

## May 25, 2023 – Park Authority Minutes

Meeting called to order at 6:32 pm at The Washington County Building by Ben Casteel.

Present: Ben Casteel - Chairman, Jim Hutton, Claude Worrell, Stuart Wright, Steven Statzer, Jennifer Blankenship & Tony Fetty.

Guests: Jason Berry, Mike Rush, Lucy Phillips, Neal Kilgore, Jerry Grantham.

Absent: Joy Allen

Public Comment: N/A

### Park Authority Manager Report:

1. Trees have been cut down.
2. The grant I was working on through DCR, I got quotes to re-do our trail. The grants are 80-20 match and the quotes to redo our trails was over \$350K
3. Online payment for seasonal sites is up and people really like that.
4. Lights at Sholes are up and running.
5. We mentioned opening the drawing for the middle of the year. I have 6 sites marked down that could be re-entered for the drawing. 54, 56, 59, 60, 62 & 71 are the sites that are open. There are still 31 temporary sites available for rent.

A motion was made to open 6 sites for seasonal drawing that will start June 1, 2023 by Jennifer Blankenship and seconded by Steven Statzers. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Recreation Department Report: Joy Allen was not present.

A Motion was made to approve the April 27, 2023 meeting minutes by Jim Hutton and seconded by Claude Worrell. The Motion Passed 6-0-0.

A motion was made to approve the May payroll and the April Financial Report by Steven Statzer and seconded by Jim Hutton. Motion passed 6-0-0.

### Old Business:

#### A. Mendota Trail Partnership

Jason Berry stated, "The County cannot own the Trail Head in Bristol, VA due to the code of Virginia stating that we cannot own property outside of the county. Once we found this out, we put the break on the gift until Lucy drafted a Deed of Gift."

Lucy Phillips stated, there is a Purchase Agreement that says, The Park Authority will be acquiring the Trail Head by donation from The Mendota Trail Conservancy. The County will own the trail itself, not the Trail Head and take on the responsibility of managing the Trail and Trail Head. The Park Authority will only be the owner. There are restrictions with the trail, walking/running, only. No horses, no motorized vehicles. There is also interest in having the property go to the State in the long run to become a State Park and the State will take over maintenance. There is no guarantee that will happen, but that is a long-term goal.

The Park Authority agreement states that we will agree with owning the Trail Head and will work agreeably with the County on the maintenance of the Trail. If the State does offer to take the property and make it a State Park, the Park Authority will agree with that as well.

Discussion about The Park Authority taking over the Trail Head at The Mendota Trail:

1. Stuart Wright- This agreement suits him.
2. Jason Berry – There will be a bathroom put at the Trail Head and county employees through Kevin Hill will be maintaining the bathroom and sewer.
3. The Mendota Trail Conservancy – Their main goal is to keep the entire thing together and not have it split up between two locations.
4. The Mendota Trail Conservancy - We have had several races on the trail. We recently had a Yeti run and had people fly in from 11 different states.
5. The Mendota Trail Conservancy – We are working on a trussell currently. The last trussells were funded by grants, the original trussells were funded by private funding.
6. Lucy Phillips – We want to go to the Board of Supervisors the first July meeting. The purpose of the purchase agreement is to ensure this will happen.

The Park Authority agreed to move forward with this agreement and will be ready to sign paperwork once it is complete. Everyone agreed.

Before moving forward, Jason introduced Neal Kilgore to the group. Neal is a new part time employee with Washington County who has come on board to work with trails, parks and outdoor recreation.

B. Preliminary Budget Items – Reviewed the budget and discussed what the needs are for the Park Authority in 2023-2024.

New Business:

- A. Welkin Development opportunity to rent their airstreams.

Board Member Action Items:

- a. Ben Casteel – Kayak ramp, job description and drone photos
- b. Jim Hutton –
- c. Jennifer Blankenship –
- e. Claude Worrell –
- f. Steven Statzer
- g. Stuart Wright -

Next scheduled meeting is June 22, 2023, at 6:30 pm at The Washington County Building.

A motion to adjourn by Jennifer Blankenship and seconded by Jim Hutton.  
Motion passed 6-0-0.