

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Fayette County Parks and Recreation Department provides services which enhance the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens. Members of our community benefit in many ways from these services either by utilizing one of our park facilities or by engaging in programs offered through our department. It could be as simple as taking a walk on one of our walking trails, learning something new in a class, participating in a sports league, exploring the arts, or just receiving the benefits of breathing clean air in our parks. All of which are essential in promoting a quality lifestyle for the community.

In 2016, staff administered 496 different classes and programs. These programs included such things as fitness classes, adult programs, cultural/nature programs, youth programs, and therapeutic programs. Approximately 3800 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 pavilion reservations in the various parks. During the year, 268 reservations were taken. It was estimated 12,456 individuals utilized these pavilions. To help offset the maintenance cost needed for these pavilion reservations, a reservation fee is charged. At the end of last year, an analysis was conducted on expenses incurred as a result of pavilion reservations. In April, the Board of Commissioner approved an increase in the pavilion reservation fees. The implementation of the new fees began September 1st. Therefore in 2016, the department noticed an increase in revenue of 29% over last year to help offset the operational cost for the various reservations.

INITIATIVES

- In an effort to provide citizens with a fun family oriented community event, Fayette County held a Hot Air Balloon Festival in June. While the weather didn't exactly cooperate given the high temperatures of the day, families, friends, residents, and visitors alike enjoyed the event. Over 10,000 people decided to spend their day at the festival. License tags abounded for out of county visitors and several neighboring states. Fayette County departments, vendors, and scores of volunteers did an amazing job for the event that bordered on Air Show attendance. However, with any new large event, several opportunities to improve upon were presented and are being corrected for a similar event in June 2017.
- The Board of Commissioners approved the Recreation Commission and staff's recommendation to enter into a Youth Athletic Association Agreement with the Peachtree Rowing Club to provide Rowing Activities at Lake McIntosh. This agreement would be the same as the agreements established with other sport associations within the County. In all of these unique partnerships, the County provides resources to construct and maintain facilities and the sports organizations administer the sport program. In 2017, the County constructed a gravel pad and fenced in storage area for the rowing program. Grand Opening activities were

- held in July with an attendance of upwards to 250 people. Many of whom were visitors to Lake McIntosh for the first time. Since beginning in July, 196 members of the community have participated in programming, including single-day Learn-To-Row activities, Late-Summer camps, Fall youth pre-competitive rowing programs, adult recreation rowing, and corporate team building programs.
- The Board of Commissioners approved staff's recommendation to accept a donation from private citizens, businesses, and community leaders for the installation of a Kenwood Park Monument and Memorial Garden in honor of late Commissioner Pota Coston. Installation of the Monument and Memorial Garden is proposed to take place in 2017.
 - The Parks and Recreation Department obtained a grant from Coweta Fayette EMC for 5 handheld lightning Detectors. These devices can detect lightning from a distance prior to its arrival at the various recreation sites. The device is utilized by a trained individual that monitors the weather for lighting and then informs officials about impending lightning to ensure the safety of participants and spectators.

AWARDS

- The Georgia Parks and Recreation Association 4th District awarded Fayette County the 2016 Special Events Award for the Fayette County Hot Air Balloon Festival. This award recognizes outstanding special events that occur no more than once annually.

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 new parking lot at Brooks Park
- Completed site plans, environmental surveys, and topographical surveys for Kenwood Park Phase II
- Completed grading for Kenwood Park Phase II
- Installed cameras at Kenwood Park
- Installed new flooring at Kiwanis Park Activities House
- Mineral bonded and restriped front parking lot at Kiwanis Park Activities House
- Replaced safety netting at Kiwanis Park Fields #3, #4, and #8
- Replaced outfield fencing at Kiwanis Park field #2
- Refurbished dugouts at Kiwanis Park fields #3 and #4
- Installed player benches at Kiwanis Park tennis courts #1 and #4
- Replaced windscreens and yellow fence top at Kiwanis baseball fields, Brooks Park, and McCurry Park softball fields

- Painted foul poles at Kiwanis baseball fields, Brooks Park, and McCurry Park softball fields
- Turf planned McCurry Park football field #1, soccer field #4, #6, #7
- Refurbished restroom stalls at Kiwanis Park lower restrooms, McCurry Park Soccer and Picnic Areas

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

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.

In 2016, the Parks and Recreation Department formed a partnership with the Fayette County Animal Welfare and Control Department to provide mobile dog and cat wellness clinics in the parks once a month.

We continue to serve thousands of youth through the partnerships with six different Youth Athletic Associations. Almost 3800 youth participated in the various youth association sport leagues. Estimated revenue generated by these associations in 2016 totaled over \$30,000.00.

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 adults 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 678 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 268 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 \$1,943.00.

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.