

CUMBERLAND COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

February 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes Notes

A meeting of the Cumberland County Recreation Commission (C.C.R.C.) was held on Thursday, February 9, 2023, at The Cumberland County Administration Building in Bridgeton, New Jersey and via Microsoft Teams and/or Teleconference.

Ken Sheppard, Chair (February 2027) *
Chris Wilson, Vice-Chair (September 2025) *
John Fuqua (July 2025) *
Carman Daddario, Jr. (February 2027) *
J.T. Burks (July 2025) *

Commissioner Victoria Lods
Commissioner Donna Pearson

Matthew Pisarski, Department Head *
Omarey Williams, Shared Services Coordinator *
Wanda Riviera, Confidential Assistant *
Matt Horowitz, Recording Secretary *

Guests: Kuan Bowleg

Note: Asterisk () indicates members present at the aforementioned meeting.*

Approval of Minutes Notes – January 12, 2023

A motion to approve the January 12, 2023, meeting minutes was made by Mr. Fuqua. It was seconded by Mr. Wilson and passed unanimously by the Commission.

Sponsorship Requests

Mr. Sheppard explained there were four Sponsorship Requests within the monthly meeting packet submitted on behalf of the Youth Love Movement, the Positive Vibes Community Group, Life Worth Living, and the Vineland Midget Football League.

Mr. Bowleg from the Youth Love Movement—a high school football coach, the vice president of the Holly City Youth Football League, and president of the Youth Love Movement—had reached out to Kelly Redman at the Cumberland County Technical Education Center (CCTEC.) Mr. Bowleg was seeking funding to support football clinics for ages 8-17 every two weeks on Saturdays from tentatively 11-2:00pm. Mr. Bowleg was looking for funds to cover both the cost for use of the facility (\$600.00,) as well as liability insurance (\$140.00.) Following a brief period of discussion amongst the Commission, a

motion to approve the Youth Love Movement's request as made by Mr. Fuqua, seconded by Mr. Daddario, and passed unanimously by the Commission.

Mr. Sheppard said next up was the Positive Vibes Community Group. Mr. Burks said the Group was getting ready to kick off both their Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) basketball and fall ball camps. Mr. Burks explained one of the organization's main goals was to keep the programs' registration costs low and affordable to help bolster applications. Mr. Burks said the \$750.00 would be a big help in offsetting these costs. A motion to approve the Positive Vibes Community Group's request was made by Mr. Daddario, seconded by Mr. Fuqua, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Mr. Burks abstained from the vote.

Mr. Fuqua of Life Worth Living had submitted a request for \$750.00 to help fund their upcoming two-day Youth vs. Guns, Gangs & Drugs basketball event. Mr. Fuqua said he and Mr. Burks had been hosting the event together for the past four years. It would be made up of various games hosted throughout the weekend for children ages 12-14 and 15-18. Mr. Fuqua said they would have food vendors, and everything would be free for the entire community to feed up to 600 attendees. Families would be able to pay tribute to their loved ones who lost their lives in various ways over the weekend. A motion to approve Life Worth Living, Inc.'s request was made by Mr. Daddario, seconded by Mr. Wilson, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Mr. Fuqua abstained from the vote.

Mr. Wilson, the president of the Vineland Midget Football League, was requesting \$750.00 on behalf of the organization. Mr. Wilson said these funds would go towards equipment needs, as 100 new helmets were needed and 100 additional helmets would need to be re-certified: this would cost roughly \$21,000.00. Mr. Wilson said the \$750.00 would go towards these necessary equipment costs for 2023. A motion to approve the Vineland Midget Football League's request was made by Mr. Fuqua, seconded by Mr. Daddario, and passed unanimously by the Commission. Mr. Wilson abstained himself from the vote.

Discussion of Annual Kids' Fishing Derby Use Fee

Mr. Williams explained staff were currently making preparations for the 41st annual Kids' Fishing Derby to be held on May 7, 2023, at Mary Elmer Lake. However, Mr. Williams had received communication from the City of Bridgeton notifying they had updated their fee schedule; this would include a \$150.00 fee for the day at Mary Elmer Lake. Mr. Williams said he would be requesting a fee reduction or waiver, but wanted to get the Commission's consent to pay the fee, if not. A motion to apply the \$150.00 fee, if needed, was made by Mr. Daddario, seconded by Mr. Sheppard, and passed unanimously by the Commission.

Discussion of The Jake's Law Grant

Mr. Pisarski explained the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) would soon be launching a new grant funding program to construct all-inclusive playgrounds within each county. Cumberland County was intending to apply and the County Commissioners had selected the lawn area in front of the Cumberland County Library. He said the City of Vineland was doing their own all-inclusive playground, as well, that was

being separately funded. Mr. Pisarski shared Vineland's design and budget, which was comparable to the County's proposed budget of \$750,000.00. It would be all-inclusive for both physical and sensory disabilities for children from the ages of toddlers to 12 years old.

He was hoping the grant award would be somewhere within the range of \$750-850,000.00 with a 25% match to be covered by funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA.) For those in attendance in-person, Mr. Pisarski shared concept plans and aerial photos of the 40,000 square foot location area in front of the library. Mr. Pisarski stated that he was under the impression that each county who applied and met the minimum criteria, would receive funding. He added this would be the first wheelchair-accessible/all-inclusive playground within the City of Bridgeton.

Mr. Pisarski said there would be a public hearing held at the next Commissioners' meeting on February 28, 2023 at the Maurice River Municipal Building in Leesburg. Mr. Pisarski said the Library was chosen as one of four possible locations because of its close proximity to the nearby underserved populations at Tips Trailer Park, the Bridgeton Public Charter School, the NJ Transit Bus Route 553 running nearby, and the largest number of disabled persons served within a five-mile radius all impacted by this one location.

Discussion of The Giles Street Park Project

Mr. Pisarski said the Giles Street Park Project was currently in-process. Staff and administration at the County thought a half-field soccer practice field complete with a soccer goal, netting, re-sodding, and striping would be great for the community in the neighboring area. He referenced aerial photography and a concept plan included within the meeting packet. Mr. Pisarski explained it would also include picnic tables, a trash receptacle, and perhaps a small piece of playground equipment.

Staff would be asking the Recreation Commission to cover the costs of the soccer goal and backstop netting at roughly \$5,000.00. It would, hopefully, all be installed and unveiled by the summertime. Mr. Pisarski said some of the money would likely be pulled from funding allotted for sponsorships. Mr. Williams added the amount of sponsorship awards could be reduced, if need be, as well.

Mr. Fuqua expressed concerns that the budget for the Commission had been talked about being increased over a year ago. He said former Commissioner Director Darlene Barber had promised a \$2 million budget increase out of \$48 million awarded to the County from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA.) Mr. Fuqua said the \$2 million award could go towards both the soccer half-field and the all-inclusive park in front of the County Library, in addition to many other projects. Mr. Pisarski said he would check on this. The Commission felt it may be tough to pull the \$5,000.00 from the existing budget. Mr. Sheppard suggested to look into applying for additional grant funding and re-circulate the existing budget, as well.

Discussion of The Maurice River Township Bikeways Grant

Mr. Pisarski said the Bikeways Grant was funding received by Maurice River Township, which was included within their meeting packet and asked the Commission members to, please, look it over in their spare time prior to the next meeting.

Planning Department Updates

Mr. Pisarski said the Jake's Place all-inclusive playground grant application was taking up a lot of Departmental staff time. He added the grant was due on March 1, 2023. Mr. Pisarski said even with the \$2 million of ARPA funding, staff would still be actively pursuing grants for the Fairgrounds and comprehensively for other upcoming Recreation projects throughout the County.

Mr. Pisarski said he also agreed that the Giles Street Park Project could be funded through ARPA, as well. However, this would be something that would need to get final approval from the County Commissioners. He said staff would ask the Commissioners to directly address this issue at the next Recreation Commission meeting.

County Commissioner Comments

Mr. Sheppard said he did not see any County Commissioners present on the meeting/call. Mr. Williams added that Commissioner Pearson sent her regrets because she had another meeting scheduled at the exact same time and she was very supportive of the Jake's Place Park project. He said Commissioner Pearson was also excited they may be attaining an additional source of grant funding for the Recreation Commission's continued efforts.

Recreation Commissioners Comments

Mr. Wilson stated he wanted to commend both the County and the Recreation Commission for the Jake's Place Park initiatives in both Bridgeton & Vineland. Mr. Wilson thought it was great that Mr. Pisarski suggested applying for more grants and he wanted to remind the Commission members their goal was to 10X the budget. Mr. Wilson also wanted to thank the Commission for the sponsorship for the helmets for the Vineland Midget Football League.

Mr. Fuqua said he quickly wanted to add that Life Worth Living was actively working towards getting a rec. center built within the City of Bridgeton. He explained they had blueprints completed and had recently received a \$10 million commitment. Mr. Fuqua stated the whole project would cost about \$21 million and it was still roughly three years away from coming to fruition. Mr. Fuqua said he was very passionate about bringing a rec. center back to Bridgeton because when he was growing up, the local rec. centers helped keep him and his friends out of trouble. Mr. Fuqua said the location was still to be determined, but he wanted it to be located within Bridgeton City limits.

Mr. Daddario thanked everyone for a great job well-done!

Correspondence

Mr. Williams added there was one piece of correspondence contained within the monthly meeting packet, article on the Bikeways Grant. Mr. Wilson wished Isiah “Pop” Pacheco best of luck in the Super Bowl.

Old Business/New Business

Mr. Williams mentioned the ongoing initiative concerning CPR training amongst the local sports leagues. He said he had spoken with staff at Inspira and had received a contact for CPR/AED trainings. Mr. Williams would circulate additional information shortly.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the February 9, 2023, Recreation Commission meeting was made by Mr. Daddario, seconded by Mr. Wilson, and passed unanimously by the Commission.