



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County

FAIRFAX COUNTY ATHLETIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

JULY 27, 2020

MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

LINK TO VIDEO OF THE MEETING:

[July 27 Athletic Council Meeting](#)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Marcia Pape Daniels, Braddock District
Mark O'Meara, Braddock District, Alternate
Brian Luwis, Dranesville District, Alternate
Lisa Mickey, Lee District
Barbara Lowrey, Mason District
Lester Munson, Mount Vernon District
Stephen McLaughlin, Providence District
Michael Thompson Jr., Springfield District
Gary Flather, Sully District
Katherine Quinn, Member-At-Large
Jeff Stein, Town of Clifton
Roland Taylor, Town of Herndon
Rob Hahne, Baseball Council
Suzy Willemssen, Fast Pitch Softball Council
Mark Meana, Football Council
Mary Ann Wagner, Lacrosse Council
Carl Coan, Adult Softball Council
Lula Bauer, Soccer Council
Chuck Pruitt, Volleyball Council
Rob Baily, Volleyball Council, Alternate
Jenni Cantwell, Women's Sports

COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Chris Leonard, Director, Neighborhood and Community Services
Keisha Dotson, Division Director, Neighborhood and Community Services
Karen Avvisato, Athletic Services Manager, Neighborhood and Community Services
Mark Martino, Branch Manager, Neighborhood and Community Services
Jason Shelton, Analyst, Neighborhood and Community Services
Michael Thompson Jr., Fairfax County Park Authority Board
Kurt Louis, Director of Park Operations Division, Fairfax County Park Authority
Bill Curran, Director of Student Activities, Fairfax County Public Schools
John Chapman, Community Use Specialist, Fairfax County Public Schools

2020 Council Members

Magisterial Representatives:

Marcia M. Pape Daniels
Braddock District

Gregory Beckwith
Dranesville District

James Elder
Hunter Mill District

Lisa Mickey
Lee District

Barbara R. Lowrey
Secretary
Mason District

Lester Munson
Mount Vernon District

Stephen McLaughlin,
Chairman
Providence District

Michael Thompson, Jr.
Springfield District

Gary Flather
Sully District

Katherine Quinn
Member-At-Large

Vacant
Diversity-At-Large

Town Representatives:

Jeffrey E. Stein
Town of Clifton

Roland Taylor
Town of Herndon

Sam Althoff
Town of Vienna

Sports-Specific Representatives:

Rob Hahne
Baseball Council

Suzy Willemssen
Fast Pitch Softball Council

Carl A. S. Coan, III
Adult Softball Council

Steve Bergstrom
Basketball Council

Mark Meana,
Football Council

Mary Ann Wagner
Lacrosse Council

Lula Bauer
Soccer Council

Chuck Pruitt
Volleyball Council

Jenni Cantwell
Vice Chairman
Women's Sports

Non-Voting Members:

Michael Thompson
Park Authority

Kurt Louis
Park Authority

Melanie Meren
School Board

William Curran
Fairfax County Public Schools

Executive Agency:

Christopher A. Leonard
Director
Neighborhood and Community Services

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Gregory Beckwith, Dranesville District
 James Elder, Hunter Mill District
 Lisa Mickey, Lee District
 Roland Taylor, Town of Herndon
 Sam Althoff, Town of Vienna
 Jenni Cantwell, Women's Sports Programs

GUESTS:

Eric Kulczycky, Visit Fairfax
 Matt McMahon, Fairfax Ultimate
 Jeremy Purcell, President, Fairfax Athletics
 Jeff Diehl, Chantilly Youth Association
 Michelle Dolansky, Braddock Road Youth Club

MEETING OPENING

Mr. McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll was called, and a quorum was present.

CITIZENS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

None

CHAIRMAN REPORT

Mr. McLaughlin reported that he had distributed a reference to the Governor's FAQs that clarified what can occur in Phase 3 regarding competition and contact.

STATUS REPORT FROM COUNTY REPRESENTATIVESNCS

Mr. Martino stated that NCS have issued field permits in accordance with the [Forward Virginia Phase 3 Guidelines for Recreational Sports](#).

NCS field monitors are out observing if groups are abiding by social distancing guidelines and reporting back to staff. For the most part the youth organizations are doing a good job abiding by the CDC and state guidelines. Most of what is occurring are conditioning and drills, however NCS does know that competitive games are occurring with field hockey, lacrosse, and soccer. NCS have received emails from concerned citizens asking why field use is permitted. NCS explains they reach out to the groups and reiterate the importance of abiding by the guidelines. Adult organizations have experienced the most issues following guidelines. Adult groups have been playing games with spectators on sidelines that are not social distancing. NCS is also seeing a lot of walk-on groups that are not abiding by guidelines.

Mr. Leonard reiterated the importance to follow the CDC and state guidelines. He informed the Council that Prince George's County began issuing tickets to field users not abiding by social distancing guidelines. Mr. Leonard does not want Fairfax County to get to that point and has elevated all complaints and concerns to the Health Department for their input. Mr. Leonard informed the Council of the Virginia High School League's decision to postpone the fall sports season and adopt a condensed schedule that will start in December and include a fall, winter,

Fairfax County Athletic Council
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and spring sport season. Details on the new VHSL schedule can be found at [VHSL Sports Announcement](#).

Mr. Leonard stressed the need for youth to have both physical and mental outlets, but in sports that involve close contact groups need to be mindful of the guidelines which may result in no competitive games. NCS does not want to pull field permits for groups not following guidelines, but reiterated it needs the Council's assistance to ensure all field use is safe.

Mr. Thompson inquired if Fairfax County had different guidelines than other jurisdictions in Virginia. Mr. Leonard stated the guidelines apply to all jurisdictions in the Commonwealth. Mr. Thompson reported that he had seen pictures of lacrosse tournaments occurring in other parts of Virginia so there may be some confusion and different interpretations of the guidelines.

Mr. Thompson suggested that soccer may have received approval from the Governor's office to proceed with games and scrimmages which also may be causing confusion. Mr. Leonard reiterated that the Health Department directs the County officials to the Governor's FAQs and competition that involves close contact must be avoided.

Mr. Leonard acknowledged that pulling group's permits would create more walk-on use which is what we want to avoid. If we are permitting the fields and there is an issue, NCS can see who was scheduled at the time and handle the issue appropriately.

Ms. Bauer reported the soccer community had received approval from the Governor's office that soccer was approved to play competitive games. Ms. Bauer informed the Council that Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA) sent out guidelines for phase 3 which stated matches are permitted in phase 3. There have been Soccer tournaments, summer leagues, and games occurring over the summer.

Mr. Thompson requested the VYSA document referenced be distributed to the Council. The document can be found here [VYSA Return to Play](#)

Mr. Meana inquired if the guidelines differentiated between youth and adults? NCS stated that it has not seen any age differentials in the guidelines, so they apply to everyone

Mr. Leonard explained the challenge is the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has classified soccer as a high-risk sport and VHSL has adopted the same thing. The understanding was phase 2 would be more drill work and conditioning, and phase 3 socially distanced sports such as baseball and softball could resume games. Sports that are not socially distanced and have close contact would continue with drill work and conditioning. NCS wants to give groups a chance to adapt to the CDC and state guidelines. Mr. McLaughlin acknowledged that the Council needs a definitive answer if soccer competition is permitted in phase 3 and needs to be resolved before the fall season.

Mr. Flather asked if the County determines which sports are permitted in phase 3 or if it was up to the user groups' interpretation? Is there a definition from CDC or state guidelines that tell us what sports are close contact permitted in phase 3? It is important to be consistent with NCAA and VHSL, as well as the Health Department.

Mr. Hahne clarified in his conversation with the Governor's office that close contact sports are sports where you guard somebody or play defense, but he was unsure whether the definition has evolved since his conversation.

Mr. Stein stated that he was receiving inquiries regarding opening registration for various sports and was hoping for clarification if he should proceed with opening registration and if so, for which sports. Mr. Stein also inquired what threshold or benchmarks need to be met to move to phase 4.



Mr. Leonard stated that the Governor was asked the question regarding phase 4 during his most recent press conference and he would not commit to any timeline. Mr. Leonard stressed the need for youth to engage in sports as it is beneficial for both physical and mental health. Baseball and softball seem to be fine to resume competitive games. However, be mindful of close contact sports when opening registration.

Ms. Wagner stated that guidelines are not rules and inquired how the guidelines were being enforced. Ms. Wagner suggested it seems like phase 3 is more restrictive than previous phases and expressed frustration of the vague guidelines and multiple interpretations. Groups do not want to lose permits, but the guidelines are unclear of what can and cannot occur on fields. Mr. Leonard understands the frustration and hopes to gather feedback from the Council members to have the Board of Supervisors and Health Department weigh in. Mr. Leonard explained it is hard having games for certain sports when the NCAA and VHSL are not playing this fall.

Mr. Munson stated that he hoped with the VHSL decision to postpone fall sports, everyone would follow the guidelines and stay safe so that the high school seasons can be salvaged. There is a goal in sight with the new VHSL model and it is in everyone's best interest to be safe.

Ms. Bauer explained that soccer was not only permitted for matches, but there are several protocols they must abide by including staggered scheduling, sanitization stations, limits on number of spectators and identifying separate entrance and exit points. The leagues and organizations are strictly enforcing these protocols to ensure the safety of all.

Mr. Flather echoed Ms. Wagner's comments that there are no clear-cut rules on what is and is not acceptable. Organizations want to operate and ensure safety but need clear cut rules as the current guidelines can have many interpretations.

Mr. Jeremy Purcell, President of Fairfax Athletics (FXA), explained the governor's office stated soccer games were acceptable, regardless of youth or adult. Since July 8 FXA has played 603 games by roughly 8,000 players. One team captain had a player email that they had a COVID-19 diagnosis from someone in their household, however FXA has been fortunate and believes contact tracing would have traced back to games if there was a spike in positive cases. Players are thankful for ability to get out and see friends, as well as engage in physical activity. Mr. Purcell acknowledged that not all participants were following social distancing guidelines at the beginning of the restart. The league sent 2-3 emails a day to players and referees to remind them to follow all guidelines. FXA instituted a 3-strike policy for any social distancing violations and acknowledge there was certainly a learning curve for all. More players are wearing masks on the field and sidelines and teams are doing a better job social distancing on the sidelines. Mr. Purcell closed by echoing the need for clarification and guidance of what can occur on fields.

Mr. Leonard stated it is very clear we need a decision in Fairfax County on what we are doing as there is too much ambiguity and interpretation with the current guidelines.

Mr. Thompson inquired if NCS and FCPS were looking at rethinking the current season model to accommodate a sport like football in the spring? Space at school facilities may be limited due to the new high school sports model. Mr. Leonard explained that NCS and FCPS has met to discuss. Mr. Thompson requested NCS send out any updates from Governor, so Council is aware where County stands. NCS confirmed they will send out pertinent updates.

Mr. Meana reiterated the need for a decision of what is and is not permitted to occur. There is too much confusion and different interpretations of guidelines.

Ms. Pape stated the if VHSL, a statewide governing body, decided to postpone fall sports, why would the County go against that? Mr. Curran stated that he can only speak for FCPS, but with a risk of a COVID-19 spike in the fall and schools going to a full virtual learning to start, it was counterintuitive to have sports in the fall. The best opportunity to preserve a chance at salvaging all 3 sport seasons was to delay until December.



FCPS

Mr. Curran reported that FCPS had taken a strict approach to student athlete work outs. All student athletes must receive a temperature check before they exit their vehicle. All activities are supervised by trained coaches and have received great feedback from coaches, parents, and student athletes.

FCPA

Mr. Louis reported FCPA staff were working on fields for permitted use and are being supplemented by contractors since FCPA is currently short staffed.

Mr. Louis reviewed the following FCPA Projects:

- Hooes Road Park field light project starting soon
- Spring Lane Park Futsal / Tennis / Pickleball court open in 1-2 weeks
- Lillian Carey court repair and resurface open by end of week

Mr. Thompson reminded the Council that FCPA will be moving forward with the 2020 bond. Information on the 2020 Park Bond can be found at [2020 Park Bond](#)

Mr. Flather inquired if the synthetic turf and track replacements at Centreville HS and Westfield HS were completed and available for community use. Mr. John Chapman, Community Use Specialist with FCPS stated he would check on the status and get back to Mr. Flather with an update.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully,

Barbara R. Lowrey, Secretary

