

NOVA Parks
Algonkian Regional Park
47001 Fairway Drive
Sterling, VA 20165

Board Meeting, November 16, 2023
7:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present:

Cate Magennis Wyatt, Chairman
Scott Price
James Bonfils
Michael Nardolilli
Paul Baldino
Douglas Stewart
Paul Ferguson
Dave Gustafson (via Zoom)

Staff Present:

Paul Gilbert, Executive Director
John Bell, Senior Planner
Mike DePue, Planning Administrator
Danielle Endler, HR Administrator
Kelly Gilfillen, Director of Marketing and Communications
Kim McCleskey, Budget Administrator
Brian Nolan, Director of Planning & Development
Chris Pauley, Director of Operations
Anh Phan, Community Engagement Manager
Blythe Russian, Park Operations Superintendent
Lauren Weaver, Director of Finance
Mark Whaley, Park Operations Superintendent
Rachel Doody, Park Manager

CALL TO ORDER:

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A Motion was made by Mr. Bonfils, seconded by Mr. Nardolilli to approve the September 21, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

TEAM BUILDING EXERCISES:

Mr. Gilbert introduced Rachel Doody, Park Manager at Potomac Overlook Regional Park and Winkler Botanical Preserve, to the Board and Ms. Doody started the team building process. Ms. Doody provided a brief overview of her experience in leading team building exercises as well as her current position of Park Manager. The Board members and staff present participated in the team building exercises.

Ms. Magennis Wyatt recognized Ms. Doody and thanked her for organizing the team building event.

REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE:

Mr. Baldino notified the Board that Ms. Magennis Wyatt, Mr. Bonfils, Mr. Nardolilli, and Mr. Stewart all participated in the audit committee meeting on behalf of the Board. The audit is incomplete due to the delays in information from Comerica due to a change in their banking system. Michael Lupton of Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates did a brief presentation to the Audit Committee and answered their questions. The audit is an unmodified positive opinion. There were no finding of problems. Mr. Baldino was very complimentary of staff and their work with the auditor. Board members have 10 days to provide comments/edits to the report. The auditor will then finalize the audit and present it at the January meeting for the Board to approve. Mr. Bonfils made a recommendation to incorporate an IT audit in the next Audit.

ANNUAL TIMELINE OF THE BUDGET PROCESS:

Kim McCleskey, Budget Administrator, presented the annual timeline of the budget process and which stages of the process require Board action. She highlighted the steps in the process starting with Operations developing Fees & Charges which is the basis for the revenue figures for the budget. The Budget meetings with staff take place in January to identify requests for expenses. At the end of January, the personnel, benefit costs, and CPI are reviewed and added to the Budget. By the end of February, the proposed budget is balanced in preparation for the March Board meeting. In April the Budget is finetuned and then presented to the Board for approval in May. Once the Budget is approved, the Budget team puts the Budget in final form and prepares for the GFOA award. The Board receives the final Budget at the July Board meeting.

FEES & CHARGES:

Chris Pauley, Director of Operations, provided an overview of the process Operations uses when creating the fees and charges. The process starts with giving tasks to park staff to review like organizations (public and private) and then NOVA Parks' fees and charges and make recommendations

of what changes should be made. The staff committees (aquatics, events, camping, etc.) work together on the recommendations for fees and charges.

Mr. Pauley provided an overview of which categories have recommended changes and which are remaining the same. Some of the proposed changes are due to increased services and to account for maintenance expense. Mr. Pauley explained what factors have impacted the changes to the fees.

Mr. Baldino asked Mr. Pauley to address the questions that Mr. Gustafson submitted via e-mail.

Does the park that earns the revenue keep the revenue? No, the funds go towards the net revenue for NOVA Parks.

What do these increases mean and what does that equate to in revenues? About 220,000 general admissions in water parks, which means a \$1 increase is an increase of \$220,000 in revenues. This is to combat the increase in expenses which also includes the practice to stay \$1 ahead of minimum wage.

Why do senior rates start at 55 instead of 65 or 67? This is something that has always been in place. There are not that many senior discounts offered.

If we increase one area, can we not decrease another to keep them accessible? Mr. Pauley indicated that we are at a point where we are trying to do that. NOVA Parks is a public government and provides services to the residents of our jurisdictions. NOVA Parks provides many opportunities for residents to use our facilities that are not fee driven.

A motion was made by Mr. Bonfils, seconded by Mr. Stewart, to approve the Proposed Fees and Charges 2024 – 2025 as presented.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

NOVA PARKS ASSETS AT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION:

Lauren Weaver, Director of Finance, provided background information on the Community Foundation. Mr. Gilbert attends the quarterly meetings with the Community Foundation where the investments are discussed. Ms. Weaver interacts with the Finance department at the Community Foundation.

Ms. Weaver provided an overview of the pooled funds managed by the Community Foundation. The Community Foundation tracks the donations as well as any grants that are awarded.

- The NOVA Parks Fund received 44 donations and 2 grants were awarded.
- The NOVA Parks Outdoor Kids Fund received 17 donations and 0 grants were awarded.
 - Ms. Magennis Wyatt asked about the scholarships that were created and if those were funded from the Outdoor Kids Fund. The scholarships were discussed at previous meetings where it was approved to fund scholarships from the general NOVA Parks Fund as well as the Outdoor Kids Fund.
- The 1863 Fund, which is restricted to historical parks, received 5 donations and 0 grants were awarded.

Ms. Magennis Wyatt pointed out that Giving Tuesday is coming up and doing a possible campaign with our Friends Groups to try and drive additional donations to our funds.

Ms. Weaver provided an overview of the Endowments held at the Community Foundation.

- The Winkler Botanical Preserve received an additional \$800,000 from the Winkler Foundation. 1 distribution in the amount of \$120,000 was made to support annual park operations.
- The Capital Endowment is being funded through mitigation banking credits and non-recurring license fees. This Endowment increased by \$765,000 from last year.
- The Temple Hall Farm Endowment took about three years to transfer from NOVA Parks to the Community Foundation. The interest in this Endowment is used to support the operational needs of Temple Hall Farm.

Mr. Stewart asked if there are guidelines on drawdowns. Ms. Weaver confirmed that the drawdowns are part of the Budget process and are approved by the Board when the Budget is approved. Up to 4% can be taken from the Temple Hall Endowment and Winkler Endowment. Up to 15% can be taken from the Capital Endowment Fund.

ACCEPTANCE OF LAND ADJACENT TO THE W&OD TRAIL:

Mike DePue, Planning Administrator, presented an option to accept property through a proffer from Fannie Mae. Fannie Mae had approval to construct two additional buildings on their property. Since commercial real estate is going down, Fannie Mae went through the rezoning process to build residential properties. With this approval, there are more stringent requirements for environmental concerns. Fairfax County and Fannie Mae agreed to offer the land to NOVA Parks as part of a proffer to the rezoning. The offered land is a deciduous forest that provides a buffer between the W&OD Trail and Sunset Hills Road. It also provides habitat protection. Fannie Mae will be required to create a sidewalk next to the proffered property to VDOT standards. The sidewalk will then be handed over to VDOT for maintenance. Fannie Mae will work with NOVA Parks to develop the sidewalk through the previously proffered park land. Environmental reviews have been conducted and nothing was found. The only archaeological aspect is that it is located next to the W&OD Trail.

Ms. Magennis Wyatt asked if we know the scale of the development. Mr. DePue indicated that the proffered land is basically the “shoulder” of the property that Fannie Mae cannot do anything with. Mr. DePue confirmed that staff did not ask for additional proffers specific to NOVA Parks, but Fannie Mae is required to make their trail system, ponds, lakes, etc., open to the public.

Mr. Nardolilli asked about the corner that is not included in the proffer. Mr. DePue stated that the corner is a transmission tower and the entrance feature that NOVA Parks would not want to maintain.

A Motion was made by Mr. Ferguson, seconded by Mr. Baldino, that, subject to staff review and approval of the plat and deed, the Executive Director be authorized to execute the necessary documents to (1) accept the dedication of approximately two acres of land to be added to the W&OD Railroad Regional Park and (2) dedicate .1388 acres of existing park property to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors or VDOT for the construction of a sidewalk along Sunset Hills Road.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

A. Treasurer's Report

APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

A Motion was made by Mr. Baldino, seconded by Mr. Ferguson to approve the Administrative Items.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Mr. Gilbert notified the Board of two upcoming events: NAACP clean up at the Harris Cemetery on November 18 and Catherine Winkler sign unveiling with Alexandria City Council and School Board at Winkler Botanical Preserve on November 28.

Mr. Ferguson thanked the Board for entrusting him to the process of identifying the slate for the upcoming elections. Three years have gone by fast, and elections will be in January. Mr. Ferguson will be reaching out to each Board member to ensure they are in agreement with the slate that is being proposed. The nominating report will be at the January meeting. Mr. Ferguson also wanted to give special thanks to Mr. Baldino for filling in as treasurer when the previous treasurer was not reappointed to the Board.

Mr. Baldino asked the Board to congratulate Mr. Ferguson on his reelection as Clerk of Court for Arlington County and the City of Falls Church.

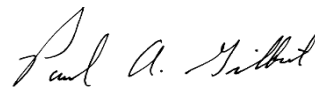
ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mr. Ferguson, seconded by Mr. Bonfils, to adjourn the meeting.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul A. Gilbert, Secretary

Approved by the NOVA Parks Authority Board
on January 18, 2024:



Paul A. Gilbert, Secretary



Sean Kumar, Chairman