

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

December 2, 2013

3:00 p.m.

County Government Center, Building A

1.) Roll Call

Present

Ms. Robin Bledsoe

Mr. Tim O'Connor

Staff Present

Mr. Paul Holt

Ms. Tammy Rosario

Ms. Sue Mellen

Ms. Beth Klapper

Guests Present

Mr. John Carnifax

Ms. Brittany Voll

2.) Minutes

Mr. Tim O'Connor moved to approve the November 14, 2013 minutes.

3.) Old Business

There was no Old Business to discuss.

4.) New Business

a. FY15 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Requests

Mr. Luke Vinciguerra stated that the recommended agenda would be a discussion of the Parks and Recreation CIP requests. Mr. Vinciguerra noted that Mr. John Carnifax, Director of Parks and Recreation, was on hand to answer questions about the division's CIP requests. Mr. Vinciguerra further noted that Ms. Sue Mellen, Assistant Director of FMS, was available to answer any budget questions.

Mr. Vinciguerra stated that the agenda for the meeting on December 3, 2013 would include a presentation from the Williamsburg-James City County Schools. Mr. Vinciguerra noted that a representative from Stormwater would be available as well as representatives from any other divisions who might be needed to answer questions about their CIP applications.

Mr. O'Connor requested that Mr. Carnifax provide a broad overview of the anticipated needs for recreational facilities.

Mr. Carnifax stated that each year the Parks and Recreation Five Year Plan for recreational facilities and programs is updated based on population growth, citizen input, individual park master plans and recommendations in the adopted Comprehensive Plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Virginia Outdoor Plan. CIP requests are based on priorities identified in the Five year Plan.

Mr. Carnifax stated the cost would be \$58 million to build out the facilities designated in all current master plans. Mr. Carnifax noted that three parks, Upper County Park, the Recreation Center Water Tower Site and Little Creek Reservoir, do not yet have a master plan. Mr. Carnifax noted that the process of developing master plans for those parks would begin in 2014.

Mr. Carnifax noted that, going forward, in addition to addressing needed facilities it would be necessary to factor in the cost of maintaining existing and future facilities.

Mr. Carnifax stated that the eastern and western ends of the County have been identified as needing additional facilities.

Mr. Carnifax noted that there has been a focus on improving school athletic facilities to accommodate local clubs on the weekends as a result of the desire to attract revenue generating sports tournaments to the Warhill Sports Complex.

Mr. Carnifax noted that at the direction of County Administration, a feasibility study is in progress for an aquatics center and a gymnasium. Mr. Carnifax further noted that approximately five years ago a community gymnasium had been proposed for the Warhill complex. Design work has been completed; however, there is currently no funding for construction.

Mr. Carnifax stated that ultimately it will be guidance from citizens, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors that will shape plans for future recreational facilities and programs.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired where the Abram Frink, Jr. athletic fields were located.

Mr. Carnifax responded that those fields are located at the James River Elementary School. Mr. Carnifax noted that one of the fields is used regularly by one of the local football organizations. Mr. Carnifax further noted that when the property was originally developed there was a stipulation that the County could not light the fields as long as Carter's Grove was open to the public. Mr. Carnifax noted that there is a need to revisit that stipulation so that the fields can be lighted and put to additional use.

Mr. Carnifax further noted that there is need for a larger passive park or water based facility in that community. A potential project has been identified to convert a portion of the property behind James River Elementary School into a sprayground. Mr. Carnifax further noted that a program was being developed to teach water safety in the lower income communities. Mr. Carnifax noted that the health and life safety programs should be a priority.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired whether the Freedom Park Environmental Education Center was similar to those in other parks that focus on the area and natural habitats.

Mr. Carnifax confirmed and stated that this facility is shown on the park master plan and would be located near Colby Swamp. Mr. Carnifax further stated that this facility would be funded and operated in cooperation with the WJCC School System. Mr. Carnifax noted that the facility would be very similar to the one at Sandy Bottom Park in Hampton.

Ms. Bledsoe requested additional information regarding the emergency generator for the shelter the Abram Frink, Jr. Community Center.

Mr. Carnifax stated that the generator would allow the Community Center to be used as an emergency shelter.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired whether there was a priority order for the Parks and Recreation requests.

Mr. Carnifax stated that the priority would be maintaining and upgrading or improving existing facilities. Mr. Carnifax further stated that reviewing the master plans for the various parks and determining the best location and distribution for the recommended facilities would be a priority as the County's population increases.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired how many revenue generating events have been held at the Warhill Sports Complex.

Mr. Carnifax stated that he did not have that exact number but noted that the number of users and the revenue generated has increased every year.

Mr. Carnifax noted that, to date, the existing facilities at Warhill, supplemented by the school athletic facilities, have been adequate to accommodate both revenue generating tournaments and local sports groups; however, it will be important to upgrade additional existing school athletic facilities to meet future demand.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she had concerns about the condition of the Vermillion house and inquired what the timeframe was for restoring the property.

Mr. Carnifax stated that there has been discussion regarding the property and several options are being considered; however, it will require further input and guidance from the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Mr. O'Connor inquired about the square footage of the proposed Parks and Recreation administrative offices.

Mr. Carnifax noted that staff is currently located in separate buildings which will eventually revert to rental space. This facility would provide permanent office space for administrative staff and program support in a central location. Mr. Carnifax noted that the build out would be done in phases with the administrative offices being first due to an urgent need to vacate the current space.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired when the administrative staff needed to move.

Mr. Carnifax stated that they were supposed to be out last August. Mr. Carnifax stated that he was not certain of the actual deadline.

Mr. O'Connor inquired how passive and active recreation facilities were defined.

Mr. Carnifax stated that generally athletic fields, gymnasiums, and swimming pools were defined as active facilities. Mr. Carnifax further noted that playgrounds and trails could be in both active and passive facilities.

Mr. O'Connor inquired whether project phases were interdependent. For example would the phases for Freedom Park need to be completed in a particular order.

Mr. Carnifax stated that most of the phases were independent and could be completed in any order. Mr. Carnifax further noted that a phase could be moved forward based on emerging need and community support.

Ms. Bledsoe noted that potential changes to the Longhill corridor with additional sidewalks could improve neighborhood connectivity for Freedom Park.

Mr. O'Connor inquired whether the Olde Towne Trail is being reviewed as part of the Longhill Road Corridor Study.

Mr. Carnifax stated that the project is not part of the Corridor Study. Mr. Carnifax noted that Olde Towne Timeshares (now the Colonies at Williamsburg), as a proffer condition, must build part of the Olde Towne Trail which will connect the James City County Recreation Center to the Warhill Sports Complex along the utility corridor and across Route 199. Mr. Carnifax noted that plans were under development for that portion of the trail which would account for approximately 25% of the project.

Ms. Bledsoe noted that the multi-use trail was the most popular topic in citizen input for the Longhill Road Corridor Study.

Mr. Carnifax noted that paved trails are always popular in public surveys. Mr. Carnifax noted that paved trails are more expensive to construct but require less maintenance; while cinder trails are less expensive to construct but have higher maintenance costs. Mr. Carnifax further noted that cinder trails were more popular with runners and walkers.

Mr. O'Connor inquired whether any sports leagues paid a fee to use concession facilities.

Mr. Carnifax stated that local nonprofit partners only pay a security deposit and that the revenue from those facilities is generated by the larger private tournaments. Mr. Carnifax further stated that in the previous year the concession facilities at the Warhill Complex generated over \$130,000 in direct revenue.

Mr. O'Connor noted that he had concerns that potential future changes to the Longhill Road corridor could affect work done on the Olde Towne Trail.

Mr. Carnifax concluded his presentation by providing the Committee with a copy of the Parks and Recreation Annual Report.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired whether applications for funding for design work should be scored only that or on the end result of the entire project.

Mr. Vinciguerra noted that it would make more sense to look at the big picture and consider the end result.

Mr. O'Connor noted that he had some questions related to applications that will be discussed at the next meeting and suggested that the questions could be handled by email or representatives could attend the meeting to discuss their projects.

Mr. O'Connor inquired about the square footage for the General Services administration building and whether replacement of fixture and equipment could be phased rather than done all at once.

Mr. O'Connor inquired if a list could be provided of the individual projects encompassed by the Stormwater Neighborhood Drainage Improvements and Water Quality Improvements application.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired whether the sinkholes in the Fernbrook Subdivision would be addressed by the project.

Mr. O'Connor noted that the application for the fiber optic ring mentioned only the School Board and inquired whether the fiber optic ring will be expanded to the schools.

Mr. Vinciguerra responded that the fiber optic ring would connect the schools, the community centers and the library.

Mr. O'Connor inquired whether the 311 System and the Content Management System (CMS) are integrated.

Mr. Vinciguerra noted that the requests were submitted as separate applications this year, whereas, they were on a combined application previously.

Mr. O'Connor inquired whether the potential need to acquire additional property to construct the General Services Administrative Building is factored in the estimated cost. Mr. O'Connor also inquired why the additional property might be required.

Ms. Bledsoe noted that the Committee members should complete reviewing the applications and the project rankings.

Mr. Vinciguerra requested that the Committee members provide the rankings in advance so they could be compiled for review at the final meeting.

Mr. O'Connor requested clarification on ownership of the James Blair site - whether "CW" is Colonial Williamsburg or the City of Williamsburg.

5.) Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:49 p.m.


Robin Bledsoe, Chair of the Policy Committee