

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

**TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2021
12:00 P.M.**

AGENDA

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Social distancing and sanitary measures will be followed and masks are required.

- Item 1. Approval of Minutes – February 16, 2021**
- Item 2. Introduction of Tony Street, Head Golf Professional MCC**
- Item 3. MAFC COVID-19 Financial Impacts & Current Op. Presentation**
- Item 4. General Program /Project 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
FEBRUARY 16, 2021
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 February 16, 2021.

Present: Vice Chairman Moya Saltzgaber, Commission Members, Debbie Dillion, John Thomasson, and Tiffany Wilson

Absent: Chairman Dan Shive, Rhonda Griffin

Staff Present: Tonya Edwards, Fred Baber, Rae Moore, and Angie Sustar

Vice Chairman Saltzgaber opened meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Vice Chairman Saltzgaber announced a change in the order of the Agenda. Tonya Edwards would start with Item No. 2.

Item No. 2 Introduction of Shaquille Lamar, Winchester Center Supervisor

Parks and Recreation Director Tonya Edwards welcomed and introduced Shaquille Lamar as the new Winchester Center Supervisor. Mr. Lamar previously worked for the Spartanburg Parks and Recreation Department.

Item No. 3. Belk Tonawanda Park Expansion/Renovation Presentation

Ms. Edwards presented the Belk Tonawanda Park Expansion/Renovation Plan and discussion followed recognizing the continual improvements that have taken place at Belk Tonawanda Park.

Member Thomasson asked why a dog park was not considered for this in this renovation. Ms. Edwards stated that though a dog park has been identified as a priority by residents and installing one at this location was investigated as a part of the Master Planning efforts for this project, it was deemed unsuitable due to potential maintenance and water pollutant. As noted in the presentation, the entire park is located in a floodplain and a portion is in a floodway. Other areas are being considered for a future dog park.

Item No. 1 Approval of Minutes from January 19, 2021

Member Debbie Dillion moved to approve the Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting of January 19, 2021.

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

AYES: Vice Chairman Saltzgaber, Member Debbie Dillion, John Thomasson, and Tiffany Wilson

NAYS: None

Item No. 3. General Program Updates

Monroe Aquatics & Fitness Center:

Interim Director Fred Baber provided a brief update on the gradual reopening of amenities at MAFC. He provided insight on the modifications made to the hours of operation as well as everything that was being taken into account in the decisions being made to open the MAFC as safely as possible. One focus is working to maximize when MAFC is open versus usage and adhering to safety protocols so members feel safe.

Member Thomasson asked if there is a plan for opening up each of the amenities to full operating capacities. Mr. Baber advised that there is a plan in place for full operation of amenities but that the capacity is based on the Governor's maximum capacity restrictions. The only amenities that remain completely closed at this time are open gym basketball, steam room, and sauna.

Member Dillion asked if the pool issue had been resolved. Ms. Edwards advised that an independent (third-party) company had been contracted to perform additional testing to help determine the cause of the wrinkles in the liner. Once that testing is complete, we will go back to the company that installed the liner to continue negotiations to resolve the issue. The pool is currently open and operating normally as the wrinkles in the liner are not causing any issues that would warrant closure at this time.

Parks Maintenance:

Parks Maintenance Superintendent Darren Baucom provided an update on projects that are currently underway. Loose leaf collection season ends February 26, 2021. The maintenance staff will begin the athletic field conversion at Walter Bickett Stadium for football and then baseball. Winter park maintenance projects are being completed.

Member Wilson asked as the spring season nears, are measures in place for the public's use of parks and shelters due to COVID-19. Ms. Edwards advised that parks, shelters and greenways have remained opened. Shelters are available for public use with the outdoor gatherings restriction limited to 50.

Athletics:

Athletic and Special Events Coordinator Rae Moore provided updates on athletic programs currently offered while adhering to all COVID-19 safety protocols and guidelines. The winter basketball youth season ends this week and spring baseball season practice begins next week. Registration for spring Track and Field and Adult softball begins March 1st.

Recreation:

Ms. Edwards provided a brief update on Recreation Division programs and upcoming events. Advertising for the Easter Eggstravaganza begins on Monday, February 22nd. The event is scheduled for Saturday, March 27th. Plans are for this event to be a modified in person Egg Dash. Ms. Edwards shared the modifications that were being made to ensure all COVID-19 guidelines are met for the safety of all participants and parents. She advised that Summer Day Camp registration begins on March 1st. The Spring/Summer 2021 Program Guide will be available online in March. Also, the disc golf course redesign project at the Dickerson Center is finished and players are able to enjoy disc golf again at this facility.

Ms. Edwards advised that a landscaping project is underway at the Monroe Country Club Ballroom. Member Wilson asked if it would be possible to expand the ballroom. Ms. Edwards advised that it is a

historical building and there would be limitations in what can be done in regards to expansions and renovations at this facility.

Ms. Edwards advised that Ryan Jones along with the Community Center Supervisors have continued to partner with the UCPS to offer services to families in the community. Mr. Jones is currently working with the principal at East Elementary on a plan that could potentially have the school to provide transportation via regular bus routes to the J Ray Shute Community Center for children that have been identified as needing additional after school tutoring. The children will be able to receive one on one virtual tutoring by the school system at the community center. Member Wilson asked if the tutoring would be every day. Ms. Edwards advised that she thought it would be every day but would verify with Mr. Jones. Member Wilson asked how long this program would last. Ms. Edwards advised that it would be for the remainder of the school year. Ms. Edwards stated she hoped if this program is able to be implemented at the J. Ray Shute Community Center that it could serve as a pilot program and lead to additional partnerships with other schools and community centers.

Member Wilson made a recommendation to offer drive-in movies during the summer at Belk Tonawanda Park. Ms. Edwards advised that three years ago a summer movies series was provided but was unsuccessful due to low attendance. Discussion followed and Ms. Edwards will follow up on this recommendation.

Member Saltzgaber asked if the security cameras that were placed in the parks several years ago were still in operation. Ms. Edwards advised that the flash cameras were still in operation but needed to be upgraded and that there is a request in the budget for the camera upgrade. She stated that video cameras have been placed in recreation centers and additional cameras for inside and outside recreation centers have also been requested in the FY 2022 budget. She advised that as a part of the Belk Tonawanda Park Phase 1B there are proposed cameras but they are very expensive. Member Wilson suggested the blue light security station used on university campuses be considered. Ms. Edwards shared that those will be reviewed as a part of the final design. She also shared the pros and cons associated with the call boxes. Discussion followed.

Member Wilson asked if the outdoor basketball rims had been reinstalled following their removal due to COVID-19 concerns. Ms. Edwards advised that outdoor basketball rims had been reinstalled. She shared that we will be working to offer limited open gym basketball once the current basketball season ends. It will mostly likely be offered by reservation only and will limit the number of people per goal.

Ms. Edwards provided a brief Monroe Aquatic and Fitness Center operational update. She shared that the impact caused due the mandated closure of this facility due to the pandemic has had a substantial impact on operations and revenues. MAFC is operated as an enterprise funded facility and does not utilize any general fund monies for operational cost. This facility has been very successful since opening nearing 25 years ago. We were fortunate to have a healthy fund balance to help subsidize our operations during this unprecedented crisis as we are currently projecting a potential loss in revenue for the current budget near one million. We have been working with staff and the Finance Dept. to look at what cuts can be made in the next fiscal year to reduce our operating cost without having any substantial impacts on operations and the amenities that our members have come to expect of this facility. We have also made changes in the current budget to reduce operational cost including a reduction in operating hours, reduced the cleaning service contract by three days per week, suspended the towel service which may not return, and have been able to utilize available staff to cover.

Tonya shared the reasoning behind the times a days chosen for reduced hours of operation which included closing on Fridays at 5:00pm, Saturdays at 1:00pm, and closed on Sunday. She explained that in looking at our daily usage over the past two months these were our least utilized timeframes and days. Typically during this time of the year daily average usage would be 1,000 – 1,200 per day and at this time our current daily average usage is 200 – 250. Membership packages are at 4,000 compared to 7,000 in November 2019.

Member Wilson asked if the MAFC qualified for the CARES money. Ms. Edwards responded that at this point it has not.

Member Wilson expressed frustration with registering for classes and asked if registration for the water park would be required. Mr. Baber advised that as for now plans are for the water park to open normally with no registration required, however, if there are restrictions on the number that are allowed to be admitted, then we need to count members in on a first-come first-serve basis.

Ms. Edwards shared that she hopes that by the time the water park opens on Memorial Day weekend, the pool capacities will be more than the current 30% but that we must adhere to the Governor's Executive Order.

Member Wilson shared that watching staff walk around cleaning and disinfecting while she is working out at the MAFC makes her feel safe. Ms. Edwards shared that staff wants members to feel safe when using this facility and we are trying to make members aware of all the measures that are in place to ensure member safety is a top priority. Ms. Edwards advised that even though this facility is going through a very challenging time, we feel strongly it can weather this storm and will come back stronger than ever once the pandemic ends.

Other Business:

Ms. Edwards advised that construction has been completed for the Monroe Aquatics & Fitness Center – Parks Williams Athletic Complex Greenway Connector. The project will close out next week and then Parks Maintenance staff will install signage, banners, benches and trash receptacles. Member Wilson asked if there will be a ribbon cutting. Ms. Edwards responded that a ribbon cutting ceremony will be scheduled in the future. In order to adhere to COVID-19 restrictions, the ceremony will be by invitation only.

Advisory Board Training:

Ms. Edwards advised that NC Recreation Resources through N.C. State provides advisory board training for Parks and Recreation Commissions. Ms. Edwards indicated if the board was open to this she would like to schedule a training session for some time in the near future. The board members affirmed that this was something they would be interested in attending. Ms. Edwards will contact Recreation Resources and see what opportunities are available at this time and will provide an update at the next meeting.

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

AYES: Vice Chairman Saltzgaber, Member Debbie Dillion, Tiffany Wilson, John Thomasson.

NAYS: None

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