

September 30, 2022

TO: SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

FROM: LESLEY G. KING
TOWN CLERK

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2022

The Parks and Recreation Committee held a meeting on Monday, September 26th, 2022, at 3:27 p.m. at the Smithfield Center located at 220 North Church Street, Smithfield Virginia. Committee members attending were Ms. Beth Haywood and Ms. Valerie Butler. Other Council members present were Mr. Randy Pack, Mrs. Renee Rountree, Mr. Michael Smith, Vice Mayor; and Mr. T. Carter Williams, Mayor. Staff members present were Mr. Michael R. Stallings, Jr., Town Manager; Ms. Lesley King, Town Clerk; Ms. Ashley Rogers, Director of Human Resources; Mrs. Tammie Clary, Director of Community Development and Planning; Mr. Jack Reed, Director of Engineering and Public Works; and Mr. Wayne Griffin, Town Engineer; Mr. Eric Phillips, Lieutenant of Police Department; Ms. Amy Novak, Director of Parks and Recreation; and Ms. Deb Frank of Tourism. Also in attendance were Mr. Steve Bowman, Mr. Jeffrey Brooks, Mr. Bill Davidson, and Mr. Ryan Adams of Wavy 10 / Fox 43. No media was represented.

Parks and Recreation Committee Member, Ms. Beth Haywood called the meeting to order.

A. MATTERS DISCUSSED BY COMMITTEE WHICH WILL BE ON COUNCIL'S AGENDA.

1. Survey Results – 10 Acres @ Windsor Castle Park - Ms. Novak stated that at the last Town Council Committee meeting discussion was held on expanding the Long Leaf Pines at Windsor Castle Park. Discussion was held on what we really want to see at the park in the future. What is the best use for any of the open spaces at the park. Ms. Novak did a brief survey to the public to see what their thoughts were for the 10 acres next to the existing Long Leaf Pine plantings. The survey asked people to contribute ideas of passive features and ideas. Ms. Novak explained that a passive park means that people

use the park on their own time for leisure and nothing is programmed there. Luter Sports Complex is an example of a program park not a passive park. A playground can be built in a passive park and even though it can be loud with children there it is used on their own time. The survey results yielded that people really like farm fields with more specifically sunflowers. Ms. Novak stated that even if the Long Leaf Pines are expanded in this area does not mean that a farm field could not be planted in another open area in the park. Mayor Williams expressed concern with not being able to plant farm fields due to the spraying of pesticides on the fields near the public walking in the park or plant sunflowers or wildflowers because of the deer population. Ms. Novak stated that she feels there is a way to plant a successful crop but there is a lot of research that would need to go into it to do it without spraying any pesticides. Even if the Long Leaf Pines are planted the Town still has open fields where other things can be planted. Ms. Novak stated that the survey did show that people are not against the Long Leaf Pines. Most of the respondents visit the park at least once a week. The only other suggestion that came up several times with the survey was for more play equipment. The natural play area does not really suit everyone and there is not much to do there. Mrs. Rountree asked how many surveys were submitted. There were 110 responses to the survey. Ms. Rountree stated that she too agrees that a successful crop of sunflowers can be grown at the park again. Committee asked if it was more important to expand our acreage of the Long Leaf Pines or that they be planted adjacent to the Long Leaf Pines that are already planted. Ms. Novak stated that in her opinion she would like to see them all in one area so all the interpretive signage is in one location. She mentioned that one of the people that responded to the survey stated that the existing area of Long Leaf Pines looks terrible not realizing that this is intentional. The Town Manager explained that in the future there may be a desire to build an interpretive center that would fit in with nature and be completely off grid. This has the potential to be bigger than just the pine trees. Having all the different types of plantings in one area to see different ways that it can be done without having to travel is attractive. An additional trail will have to be put in around the trees to have fire break when they do burns. Ms. Rountree asked for clarification on the number of plantings the Town would be getting for free and how much of the acreage would be used to plant them. There are approximately 2,000 pine trees and they were looking at planting approximately 200 per acre expanding over the entire 10 acres. Mr. Pack stated that he would be in favor of the Long Leaf Pines, but he would like to see them planted in the field by the kayak launch. In his opinion the field near the road has a lot more potential for crops or open space that is mowed. The Town Manager stated that we can talk with the group that is working on this project and have them investigate the open field by the kayak launch to see if it is feasible. It appears to be very similar

acreage to the area along Jericho Road. Ms. Novak stated that she would suggest the field next to the kayak launch be used to plant sunflowers or wildflowers in the future. Vice Mayor Smith stated that he thinks the consensus from committee is that we are in favor of expanding the Long Leaf Pine project but there are still some concerns of where they should be planted within the park. Ms. Novak will reach out to Mr. McBurney between now and the Town Council meeting to determine if all areas in the park are suitable for planting the new Long Leaf Pines. This item will be placed on Town Council's agenda for further discussion at their October 5th, 2022 meeting.

B. MATTERS DISCUSSED BY COMMITTEE WHICH WILL NOT BE ON COUNCIL'S AGENDA.

1. Additional Item for Informational Purposes only – Ms. Novak mentioned that she had met with Eastern Virginia Mountain Bike Association this past Saturday at Windsor Castle Park. Their organization sets up trail leaders to maintain Mountain Bike trails at city and town parks. They are offering to do Windsor Castle Park. Our trail captain is very excited about this because he rides the mountain bike trail all the time and he has great ideas to improve the town's existing trail. They plan to build bypass trails for areas that are really tough so that almost any age could do this course. They also talked about expansion of the trail to make it approximately 1 mile. Currently it is about a half a mile long. This would draw more people in the park for a different purpose other than walking and running.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.