

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Fayette County Parks and Recreation Department provides a gateway to a healthy, prosperous and connected community. Our citizens personally benefit in many ways by utilizing facilities or engaging in programs offered through the Fayette County Parks and Recreation Department. It could be as simple as taking a walk on one of our walking paths, engaging in a class at one of our facilities, participating in a sports league, or just receiving the benefits of breathing clean air in our parks.

Our Department understands parks are crucial in the role of preserving natural resources, protecting open spaces, and connecting citizens to nature. We also understand our various programs are a source of economic activity and job creation for the community.

We are on the forefront of improving the health and wellness of our citizens by offering programs which help to combat obesity, physical inactivity, and unhealthy habits. Research shows that recreation programs in parks change the way that people interact. By providing a community with ways to get involved and stay invested, park programming such as ours offers better health and increased well-being for our citizens. There is a well-known link between the physical activity with parks and recreation programs and reduction in chronic diseases. Mental health issues like depression, anxiety and stress can be reduced by spending more time in parks and green spaces. Therefore, a conclusion can be made that parks such as ours is a low-cost, fun filled prescription for our citizens' health and well-being.

Our staff works hard every day to ensure all members of our community have access to programs, facilities, places, and spaces which makes our citizens' lives and our community great.

In 2015, staff administered 585 different classes and programs. These programs included such things as fitness classes, adult programs, cultural/nature programs, youth programs, and therapeutic programs. Approximately 4200 individuals took advantage of the variety of classes and programs. Of course, this number does not reflect the number of children who run and play in our parks or the individuals who are utilizing the walking trails, tennis courts, basketball courts, etc.

The Department also facilitates picnic reservations in the various parks. In 2015, our Department began reserving the pavilions at both Lake Horton and Lake McIntosh. 47 individuals reserved Lake McIntosh pavilions for family or friend gatherings. 52 individuals reserved Lake Horton pavilions for various gatherings. As a department, 311 reservations were taken during the year at all our parks. This was an increase of 54% from last year mainly due to the addition of the Lake McIntosh and Lake Horton pavilions. During the reservation time periods, it was estimated 13,037 utilized these

pavilions. To help offset the maintenance cost needed for these pavilion reservations, \$12,573.00 in revenue was generated.

INITIATIVES

- In an effort to provide citizens with the safest and securest environment possible at the various park locations, Fayette County began the process of installing security cameras in the parks. The main focus of the security camera project is to enhance the overall safety and security in the parks and deter vandalism. Cameras were installed at Kiwanis Park in 2015. Efforts are already underway to install cameras at Kenwood Park and Brooks Park in 2016.
- Staff began administering the annual parking pass policy for the parks which charge a parking fee. This policy will allow non-residents an opportunity to save money by purchasing an annual parking pass instead of the daily parking fee. 34 parking passes were issued in 2015 which resulted in a revenue of \$1,550.00
- The Board of Commissioners approved staff's recommendation to implement a two-year corporation/business parking decal that permits non-county employees of corporations and businesses in Fayette County to use both Lake McIntosh Park and Lake Horton Park Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The cost for the two year decal is \$1.00. After the Board's approval, 86 individuals took advantage of the benefit.
- The Department began implementation on a branding and marketing plan. Therefore, all brochures and flyers are being published and distributed so patrons will easily be able to recognize them.
- A recommendation was made and approved by the Board of Commissioners to change the makeup of the Recreation Commission to an at large format.
- A recommendation was made and approved by the Board of Commissioners to adopt the new proposed Kenwood Park Master Plan. The new plan includes development of a pavilion, restroom, parking lot, tot lot/playground, fitness stations, walking trails, and multipurpose field. Staff began moving forward in 2015 to develop the new plan with hopes of completing the facilities in 2016.
- In 2015, the background policy was revised and implemented. The policy combined two forms into one form in order to streamline the process. The policy also better defined non-approved offenses.
- A Co-Sponsored Tournament Agreement was developed to help protect the County, Youth Athletic Associations, and Tournament Organizers when various sport tournaments are hosted. This agreement defines which entity is responsible for which function and the various fees associated with those functions. Implementation of the Agreement will begin in January 2016.
- An Inflatable Ride Policy was developed to provide information to those wanting to utilize inflatables (e.g. slides and "bounce houses") on proper operating procedures/guidelines to help minimize risk and liability issues for the participants, the individuals operating the inflatables, and the county.

- With the implementation of the new park reservation policy last year, a Special Event Form was developed. The new form allows the Special Event Committee to make informed decisions on the various requests submitted.
- A New Accident Report Form was developed to aide staff, volunteers, and youth association board members in reporting an accident within the park. The new form will be utilized beginning in January 2016.
- Staff was afforded the opportunity to attend the Darkness To Light, Stewards of Children Training. As a direct result of this training, staff is developing a Code of Conduct Policy for all staff, coaches, and volunteers to abide by when working with youth. The policy should be completed and implemented in 2016.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The Parks and Recreation Department was able to make park improvements to ensure the citizens continue to have quality facilities.

These improvements included:

- Installation of a park solar waste and recycling compactor at Kiwanis Park and one at McCurry Park.
- Purchase of a minibus for adult trip participants and Special Olympic athletes.
- Continuation of the Phase II Kenwood Park erosion control plan. In 2015, the areas completed included the front entrance drive, the upper tennis courts, and by the first curve near the track.
- Installation of a new entrance and exit sign at Kenwood Park.
- Installation of new landscaping at the entrance of Kenwood Park.
- Re-surfacing tennis and basketball courts at Kenwood Park.
- Adding pickleball lines to the tennis courts at Kenwood Park.
- Installation of upgraded water fountains on the outside of all restroom facilities at Kenwood Park.
- Installation of lighting upgrades to Kiwanis Park and new lights for baseball field #9.
- Conversion of baseball fields 2 and 3 at Kiwanis Park from single age group utilization to multiple age group utilization.
- Replacement of two scoreboards at Kiwanis Park field #1 and field #3.
- Turf planning McCurry Park Soccer field #23.
- Finished installation of the light upgrades to McCurry Park Soccer Field #4 and Softball Field #6.
- Completion of erosion control work at McCurry Park Softball Field #7.
- Installation of new fencing around McCurry Park Football Field #2.
- Installation of new restroom partitions at McCurry Football Facility.

Some of these improvements developed cost saving measures through the utilization of working with the Public Works Department and the Grounds Maintenance Department.

Due to the staff efforts in these two departments as well as their equipment, costs for some of these projects were kept to material use only.

PARTNERSHIPS

In 2015, the Parks and Recreation Department continued to foster partnerships with various organizations. With the need to continue cost savings for our citizens, volunteerism and partnerships is imperative. We continue to serve thousands of youth through the partnerships with six different Youth Athletic Associations. Almost 4000 youth participated in the various youth association sport leagues. Estimated revenue generated by these associations in 2015 totaled over \$39,000.00.

We also continue to collaborate with the Fayette County Board of Education, so that the citizens have the opportunity to participate in indoor recreation activities.

In an effort to keep the youth of our community safe while participating in our programs, background checks were completed on any adult who was coaching or instructing the children. Through the partnership with the Sheriff's Office and 911, the Parks and Recreation Department was able to complete 927 background checks.

We also continue to collaborate with the Court System to utilize court-ordered community service workers for cleaning recreation facilities, maintaining park cleanliness, painting, and various other duties as needed. A total of 319 hours were clocked in by these workers. Through these community service workers and staff's efforts, facilities continue to be well stocked, clean, and safe for the patrons at a cost saving measure of at least \$2,313.00.

Also in 2015, the Parks and Recreation Department continued its partnership with Fayette Piedmont Hospital along with many other nonprofit entities to help make Fayette County a stronger and healthier community. Together we are able to offer programs which will help fight obesity, heart disease, cancer, and inactivity among our citizens.

As we move forward, staff will continue to serve and foster partnerships that will allow us to meet the needs of the community individually and cooperatively.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes Parks and Recreation is an essential service and valued asset that positively impacts the quality of life the Fayette County Citizens enjoy. Therefore, staff will continue to evaluate the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the services, programs, and facilities that the Parks and Recreation Department offers. Moving forward together with citizens, volunteers, and other county entities will help foster a livable sustainable community that everyone can enjoy.