



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

March 16, 2022

MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

LINK TO VIDEO OF THE MEETING:

[Fairfax County Athletic Council Meeting](#)

[Recording - March 16, 2022 - YouTube](#)

2022 Council Members

Magisterial Representatives:

Marcia M. Pape Daniels

Braddock District

Gregory Beckwith

Dranesville District

Jeremy Lee

Hunter Mill District

Lisa Mickey

Secretary

Lee District

Barbara R. Lowrey

Mason District

Lester Munson

Mount Vernon District

Stephen McLaughlin,

Providence District

Michael Thompson, Jr.

Springfield District

Gary Flather

Vice Chairman

Sully District

Katherine Quinn

Member-At-Large

Marc Fernandes

Diversity-At-Large

Town Representatives:

Jeffrey E. Stein

Town of Clifton

Roland Taylor

Town of Herndon

Tom Hanton

Town of Vienna

Sports-Specific

Representatives:

Rob Hahne

Baseball Council

Suzy Willemssen

Fast Pitch Softball Council

Vacant

Adult Softball Council

Steve Bergstrom

Basketball Council

Mark Meana

Football Council

Mary Ann Wagner

Lacrosse Council

Lula Bauer

Chairman

Soccer Council

Rob Bailey

Volleyball Council

Jenni Cantwell

Women's Sports

Non-Voting Members:

Michael Thompson

Park Authority

Kurt Louis

Park Authority

Megan McLaughlin

School Board

William Curran

Fairfax County Public Schools

Executive Agency:

Lloyd Tucker

Director

Neighborhood and Community Services

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Marcia Pape Daniels, Braddock District
Mark O'Meara, Braddock District, Alternate
Gregory Beckwith, Dranesville District
Lisa Mickey, Lee District
Barbara Lowrey, Mason District
Lester Munson, Mount Vernon District
Bob Kirk, Mount Vernon District, Alternate
Stephen McLaughlin, Providence District
Michael Thompson Jr., Springfield District
Gary Flather, Sully District
Annmarie Swope, Member-At-Large, Alternate
Roland Taylor, Town of Herndon
Tom Hanton, Town of Vienna
Ted Hollingsworth, Football Council, Alternate
Mary Ann Wagner, Lacrosse Council
Lula Bauer, Soccer Council
Trish Moxie, Soccer Council, Alternate
Hillary Richardson, Women's Sports Programs, Alternate

COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Lloyd Tucker, 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
Megan McLaughlin, Braddock District Representative, Fairfax County School Board
Vicki Garner, Coordinator of Community Use, Fairfax County Public Schools

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Brian Luwis, Dranesville District, Alternate
Jeremy Lee, Hunter Mill District
Harold Leff, Hunter Mill District, Alternate
Bill Bright, Lee District, Alternate
Kelly Ego-Osuala, Providence District, Alternate
Mark Heilbrun, Springfield District, Alternate
Eric Sohn, Diversity-At-Large, Alternate
Marc Fernandes, Diversity-At-Large
Mark Abbott, Sully District, Alternate
Katherine Quinn, Member-At-Large
Jeff Stein, Town of Clifton
Rob Hahne, Baseball Council
Steve Bergstrom, Basketball Council
Stew Clark, Basketball Council, Alternate
Suzy Willemssen, Fast Pitch Softball Council
Ryan Buchanan, Fast Pitch Softball Council, Alternate
Mark Meana, Football Council
Dave Paddock, Lacrosse Council, Alternate
Christine Idip, Slow Pitch Softball, Alternate
Rob Bailey, Volleyball Council
Jenni Cantwell, Women's Sports Programs

MEETING OPENING

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

CITIZENS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

None

PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL

None

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

The meeting minutes from the virtual meeting on February 16 were approved.

The Council discussed future Athletic Council meetings and whether they will continue to be virtual or if the Council will go back to in-person meetings. Members are in favor of having the ability to have virtual meetings as they allow for more inclusiveness and higher attendance. Another point made is the high gas prices and some members having to travel a significant distance to attend meetings.

Mr. Thompson stated the only reason the Council can meet virtually now is because of the COVID-19 emergency. The Council does not have the ability to meet virtually without the emergency. Mr. Thompson suggested the Council take a legal opportunity to adopt a policy that members can attend meetings virtually, however the legal requirement is that there still must be a quorum in-person in a public location and the meeting is noticed. There is a limit on the number of times members can attend virtually. The Council has legal requirements they must follow. If declaration of emergency stands the Council can meet virtually.

Mr. Flather suggested the Council inquire Fairfax County attorneys to see if a new policy could be adopted. Mr. Thompson believes it is a state legislation and the hybrid opportunity is state level. Ms. Avvisato stated she would contact the Fairfax County legal team to figure out the best course of action moving forward.

CHAIRMAN REPORT

Ms. Bauer and several Council members praised the annual Champions of Character award ceremony that was held virtually this year. The program received great feedback from all involved and the Council praised NCS Community Outreach Specialist Chris Pulley and his committee members for their tremendous work and dedication on this year's program. The Council is interested in moving forward with the virtual watch party format and will have discussions with Mr. Pulley and NCS moving forward.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications with Fairfax County Partners - FCPS, FCPA, NCS and Community Users

Mr. Flather reported the last committee meeting was on February 10. The committee deferred having another meeting until NCS and FCPS leadership met.

Ms. Garner reported that FCPS Community Use and NCS had a productive meeting. They discussed communication and established different processes and policies that started on March 1. One change is that FCPS Community Use created an internal email to be used between NCS and FCPS Community Use. NCS is to use this email instead of contacting schools directly with community use questions. The FCPS Community use office has 3 individuals monitoring the email and the response time since starting on March 1 has been about 20 minutes. Ms. Garner reported that her office has received positive feedback regarding the new process. FCPS Community Use and NCS plan on having future meetings on a quarterly basis to help improve communication.



Ms. Avvisato stated that there are challenges to any new policies and processes. NCS is committed to working through any issues with FCPS Community Use and doesn't believe there has been enough time to judge if the new policies and processes are working. Ms. Avvisato stated that NCS has always been an advocate of building relationships with schools and community users, so this is a significant change to how NCS has operated in the past.

Ms. Garner explained that this was implemented because FCPS Community Use was not always being involved in the scheduling process. Ms. Garner stated that the data collection since March 1 has been phenomenal, and it has given FCPS Community Use an opportunity to be involved in the scheduling process so if any issues arise, they have been involved. Much more effective communication moving forward.

Ms. Garner reported that she has a meeting planned with FCPS Design and Construction. Ms. Garner's goal is to make the Design and Construction grid a living document with real time updates depending on project changes, delays, etc. FCPS Community Use wants to ensure that all project dates on the Design and Construction grid match is what is in the scheduling system.

Mr. Flather inquired if the scheduled meeting with Design and Construction was to just discuss internal processes or if the Council will be able to see the Design and Construction grid that has been provided in previous years. Ms. Garner stated that she will share the grid with NCS to share with the Council. Ms. Garner wants to ensure the document is accurate and any delays or changes in projects is reflected on the grid and what is blocked in the scheduling system. Mr. Flather stressed it is important to include community users involved in these meetings to provide feedback.

An example Mr. Flather gave of good communication between community users and schools is that the Fairfax County Baseball Council requires all community users that use high school baseball fields must meet with the high school DSA before the season to discuss maintenance, scheduling, expectations, etc. Ms. Garner stressed that she isn't saying community users can't talk to schools. However, anything to do with scheduling space at FCPS facilities has to include community use. Discussions regarding groundskeeping, maintenance, etc. between community users and schools is not prohibited.

Ms. Bauer stated that while processing the new information she is feeling incredibly alarmed. Ms. Bauer stressed how organizations, especially at the high school level, have great relationships with DSAs to work out scheduling conflicts. Ms. Bauer is concerned the volume of questions and requests NCS receives will lead to a bottleneck by adding an extra step in communication by NCS not being able to contact schools directly. Ms. Garner ensured that her office has 3 dedicated staff and have hired an additional part-time staff to respond to all NCS communication. Ms. Garner stated their office will be more efficient since they are in the loop from the beginning of the scheduling process and have all information available instead of having to research when they weren't in the loop before. Ms. Garner reported she has received several calls from schools thanking FCPS Community Use for implementing the new process.

Mr. Martino stated that since we started the new communication process on March 1 the response time from FCPS Community Use has been excellent. However, Mr. Martino is concerned the same questions NCS may ask in trying to advocate for community users, aren't being asked by FCPS Community Use when talking to schools. Mr. Martino stated leaving the FCPS Community Use office out of the loop while scheduling was not intentional on the part of NCS. Contrary to what Ms. Garner is hearing from schools, Mr. Martino stated he is hearing the opposite from several DSAs concerned over the changes.

Mr. Hahne has seen how things work on both the FCPS and community user side. There are certainly many challenges, but Mr. Hahne has the same concerns as community users and DSAs. The committee that was created to talk about communication among all the entities has had several great meetings and come up with a good list of area of improvements. These changes seem like a step backward from the work the committee has done.

Mr. Hahne is concerned about the message that was conveyed at the DSA meeting that gives schools ability to cancel community use regardless of what parameters or MOUs are in place. Mr. Hahne explained there has been a common understanding in the baseball community about when green days can happen, when high school diamond fields can be closed for maintenance and when events need to be entered into the scheduling system. With schools having the ability to cancel community users without discussion is scary for community users and a change in how baseball has historically operated. Mr. Hahne stressed that community users want to feel like they have an advocate and if fields or gyms need to be closed that they are closed for a valid reason



Mr. Thompson thanked Ms. Garner for her attendance and the many different community organizations that her office serves. Mr. Thompson fears that this new process will turn into micro-managing. Mr. Thompson gave an example of his organization working with Lake Braddock SS. Mr. Thompson's outstanding relationship with the school allowed for flexibility on both sides when scheduling. There is an uneasiness that this ability to get things done may be impacted by this new process.

Mr. Thompson explained that elementary schools also have their own unique issues, not just middle and high schools. The high school DSAs want to work with local youth groups as those kids are feeders into those schools and are its future athletes. Elementary schools don't always think about the impact an event may have when canceling community users. Mr. Thompson is concerned that with school staff turnover things may turn fall through the cracks. For example, knowledge of existing MOUs for high school turf fields. New DSAs may not know how hard the community worked to get turf fields at high schools throughout the County and that there are MOUs in place on those fields.

Ms. Garner stressed that she does not want her office to be the central authority for scheduling, just part of conversation. A lot of elementary schools are happy about the new process as most just have a single person that does community use along with many other duties. Ms. Garner stated that this is a work in progress, and she looks forward to attending all Council meeting moving forward. NCS community use account for roughly 35% of FCPS users which is significant.

Mr. Thompson and the Council hoped that all organizations are held to the same standard. As an example, PTAs being more considerate of how events impact community use. Mr. Thompson also urged Ms. Garner to consider a citizens advisory committee that can give feedback as issues are being worked through. Ms. Garner stated that community outreach meetings will start taking place at Gatehouse Administration Center. Right now, there is pre-registration required because of capacity levels, however they are looking to have these community outreach meeting at other locations throughout the County as well.

Mr. Tucker stated that NCS and FCPS staff have been serving on a committee throughout pandemic that is working on developing a framework for inclusive community engagement to include those most vulnerable in the community. Mr. Tucker urged Ms. Garner and any other to use NCS as an engagement piece for community engagement.

Mr. Flather is concerned with the timing of the changes during the busiest season of the year for most youth organizations. Mr. Flather realizes any new change comes with challenges but minimizing issues during the spring season is imperative. Mr. Flather thanked Mr. Thompson for including elementary schools in the discussion, as these issues aren't isolated to middle and high schools.

Mr. Flather informed the Council that a lot of organizations are seeing cancellations for high school sports practices during youth community use time. A lot of high school coaches aren't in the school building so therefore can't practice right after school. Mr. Flather inquired why the high school practices couldn't be scheduled in a later time slot to preserve youth community use time.

Ms. Bauer concurred with Mr. Flather regarding high school coaches utilizing youth community use time for practices. Community use is getting squeezed for time. Ms. Bauer explained with all the cancelations and adjusted practice times, parents are starting to ask why application fees haven't decreased or partial refunds issued.

Mr. Flather thanked Ms. Garner for her attendance but remains nervous and concerned.

REPORTS BY SPORTS REPRESENTATIVES

Baseball

Mr. Hahne reported that baseball for community users starts on March 27. High school baseball started games on Monday. The baseball community is excited for the nice weather this week.

Football

Mr. Hollingsworth reported that the Northern Virginia Football Hall of Fame Banquet was last weekend and thanked all who were in attendance. Spring flag football is getting underway across the County.



Lacrosse

Ms. Wagner deferred to Mr. Jeff Diehl, chairman of the Northern Virginia Youth Lacrosse League. Mr. Diehl had questions regarding the COVID-19 guidelines on the NCS permits and website, specifically the Forward Virginia Phase 3 guidelines listed on the NCS website. Mr. Diehl stated that NCS had said they will follow all FCPS guidelines. Mr. Martino responded that the permits and website language have been updated after consulting with the Fairfax County Health Department. NCS will send out the updated COVID-19 language to all community users and updated permits.

Soccer

Ms. Bauer and Ms. Moxie were thrilled to report that soccer registration numbers are outstanding for the spring.

Volleyball

Ms. Swope reported that Mr. Bailey plans on reaching out to Mr. Curran to discuss the future of high school boys' volleyball. Ms. Swope has taken part in discussions in bringing organized sand volleyball to the area. There are currently several organized sand volleyball program in Dulles and Sterling, but nothing in this area. The club volleyball season is roughly halfway complete, and clubs are either preparing or playing in national qualifying tournaments. Elementary, middle, and high school boys' and girls' volleyball are going strong in the spring. The volleyball community also wanted to recognize Herndon High School's Akasha Anderson who was named the 2021-22 Gatorade Virginia Volleyball Player of the Year.

STATUS REPORT FROM COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

FCPS

Ms. McLaughlin reported that she has been busy with the new FCPS superintendent search. Ms. McLaughlin explained she had another meeting scheduled with Chairman McKay's working group regarding Stadium Field bathrooms that was discussed at a previous Council meeting. Not having permanent bathroom fixtures at all high schools is something that affects many residents, not just athletes. One disappointing news was that State Senator Scott Surovell's request to use ESSER funds at the state level to use for the utility work (plumbing) for the project which was approximately \$5 million did not make the cut. Ms. McLaughlin stated that if one-time funds were to be used for this project, this would be the budget year to do it. The best estimate for the total cost of the project is \$10-15 million. Ms. McLaughlin welcomed any suggestions from the Council and will keep the Council updated on any new developments.

FCPA

Mr. Louis reported that FCPA has begun spring maintenance activities on FCPS athletic fields including, infill renovations, turf management., mowing and infield grooming to begin late March - early April. In the process of turf deep cleaning and Gmax testing later this month.



Mr. Louis shared the following projects with the Council:

Year	Park	Field	Type of Work	Status
2021	Patriot Park North	All Fields	Re-development of the entire park: lighted synthetic fields ((4) 90's and (2) 50/70's), restrooms, shelter, playground and parking areas	Approximately 35% Complete July 1, 2021 - Winter 2022
	Winterset Varsity	1	Renovation of Police Administration Building will close field; Irrigation will be installed before reopening of field	Fall 2021 - Summer 2024
	Cunningham	1	Replacing backstop and dugout fencing; adding bleacher pad and ADA access trail	Spring/Summer 2022
	Franconia	4	Installing fencing behind goal on synthetic field	Spring 2022-in progress
	Franklin Farm	1	Replacing dome backstop	Spring 2022-in progress
	Reston North	1&2	Replacing dome backstop	Spring -2022-in progress
	Greenbriar	All grass fields	Irrigation is being replaced; infields will be renovated at the same time	Winter/Spring 2021/2022-in progress
	Rolling Valley West	1	Replacing backstop and sideline fencing	Spring/Summer 2022
	Oakton Practice fields		Synthetic replacement	Summer 2022
	South Lakes HS Stadium & practice fields		Synthetic replacement	Summer 2022
	Langley High Stadium		Synthetic replacement	Summer 2022
	Lake Braddock Stadium & Practice fields		Synthetic replacement	Summer 2022
	Great Falls Nike	4	Synthetic replacement	Summer 2022
2023	Scotts Run(?)	1	New Lighted Synthetic - 180' x 220'	Winter 2023/2024



Mr. Thompson reported on the budget cycle and explained the history of the FCPA Bonds. The bonds are typically every 4 years and total less than \$100 million. New athletic fields are typically done with bond dollars. There was an analysis done of facilities that need to be renovated in the system which includes historical sites, trails, parking lots, rec centers, etc. The requirement to meet needs for rec centers is roughly \$200 million in the next several years. FCPA asked for an increase to the total amount and an increase to how much can be spent each year. The County came back and asked FCPA to do a bond every 6 years and stay with \$100 million. Mr. Thompson sat in on a Park Authority analysis and rec center renovations by themselves will absorb all money. This is a significant impact for FCPA to meet future needs. Mr. Thompson explained the Park Authority may need to look to County or general fund money to add any new fields. Mr. Thompson will distribute pertinent information to the Council regarding this issue moving forward.

NCS

Ms. Avvisato stated that NCS will continue to work on communication with schools. Mr. Avvisato reminded the Council that the allocation committee needs to meet soon to discuss issues that have come up over time, as well as the scheduling of the new Patriot Park North tournament complex. The allocation committee will also discuss the resolution passed by the Council at the February meeting. Ms. Avvisato also plans to set up an Executive Council meeting on how to support the Council's resolution. The resolution that was passed at the February meeting was the following: The Fairfax County Athletic Council passes a resolution objecting strongly to any organization that restricts participation in high school athletics and recommends that clubs that restrict participation not be allowed to use Fairfax County Public School facilities.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Thompson urged the Council to get involved with all program NCS has to offer and help give resources to those in need.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Shelton informed the Council that NCS Community Outreach Specialist Chris Pulley has been informed of the Council's desire to put on a forum for sports officials to help recruit and retain sports officials in all sports. A lot of sports are experiencing significant referee shortages and Mr. Pulley agreed it was an outstanding idea.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully,

Lisa MicKey, Secretary

