

Town of Swansboro
Swansboro Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes February 19, 2025

- 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, February 19, 2025. Deb Pylypiw called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Members present were Debra Pylypiw, Matthew Prane, Ryan Swanson, Bets Love, and Elena Messenger. Jennifer Steele was absent. Anna Stanley and Sara Elliott were present on behalf of the Town.

II. President Chair/Vice Chair Elections

- a. Deb P. stated that she would like to stay as chair. Bets L. motioned for Deb P. to stay as chair, Elena M. seconded the motion and was unanimously passed. Elena M. stated that she would like to be Vice Chair. Matthew P. motioned for Elena M. to be Vice Chair; Bets L. seconded that motion and was unanimously passed.

III. Adoption of Minutes

- a. November 20, 2024- Meeting Minutes- The board reviewed the meeting minutes from November 20, 2024. Matthew P. made a motion to approve the minutes; Ryan S. seconded the motion, and the meeting minutes were unanimously passed.

III. Reports

- a. **Monthly Report-** Director Stanley said that the monthly December and January reports were in the packet and asked if there were any questions. There were no questions.

- b. **Upcoming Programs/Events-**Sara E. reviewed upcoming programs

Tiny Trekkers and Sprout Scouts are the monthly toddler programs that will run again in March. Program offerings for March include a Welcome Rock Workshop, Music Therapy, and toddler and fitness programs continue. The Welcome Rock Workshop is with Boulder Designs to paint 2 different designs for a landscape rock. On March 15, Luck of the Paddle Pickleball Tournament will be held in Municipal Park. Sara E. mentioned that registration numbers were lower than expected, especially from previous tournaments, but there was still over a month to sign up. A member of the public stated that it was difficult to register on the website so Sara E. suggested calling to register and a direct link will be shared for the registration. Pickleball members also stated they will share on GroupMe and other pickleball group messages. Navy Federal Credit Union is offering a free financial briefing in March. Elena M. asked if this was for everybody or just youth. Sara E. responded that right now it is for everyone, but they are open to offering more free sessions in the future depending on the turnout for this one. Music Therapy is also back in March which is a free program in partnership with Onslow

and Carteret County Down Syndrome Network. Matthew P. asked if all the information was on Staying Busy, and it is. The department are also attempting to offer two mindfulness programs for adults and toddlers through a contract instructor. Deb P. is arranging theatre trips again and have planned to offer through the end of the fiscal year. Looking ahead in April, a STEM Minecraft Spring Break Camp will be offered. Touch-A-Truck is scheduled for April 26th and already have 16 different businesses registered and the goal is 30. Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for April 17th and Lighthouse Realty Group is sponsoring the event. Elena M. asked what the best way is to market new programs. Sara E. responded with Facebook and the Facebook groups. Elena M. mentioned about dropping off flyers to like businesses to advertise our programs. Sara E. mentioned that some businesses will not post programs that are paid like the library but will investigate other businesses posting flyers. Sara E. stated that word of mouth has been helpful in our youth programs because it can be shared with friends, and reminders are sent out to registrants when there are openings. Staying Busy is sent to Tideland News, Island Review, and those that have asked to be a part of our mailing list. Elena M. asked if the department had Instagram. Sara E. stated there is an Instagram page and hat it is not as popular, which could be accredited to our clientele. Bets L. asked if Staying Busy has everything that Sara E. discussed, it has all the programming and events for March. There were no further questions for programs and events.

c. Updates

Director Stanley gave an update on the pickleball courts. The Town Manager has given approval to write the letter to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to make a change of use for the skatepark. A public patron asked what the distance was around the pickleball courts if three courts were built in the skatepark, and Director Stanely does not have exact measurements or plans yet since it is not known if the skatepark can be used. Another patron asked why the tennis courts were not being resurfaced as six dedicated pickleball courts, but Director Stanley said that was never the plan because multi-use courts need to be available. It has already been ruled out that the skatepark cannot fit a tennis court. Bets L. asked what the status was on a having a skatepark and no one was exactly sure if there would be one or not.

IV. New Business

a. 2025 Sponsorship Packet

Director Stanley reviewed the new Festival Sponsorship packet. It was noted that there was a new level for a title sponsor that was already sold to Team Chevy of Swansboro. The packet has been sent out to previous sponsors but stated that if anyone had a specific business in mind to take the physical packet to them. Sara E. will also distribute packets to businesses around town. Elena M. asked if the title

sponsor was just for Mullet Festival, but it is for all four festivals. It is a great deal for businesses to get exposure at four festivals. Elena M. asked if there were any plans to increase the overall costs and there are. Director Stanley has increased sponsorship back to where it was with the Festivals Committee so there is concern that sponsors may be lost if increased too much. Director Stanley was able to secure TV advertising this year so the more advertising opportunities are built, the easier it will be to increase the dollar amount. Elena M. asked if each level had a max number of sponsors, but only the title does. Director Stanley mentioned that the park's special events have been removed. Sara E. has received sponsorships for those smaller events. The plan for next year is to have a sponsorship packet for other parks and recreation events and programs. Ryan S. asked if the packet could be broken down by each festival, but Deb P. mentioned that it would be difficult to update the banner, and the expenses would increase. Sara E. commented that most departments have a dedicated festival staff member, but our department does not.

b. 2025-26 Annual Budget

Director Stanley is asking for another full-time staff member, increase in program supplies, and special events. This attributes to staff challenges with limited hours and increase for more programs. The hourly rate is only \$12 an hour and Summer Camp Director is \$15 an hour. The department is asking for a full-time Recreation Coordinator. There is currently no incentive to stay here because last year staff did not receive COLA, or a merit raise.

Program supplies have been a challenge because of the increase in program offerings, so more programs mean more cost. The department has asked for an increase in Special Events because Sara E. has revamped all special events, and there has been record attendance at these events. Sara E. has added BarkFest, and all the special events have at least 500 people. Director Stanley is also requesting PirateFest to be added back to the budget.

Another needed increase is in Playground Equipment and Maintenance. The equipment is starting to age, so there are more repairs. The budget for this year has already been depleted and will need to request more funds from the Board of Commissioners for any other repairs this year.

Non-capital items were removed from the budget last year included fitness equipment, trash cans, and pet waste containers. The director stated that typically a couple of these items are purchased each year so that when one of those items need to be replaced, it is on hand. Other requests in non-capital include dog park features, air hockey table, and banquet chairs. The banquet chairs are the original chairs when the Recreation Center opened. Elena M. asked if the game equipment could be fixed in-house, but really, it does not need to be fixed, just replaced. Elena M. also asked about adding extra paid programming to the free events like a pumpkin derby at Halloweenie Roast. Sara E. stated the pumpkin derby is being

considered for 2025, but other paid features at the events is something that needs to be explored further.

In capital projects the department is for the Tot Lot to be replaced. That piece of equipment is over 20 years old. Pieces are becoming more difficult to replace or may not be replaced at all. At some point the equipment may become a safety issue.

Commissioner Conoway stepped into the conversation about the budget. Commissioner Conway stated that he appreciates all the department does for the Town, but it will be another difficult budget year. First, the county plans to cut property taxes by 2-4% and the commissioners have put a good amount of money in fire and police. It was said that the budget may not come out as planned, but it is not personal because there are some challenges with the budget this year. The board supports all the work Parks and Recreation does, but it may not work out as expected. Commissioner Conway also commented on the plan for new housing units that could increase the amount of money brought in, but Swansboro does not want to jump on that. Commissioner Conoway stated that there will be pickleball courts, a new skatepark, and new basketball courts. Elena M. asked how many grants have been submitted for the department. Director Stanley responded that once Municipal Park is in compliance with the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the department will be eligible for additional grants. The board suggested to either have a full-time grant writer, contract it out, or find someone to help with grant writing.

c. Swansboro Tourism Development Authority Grant Request

Director Stanley attended the Swansboro Tourism Development Authority meeting and received a \$2,000 grant for PirateFest and \$6,500 for festivals. Director Stanley will present to the Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, February 25th to reinstate PirateFest. If the Town of Swansboro does not have the event, Onslow County will no longer support the event. Attendance reached over 7,000 people in a 6-hour period. This year, it will be held on May 10th. Director Stanley feels hopeful that they funds will be re-instated since the Swansboro TDA approved grant funds. Several board members commented on the success of the event last year.

VI. Old Business

a. ARP updates

All funding for ARP projects has been encumbered. The splash wall and shades are completed. Most items are already here, they just need to be installed once the weather becomes warmer. The department intends to host a grand reopening for the Splash Pad. Sara E. will head the event and look for a business to sponsor the event. The goal is for the basketball courts to be resurfaced in March and new equipment installed. It will be sealed six months after it is installed. Pickleball courts will be carried over into next year. Restrooms have all been replaced, but

Municipal Parks and Pirate's Den are having issues. Humphrey's Plumbing and ONWASA are working together to fix the issue. The bottle filler has been installed in the Recreation Center.

VII. Comments

Elena M. asked about adding the sponsorship wood boards around the park. She just asked if there was any more thought into that. It was discussed about logos on the wind screens around the tennis courts, but nothing was further discussed. It is something that can be investigated. Elena M. also asked about Summer Camp pricing. Sara E. said prices are increasing but did not have the exact amount. Compared to other municipalities Swansboro's are less expensive, but they can also accommodate more campers to offset costs. Deb P. suggested exploring specialty camps, as they could be a more effective use of the significant energy, time, and resources invested in the summer camp. Currently, the camp serves 12 families per week due to space constraints limiting enrollment to 12 campers at a time. The department will be hiring new Camp Supervisors for the summer.

- VII. Adjournment**—Matthew P. made a motion to adjourn at 6:45 pm and Elena M. seconded the motion. All members were in favor.