that there will be a small by invitation only modified ribbon cutting in adherence to current mass gathering restrictions to be announced at a later date.

Senior Center

Ms. Edwards shared that this project is still on schedule to be bid in the near future. She provided a brief overview of the bid process.

Member Wilson asked if we could look in to a skate park similar to the one in Waxhaw.

Ms. Edwards shared that a skate park had not been recognized as a top priority on the citizen surveys that were done as a part of the Master Plan Update in 2015. She shared that staff has tried to work towards addressing the needs identified in this plan as the highest priorities prior to seeking funding for other projects.

Member Wilson asked how we identify what the youth in the area want.

Ms. Edwards shared that teens were a part of the focus groups that were included in the Master Plan Update process and that skate parks were ranked very low. There has been a very small contingent of people that have reached out a couple of times with interest. Ms. Edwards advised that they were encouraged to pull a group together to formally come forward and in an effort show there is an interest and provide input.

Vice Chairman Saltzgaber asked if the tennis courts were finished.

Ms. Edwards advised that the tennis courts had opened.

Other Business:

Ms. Edwards advised that she had spoken to Kenneth Graham's wife, Carolyn and she was very appreciative of the idea of planting a tree in memory of Kenneth. Ms. Edward advised that she had confirmed with the City Attorney's Office that through the Parks and Recreation "Bench and Tree Dedication Program" we may sponsor a tree in memory of Kenneth. There will be a plaque that reads "In Memory of Kenneth Graham" by Parks and Recreation Staff and Parks and Recreation Commission. There will be a small by invitation dedication scheduled in the coming weeks.

Chairman Shive made the motion to sponsor a tree in memory of Kenneth Graham with the type of tree and location of planting to be determined by Parks and Recreation Maintenance staff.

Member Wilson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with the following votes.

AYES: Chairman Shive, Vice Chairman Saltzgaber, Member Rhonda Griffin,
Tiffany Wilson

NAYS: None

Ms. Edwards advised that she will notify the Commission members as soon as the tree planting is scheduled.

Ms. Edwards shared that a retirement reception honoring Gail Coffey, Kathy Henderson, and Patricia Huntley is being planned and an invitation will be emailed soon.

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

AYES: Chairman Shive, Vice Chairman Saltzgaber, Tiffany Wilson, Rhonda Griffin

NAYS: None

Respectfully Submitted,

Angie Sustar,
Administrative Assistant
Parks and Recreation Department