

RECREATION & COMMUNITY
ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING

A G E N D A

TOWN OF CHINCOTEAGUE

January 14, 2014 - 5:00 P.M. – Council Chambers - Town Hall

CALL TO ORDER

AGENDA ADOPTION:

1. Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park
 - Review proposed strategy for Playground Master Plan and Fundraising
 - Schedule Playground Workshop in February
2. Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park
 - Consider removal or repair of Skate Park fence
3. Project Report Updates
4. Committee Member Comments

ADJOURN:

Next Meeting – February Workshop (to be scheduled), and March 11, 2014



STAFF REPORT

To: Recreation and Community Enhancement Committee

Through: Robert G. Ritter, Town Manager

From: William Neville, Planning Director

Date: November 12, 2013 (**Updated January 14, 2014**)

Subject: Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park Playground

❖ Review strategy for Playground Master Plan and Fundraising

Committee members heard a request from the community at a previous meeting to repair and replace playground equipment at Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park. Following the recent removal of several damaged play structures and dead trees, several strategies should be considered for what improvements can and should be made:

- 1) Identify age appropriate play structures to replace the existing facilities
- 2) Prioritize and establish a schedule to complete the work
- 3) Request funding from Town Council through the annual budget process, apply for grants, promote sponsorship opportunities, or work with community groups for fundraising campaigns

A more comprehensive approach would include: a subcommittee/citizen working group, a community survey, a master plan, major site renovation to elevate play areas above flooding, and a landscape plan.



Playground Improvement Project

The Town of Chincoteague values community participation and specifically would like to involve the parents of small children in the selection of play structures. No plan can be successful without the benefit of park users to identify needs, desires, and local community issues. The following approach is proposed for a Playground Improvement Project in 2014.

Why Master Plan Parks?

Park master plans provide the public a way to help determine the best uses for a specific site and to optimize management of the site's resources. The Recreation and Community Enhancement Committee (RCEC) uses public input, combined with analyses of current trends and future needs as identified in the Town 'Park Inventory and Recreational Needs Assessment', to help craft a long-range blueprint for use of a park site. The Needs Assessment should be updated for playground improvements to support possible grant requests.

What is a Park Plan?

A park master plan is a general guide for appropriate park uses and their approximate location within a specific park site. The plan serves as a long-range vision (10-20 year timeframe) for future development and programming. The plan is conceptual in nature and not always intended to address detailed issues related to engineered site design or park operations. The plan is just one of many steps in the process that leads to the development of a public park. Once a playground improvement plan is developed, the master plan for Veterans Memorial Park should be updated.

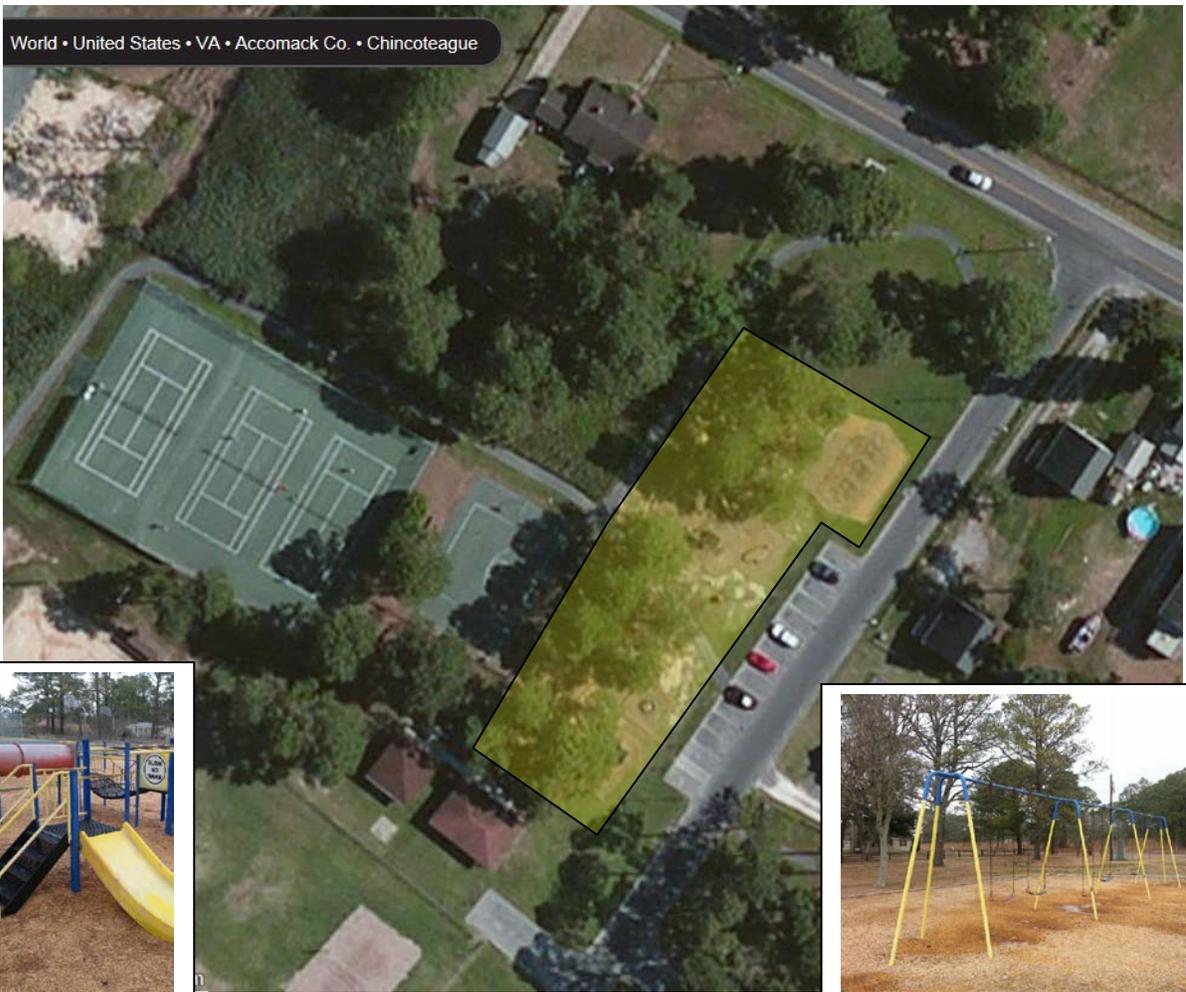
The Park Planning Process

Typically, there are at least three public meetings throughout the planning process to seek public involvement.

- 1) The first is a public information meeting to introduce the project and existing site conditions; explain the planning process; identify community issues and respond to preliminary questions.
- 2) Later, there is a planning workshop where the community is invited to evaluate alternative park uses and conceptual designs. After a preferred alternative is identified, a draft park master plan is developed and a recommendation is made from the RCEC, and
- 3) A public meeting is held by Town Council to gather further comments. The draft plan may be further refined after each public meeting. Eventually, the Town Council is presented with a final plan for adoption. While not all individual preferences can be accommodated, the Town Council strives to provide a well balanced park system to meet the needs of residents and seasonal visitors.

Public Input is Essential

The January 14, 2014 RCEC meeting, along with this staff report, will serve as public information. Comments and suggestions are always welcome and encouraged. Please send via e-mail to: wneville@chincoteague-va.gov or by post to: William Neville, Director of Planning, Town of Chincoteague, 6150 Community Drive, Chincoteague, VA 23336



Next Steps

An inventory and assessment of the existing play structures has been completed by Town Staff on November 18, 2013 (see attached forms). The general recommendation is to continue maintenance of the equipment, replacing broken components, and minimizing safety risks from rusted and sharp edges until each structure can be replaced. The short term need for replacement structures are prioritized as follows:

- 1) Small multi-function play structure for 3-5 year age group near Picnic Pavilion (low fence may be required)
- 2) Round geodesic climbing structure for all ages
- 3) Large multi-function play structure for all ages

In preparation for a planning workshop, Town Staff will prepare a base map to scale, with a range of possible play structures to 'cut and paste' onto the plan. A brief user survey will be developed to collect ideas and information from members of the community. Site preparation requirements, safety zones, and cost estimates will be identified for each of the play structure options so that a preliminary budget can be developed as a result of the workshop exercise.

A small workgroup should be established to incorporate the playground plan and budget into a fundraising strategy. Funding levels for individual, organizational and corporate contributions should be established, along with recommendations for Town Budget allocation and/or grant funds that are needed.

The results of the planning workshop and the fundraising workgroup will be presented at the regular RCEC meeting on March 11, 2014. The RCEC may make a recommendation to Town Council as early as April 7, 2014.

Action Required

Establish a date in February for the planning workshop so that it may be advertised throughout the community.



STAFF REPORT

To: Recreation and Community Enhancement Committee

Through: Robert G. Ritter, Town Manager

From: William Neville, Planning Director

Date: January 14, 2014

Subject: Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park
Skate Park Fence

❖ Consider possible removal or repair of Skate Park fence



Recent damage to the fence surrounding the existing skate park needs to be repaired or replaced.

At this time, Public Works Director Spurlock has requested direction from the Recreation and Community Enhancement Committee as to whether it would be better to remove all (or a portion of) the fence to provide open access with advisory signs.

An open access strategy would minimize replacement costs, supervision and enforcement recognizing that the closed gate does not deter someone from jumping the fence to use the facilities.

Safety concerns remain to provide a separation between skate park users and parking lot traffic, as well as ballfield users and skate park equipment.

A gated perimeter fence system allows the Town to secure the facility when flood conditions exist, when the park is closed at night, and may provide an added measure of liability protection in the event that someone is injured using the equipment when the skate park is closed.

The Committee may want to discuss the long term options for relocating the skate park equipment to an alternate site.



MEMORANDUM

The Town of Chincoteague, Incorporated

To: Recreation and Community Enhancement Committee
Through: Robert Ritter, Town Manager
From: William Neville, Director of Planning
Date: January 14, 2014
Subject: Project Updates

The status of ongoing projects is updated below for Committee review and discussion.

Ocean Boulevard Extended

The small bridge/boardwalk to be constructed over Fowling Gut has been completed.

- Next Steps:
- Staff is working with property owners along Coach's Lane to obtain an easement for extension of the bike path to connect back to Maddox Boulevard
 - Continue working with USFWS or other sources to obtain grant funds for paving the trail
 - Install signage and schedule an 'soft' opening ceremony

CNWR Bike Trail Extension

FWS completed the boardwalk bike trail connection to the Chincoteague Museum by extending the trail across the front of the Museum property to a new crosswalk location and connecting the Maddox Boulevard shoulder bike lane.

- Next Steps:
- Bike lane improvements along Maddox Boulevard from the Traffic Circle to AJ's Restaurant may be approved for construction through the remaining Sarbanes Grant funds or with a long term VDOT capital project

Jessie R. Watson Sr. Memorial Park

The Chincoteague Garden Club maintains the perennial garden project.

- Next Steps:
- Schedule Spring planting
 - Phase two improvements are on hold for additional funding or donations

Mariners Point

Committee members have identified the overlook area at Curtis Merritt Harbor as the number one priority for planning future open space and recreational opportunities in the Town. The Ships Mast Memorial has been installed

- Next Steps:
- Ships Mast Memorial compass base is in progress
 - Low fencing may be advisable as a safety measure around the perimeter of the guy wires
 - Updated master plan document showing the proposed improvements and the Ships Mast Memorial as needed

Downtown Main Street/Robert Reed Park

The Main Street revitalization project, acquisition of Bridge Street right of way, purchase of additional land, and the construction of a fishing pier are all changes that will be incorporated into the master plan for Robert Reed Downtown Park.

- Next Steps:
- Abandonment of Bridge Street and VDOT deed with agreement of adjacent landowners to allow Town maintenance of street access and parking. Waiting for draft agreement from VDOT.
 - Construction for east side of Main Street streetscape improvements has begun with completion by Memorial Day 2014
 - Incorporate suggestions from the Downtown Merchants and the Cultural Alliance regarding opportunities to improve and manage the Downtown Park and nearby parking areas
 - Incorporate proposed use of the Bridge Street right of way and the recent park expansion plan prepared for the DCR grant application.
 - Waterman's Memorial sculpture location has been approved by Town Council
 - Additional benches and performance stage proposed.
 - Prepare cost estimates and recommendations for the Town Budget

Interpretive Signs

The Committee considered a proposal last year to include interpretive displays at Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park.

- Next Steps:
- Prepare cost estimate and recommendation for Town Budget
 - Consider incorporating the research, design and manufacturing of these signs at the same time as the Robert Reed Downtown Park expansion area/Historic Bridge information kiosk.

Hallie Whealton Smith Drive

The Town received a Safe Routes to School construction grant to construct a bicycle shelter and a shared use trail between the Elementary and Combined Schools along Hallie Whealton Smith Drive.

- Next Steps:
- Preliminary Design Report prepared by consultant in December 2013 and is currently under review by Town Staff.

- Schedule a meeting of the SRTS committee to review the proposed trail alignment and several design details with School administration

Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park

As the most complete Town Park with a range of recreational use facilities, the focus continues to be on maintenance and completing minor improvements

- Next Steps:
- Repair of Hurricane Sandy storm damage is complete and tree stumps have been removed. New tree planting recommendations are needed.
 - New life rings have been installed on the pier
 - Drainage improvements around the playground, installation of new play surface mulch, removal of the tire swing and repair/replacement to current playground equipment is ongoing.
 - New playground equipment is needed.
 - Repairs to the skate park ramps have been approved by Council and have been completed
 - Future playground improvements will be considered over the next several RCEC meetings along with additional funding recommendations or fund raising
 - Look into adding more lighting at Fishing Pier

Donald Leonard Park

The Leonard Family has completed Phase One improvements with the assistance of a landscape designer to recommend plantings and improvements to the Park. This location has been discussed as a possible location for installation of improved water access for a kayak launch. Town Council approved the location of a ‘memorial boulder’.

- Next Steps:
- Refine park master plan (possible soft shoreline demonstration project)
 - Identify incremental improvements to be completed as a part of regular Town maintenance program
 - Donna Leonard will present information regarding the purchase and installation of a pier, floating dock and kayak launch area.

Island Nature Trail

The Island Nature Trail includes approximately 1.2 miles of paved and unpaved trails located in preserved open space along Hallie Whealton Smith Drive. The paved trail surface has buckled and needs to be repaired and repaved. Hurricane Sandy caused wind and flood damage to numerous trees throughout the park. Mature pines have been stressed by the pine bark beetle.

- Next Steps:
- Review park master plan to determine if newly cleared areas provide an opportunity for additional open space uses and natural plantings.
 - Identify trail paving to be completed as a part of regular Town maintenance program, or pursue grant applications. Grant application filed with Virginia DCR in December 2013.

**Recreation and Community Enhancement
Committee Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2013**

Committee Members Present:

John Jester, Chairman
Terry Howard, Councilman
Jack Van Dame
Bob Conklin
David Johnson

Staff Present:

Robert G. Ritter, Town Manager
William Neville, Town Planner

Others Present:

Ray Rosenberger
Nancy Rosenberger
Drew Jorgensen
Paula Gormly
Donna Leonard
Ted Daisey

Call to Order

Chairman Jester called the meeting to order at 5:10 PM

Agenda Adoption

Councilman Howard motioned, seconded by Mr. Conklin to adopt the agenda. Unanimously approved.

1. Watermans Memorial

Chairman Jester introduced the item to review a proposed concept plan change for Robert Reed Park. Town Planner Neville summarized prior committee consideration of a Waterman's Memorial with certain elements to be located at Mariners Point and the possible location of a memorial sculpture or monument to be located at Robert Reed Park.

A location in the new park expansion area at the 'jog' in the boardwalk was proposed as a focal point, and examples were illustrated in the Staff Report of the appropriate size and scale of similar sculptures. Mr. Neville suggested that the Committee could forward this proposal to the Town Council as a recommendation to amend the Robert Reed Park master plan.

Chairman Jester suggested that this area would need to be set aside for a period of time to allow for continued fundraising. He discussed the plan for locating historic bridge artifacts and an information kiosk at the end of Bridge Street. David Johnson asked about the timing of these park improvements. Mr. Ritter explained the ongoing negotiation with VDOT and adjacent property owners to allow Town ownership of the Bridge Street right of way.

Committee Members continued to discuss the master plan elements of the expansion area. Mr. Conklin stated his understanding was that a vote to allow the location of a Waterman's Memorial sculpture in a designated location was all that was necessary and other park elements would continue to be planned around it. Mr. Howard recalled that the Waterman's Memorial was always to be located at Curtis Merritt Harbor. Mr. Van Dame added that a decision to locate a sculpture at Robert Reed Park has not been made in the past. Chairman Jester reviewed prior

actions to locate the ‘ships mast’ memorial at Mariners Point. Mr. Johnson stated that a decision regarding location of the sculpture is needed to help with continued fundraising.

Committee members disagreed over the best location for the proposed sculpture.

- Mr. Conklin made a motion recommending for Town Council to set aside a certain allotted area of land within Robert Reed Park to place the Waterman’s Memorial statue as shown in the November 12, 2013 staff report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson. Mr. Howard supported the efforts to create the memorial but disagreed with placing memorials in both parks and felt that the Harbor was an appropriate location.

For: Conklin, Johnson, Jester

Against: Howard, Van Dame

2. Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park Playground

Chairman Jester described problems experienced this year at the playground with tree removal and aging play equipment. Town Planner Neville presented several options for a renovation of the existing playground including a possible fund raising campaign with a theme for the new play equipment. Mr. Neville asked for direction from the Committee whether to replace one piece of equipment at time over several years under the existing plan, or whether there should be a complete renovation with a new master plan led by a community-wide effort.

Chairman Jester supported a larger community effort that would include the PTA so that parents with children get involved in selecting play equipment for a variety of ages and experiences. Since cost is a big factor to provide safe well designed play systems, it will be necessary to encourage community fundraising. The Town has a playground fund created by Chief Lewis with a current balance of approximately \$8,000 that can be a good start.

Mr. Conklin suggested other community organizations such as the Kiwanis and American Legion which typically like to organize to benefit a project, and perhaps with 5 main play structures there could be a group to sponsor each structure. Other ideas were to contact the Navy Chiefs or Orbital Sciences who might get interested in playground equipment with a nautical or rocket theme. He identified the need for someone to organize interested groups.

Mr. Neville provided early cost information of \$5,000 and \$20,000 per structure depending on the number of play events, and a possible overall goal of \$100,000 for the complete renovation.

Chairman Jester emphasized how important this effort is for Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park because of the heavy use by Island and County residents as well as seasonal visitors. Mr. Howard supported the idea of a complete plan to address the playground area and other issues such as drainage and landscaping. The public was asked to comment.

Ted Daisey offered to help with a citizen group to work on the master plan. He suggested separating the play areas for small children from the basketball courts.

Chairman Jester proposed to schedule a workshop with the Committee and invite individuals and organizations who would like to participate in planning the playground. He suggested other park

improvements that were needed, however it was decided to limit the effort to just the playground area for now. The regular Committee meeting on January 14th was identified as the best time to organize a workshop. Mr. Howard identified Ann Whealton as a person who had served as a great resource to the Town in the past for the previous effort to build the playground.

Mr. Neville described a process for working with information provided by the recreational equipment manufacturer to prepare a preliminary design for review by the working group. Chairman Jester asked for an initial drawing of the park to decide what needs to be done, what are the flooding issues, and how can the needs of all ages be met (backs on benches).

Mr. Howard stated that this plan will give the Mayor and Council food for thought regarding funding and needs for regular maintenance.

Chairman Jester proposed reaching out to interested groups to identify what their part could be and what they would like to do before the January meeting. Kiwanis Club, American Legion, YMCA, Chamber of Commerce were suggested as possible supporters that should be contacted.

- Mr. Howard and Chairman Jester discussed making a recommendation at the next full Council meeting that a citizens working group be established to plan the playground renovation project.

3. DCR Trails Grant

Staff provided information about a grant opportunity that could assist the Town in re-paving the existing asphalt Nature Trail. Since the grant requires a 20% local match and the estimated cost is around \$43,000, the grant would need to be around \$50,000.

- Mr. Conklin motioned, seconded by Mr. Howard to recommend to Town Council the application for a Recreational Trails grant in the amount \$53,750 to include work in-kind by the Public Works Department for the required local match. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Project Report Updates

Committee members discussed various ongoing projects:

Ocean Boulevard Extended

The footbridge over Fowling Gut has been completed and the natural surface trail is open for use. Mr. Conklin complimented the Public Works department on the bridge.

Chairman Jester reported that USFWS is still hoping to award remaining trail grant funds for paving the trail. The committee discussed several ways to advertise the opening of the trail for use including placing an article in the next Town Newsletter. Improvements to Coach's Lane were identified as the next priority so that the trail will connect back to Maddox Boulevard.

Mr. Conklin suggested that placing a removable bollard at the trail entrances may be necessary to prevent people from driving over the new bridge.

CNWR Bike Trail Extension

The Town is working with CNWR to possibly widen the road shoulder bike lanes from AJ's to the traffic circle.

SRTS Multi Use Trail / Hallie Whealton Smith Drive

Mr. Neville reported that the survey and design phase is underway and a preliminary design study will be available for review by the Safe Routes to School Committee in December.

5. Committee Member Comments

Chairman Jester invited members of the public to provide comments.

Donna Leonard supported a Watermans Memorial sculpture located at the Harbor, and repeated her suggestion that the Chamber of Commerce should participate in the Playground project with the Easter Decoy Festival auction as a possible fundraiser. She encouraged the rocketship theme as a way for the community to embrace space tourism.

Ms. Leonard described her family's hopes for the Leonard Park Improvement Fund that currently contains approximately \$4,000. A ramp for non-motorized vehicle launch into Chincoteague Bay was proposed and photos of a floating kayak dock and the end of a low boardwalk from Onancock were shown as an example of what could be done. She stated that this could provide a facility for kayaks, wind surfers and other non-motorized watercraft that did not conflict with other boat ramps and hoped that the facility could be used without a fee or sticker. New picnic tables are also needed.

Mr. Howard asked if this improvement could help with family tourism and the economy. Ms. Leonard stated that this would help to attract more people to the Island. Chairman Jester suggested a kayak around the Island event and getting the Scouts to build picnic tables with donated lumber.

- The Committee agreed with this idea and asked Ms. Leonard to report back to the committee with more information about costs and what would be needed.

ADJOURN:

Mr. Conklin motioned seconded by Mr. Johnson to adjourn.