

**Town of Swansboro**  
**Swansboro Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**  
**April 17, 2024**

- I. Call to Order & Roll Call-** The Swansboro Parks and Recreation Board met at the Swansboro Recreation Center for a regular board meeting on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. Deb Pylypiw called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Members present were Jenifer Steele, Lawrence Abalos, Debra Pylypiw, Matthew Prane, Debbie Harnatkiewicz, and Elena Messenger. Anna Stanley and Sara Elliott were present on behalf of the Town.

- a. **Staff Introductions-** Director Stanley announced that Sara Elliott joined the Parks & Recreation staff on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Sara introduced herself and gave some work experience background.

**II. Adoption of Minutes**

- a. **February 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes-** The board reviewed the meeting minutes from February 21, 2024. Lawrence A. made a motion to approve the minutes Jennifer S. seconded the motion, and the meeting minutes were unanimously passed.

**III. Reports**

- a. **Monthly Report-**Director Stanley provided the February and March monthly managers report. The board did not have any questions.
- b. **Upcoming Programs/Events-** Sara E. spoke about Touch-a-Truck, Tai Chi, POUND, and Fellowship Night. She also spoke about two new programs, Tiny Trekkers and Sprout Scouts. Parks and Recreation is also hosting Mother/Daughter Craft Night. Pirate Fest is coming up on May 11th. There is also one last Teacher Workday Camp before summer camp which has been filled. Elena M. asked about making the new program a new series. Sara E. responded that it depends on staff budgeting, hours, and programming budget.

**c. Updates**

Director Stanley spoke about Senior Games and the amount of events Swansboro Parks & Recreation have covered and will cover through the entirety of the games. Onslow County Senior Games has continued to gain new participants each year. Director Stanley also spoke about Arts by the Sea Festival entertainment and mentioned that anyone who knows any local performers, please have them reach out to Sara E. Matthew P. asked if there was a registration fee and there is not. Matthew P. mentioned that he has a contact for different nationality/cultural performances groups and will pass it along to Sara E. ABTS will have a wine and food tasting tent again with an increase in price to \$45/ticket pre-registration and

\$50/ticket at the door. There will be a taste of town competition along with the wine tasting.

Director Stanley said that Independence Day fireworks are booked, the bands are booked, and applications have been sent. The Mullet Festival has the band booked and almost all the vendor spaces have been filled. Deb P. mentioned that we are trying to host the Mullet Festival a little differently because it is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Deb P stated that the local newspaper is highlighting the history and local historians will have different displays about the history of mullet fishing. There was a discussion on having a tent dedicated to different fishing activities for kids that would be run by the board and where to have it that would draw people to that area.

#### **IV. New Business**

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- a. Splashpad Enhancement- Director Stanley stated that the BOC did approve the additional \$15,000 to complete the splashpad. The packet has the information on the new shades and the quality of them. The splashpad is opening in May and then depending on the time frame of the work. The splashpad may only close for a few weeks or just close it a month early. This will depend on when the shades come in. Matthew P. asked where we plan to store the shades and how we take them down. They will be stored at Public Works, and they are considered quick release shades.
- b. Master Plan Recommendation-Chapter 5- What is the department currently doing? In terms of park improvements the current plans the department has is the splashpad enhancement and resurfacing of the basketball courts. Director Stanley said the department is looking to replace the tot lot playground equipment. \$50,000 was originally requested, but it was reduced to \$25,000. If the department can secure a grant from the company it would be a 50/50 match.

*“Leveraging parks and the department for economic impact and as a costal resource”*  
Director Stanley highlighted some of the recommendations from the Master Plan. One of the recommendations includes leveraging the parks for economic impact. Director Stanley pointed out that currently the festivals are being leveraged for economic impact and will continue to do so. Recommendations also included waterfront enhancements which includes the boardwalk extension.

*“Recreation Programming”*- the plan discusses utilizing outdoor programs, which the department currently offers, but needs to expand its programming. Once Sara settles in she can expand on outdoor programming. She has already began creating new programs for age groups that have been overlooked in the past. Deb P. and

Elena M. suggested to offer free walking programs including Walk & Talk and exploring different areas of Swansboro or parks. The department will continue to look add more fitness and educational programs.

*"Operations-Building Staff"*- Director Stanley provided other staff updates including the new Dock Master and the benefits of having one. Matthew P. asked how we could better enforce the "No Wake Zone." Dock Master Justin has already talked about getting the buoys for the "No Wake Zone" so we can enforce them. A full time Recreation Coordinator was submitted in this year's budget request.

*"Operations-Marketing"*-establish a marketing plan, social media, and communications strategy. Sara E. has also started updating the media lists and creating a new distribution list for advertising. This will allow the department to reach more than just social media. Director Stanley also mentioned monthly newsletters through Mail Chip or Constant Contact once a distribution list has been established. Director Stanley also spoke about Placer AI which is a new technology tool for parks, festivals, and events to obtain a more accurate attendance number. This software could also show where people come from, so the department could advertise to other markets. Director Stanley stated that she asked for partial funding for this software through the Onslow County Tourism grant.

*"Park Maintenance"*-Director Stanley spoke about working with Public Works on a Maintenance Plan for the parks. Lawrence A. mentioned that he was shocked there was nothing in place. Public Works does have regular parks maintenance scheduled, but the Director is unsure if there is a formal written plan in place. The director is also working with the Dockmaster to create a formal written plan for the docks and downtown facilities.

Matthew P. brought up about the Master Plan talks about more land, but Director Stanley said that she always asks for it in the budget, but it does not get approved. Lawrence A. stated that it is great to look at the short-term projects, but we need to find ways to meet the long-term goals.

c. 2024-25 Budget Review- Director Stanley stated that the budget is still being reviewed and the first round of reductions and a hiring freeze has been implemented. The department will be unable to hire any part-time staff or a dock assistant and will not be able to open the concession stand because no seasonal staff can be hired. Matthew P. asked since we are budgeted on hours rather than people, could not the department hire part-time seasonal staff. The director explained that no new staff can be hired even though the hours are budgeted.

Director Stanley informed the board items removed from the budget were nonrevenue generating programs and events including Movies in the Parks, concessions stand, uniforms, special events, and advertising. Jennifer S. mentioned that if we show we can make money or cover costs, then it can be added to the

budget. Director Stanley explained that funds have to be shown on both the revenue and expenditure sides. The department can solicit sponsorships to cover the cost of programs or events that were removed from the budget.

Jennifer S. mentioned that it seems like a lot of Parks & Recreation are dependent on budgeting, especially from the BOC. She mentioned finding different sponsorships and money for the parks and not just festivals. Elena M. mentioned signs on the field and not just the tennis courts. Director Stanley stated research has been collected to establish something like that, but the sponsorship needs to be developed.

## **VI. Comments**

**VII. Adjournment-** Jennifer S. made a motion to adjourn at 6:57 pm and Elena M. seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

**Next Meeting May 15, 2024, 5:30 pm**