

THE POLICIES AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND RECREATION COUNCILS IN WICOMICO COUNTY

This Policy Statement is to define the purposes, objectives, and obligations of the Wicomico County Recreation and Parks (Department) and Recreation Councils (Councils) in the continuation of a positive relationship in the delivery of leisure services.

In establishing policies and procedures to promote a spirit of cooperation, there is no intent to infringe in any way upon the legal obligations, duties and authority of either the Department or the Councils. Rather, one of the primary objectives is to enable the parties to better perform their respective obligations within the existing legal framework through mutual cooperation in the development and implementation of recreation policies and programs.

I. THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS, & TOURISM

One of the primary missions of the Department is to provide a wide range of leisure services and facilities designed to meet the recreational needs and desires of the residents of Wicomico County. The Department recognizes that recreation provides a useful and appropriate outlet for the energy and enthusiasm of participants of all ages. The chance to learn and utilize new skills by active participation in recreation programs significantly contributes to the improvement of the quality of life for county residents.

In recognizing the value of councils and volunteers who work with councils, the Department shall, within approved budgeted funds and staffing availability, assist councils by providing the following:

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Based on the premise that elected officials and members of recreation councils will come and go, the only continuity in maintaining a viable recreation council is the Department's involvement. Consequently, it is imperative to keep the Council in operation by:

1. Continually building its membership through recruiting people who have a strong commitment to public service;
possess certain strengths and talents;
have time available to devote to the Council;
have a vested interest (children and grandchildren participating, etc.);
represent specific segments of the community (organizations and service clubs).
2. Nurture leadership among members through:
orientation of the Council's structure;
determining the leadership qualities each possess;
expose members to various chairs of responsibility within the Council;
initiate routine meetings with the Chairman to find strategies to accomplish goals;
represent specific segments of the community (organizations and service clubs).

3. To provide technical input, to include all facets of program organization and maintenance and capital improvement projects by supplying information on:
specifications and bid documents;
materials and quantities;
sources of skilled labor;
required procedures for all of the above.
When these specifics are not known, it's important to approach the proper Department personnel to obtain them.
4. To provide information on securing funds:
by providing guidance such as who and when to ask and to determine if the request is reasonable;
by comprehending the overall goals and resources the County has established for capital improvement projects;
5. To keep Department Administration current with issues, needs, and concerns addressed by the Recreation Councils;
6. To obtain Recreation Council minutes for retention within the Department.
7. Provide coverage under the Department's general liability insurance for suits arising out of the performance of their duties with the Department.

II. RECREATION COUNCILS

A community park and recreation council consists of representatives from community organizations concerned with recreation. They serve to develop and coordinate recreation programs for the community. It has been the policy of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism to develop the recreation programs in Wicomico County on the basis of community needs and interests, as determined by the Community Recreation Councils.

This council is a public organization, whose members shall consist of representatives from non-profit, civic, church, school, cultural, youth and adult community organizations and interested citizens who are concerned with leisure time activities. Its purpose is to develop a well-rounded parks and recreation program for all the people of the community to effect proper coordination of all agencies and organizations in the community interested in recreation and to help finance, publicize, and evaluate year-round programs. The recreation councils shall, within approved budgeted funds and volunteer availability, assist the department by providing the following:

THE RECREATION COUNCILS RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To raise money to supplement County funds used to administer recreation programs.
2. To offer recreation programs assistance:
 - a. solicitation of volunteers;

- b. provide input, i.e., recreation needs, evaluation of programs, recruiting staff;
 - c. providing volunteer man hours;
 - d. assist with publicity of programs;
 - e. assist with registration;
 - f. assist with finding sponsors for programs;
 - g. assist with developing fee structures.
3. To provide maintenance of facilities:
- a. routine maintenance (cutting grass, removal of trash, minor repairs, etc.);
 - b. assist with annual spring clean-up;
 - c. coordinate certain responsibilities with the town government, private contractors, and County personnel;
 - d. undertake facility inspections (lighting systems, playground equipment, bleachers, and outbuildings, etc.).
4. Capital Improvements:
- a. assess what major projects/improvements are needed and assist in developing a subsequent plan of action;
 - b. seek funding through donated labor, materials, and money in conjunction with seeking money from towns, the County, State grants and fund raisers;
 - c. to follow all purchasing procedures required by the county purchasing procedures to retain a contractor;
 - d. seek proper materials, labor, and workmanship to ensure an acceptable job completion;
 - e. provide the required on-site inspections.
5. Establishing Policies:
- a. to be administered by its adopted By-Laws;
 - b. to maintain Minutes of all Council meetings;
 - c. to develop and administer an annual Council Operating Budget;
 - d. to ensure equal opportunity in participation practices of its programs;
 - e. to regulate proper conduct and to ensure safety practices;
 - f. to establish and assess equitable fees and to schedule use of its facilities and programs;
 - g. to actively interact with its Town Council and the County Council;
 - h. to ensure that a varied representation of its town's population is present on the Council (age, sex, service clubs, etc.);
 - i. To address the feasibility of sponsoring functions recognizing its volunteers.

MUTUAL PROBLEMS AND ISSUES FACED

1. Attendance at meetings and the adherence to By-Law procedures;
- a. maintaining an active Council may be addressed by the delegation of responsibilities to a major portion of its members. Remember, a busy council develops commitment among its members.
 - b. preparing agendas in advance of the meetings and sticking to Roberts Rules of Order and the agenda format keeps the meetings moving along and more interesting.

2. The communication between the Councils and the department;
 - a. Staff must take the initiative when assisting Councils.
 - b. Broaden the Council's understanding of the County's financial status and how it affects all, by:
 1. sharing Planning & Zoning data, stressing growth trends within the County and its affect on them;
 2. provide staff members with the County's Program Open Space Plan (annual and 5-year);
 3. provide staff with Recreation, Parks, & Tourism's 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan.
 4. provide staff with the Department's 10-year Analysis of Funds Spent, upon completion.

RECOMMENDED USE OF THESE POLICIES

A Basic foundation of pertinent information for your organization's permanent use and reference is provided in this manual. The enclosed materials will be supplemented and updated periodically by the Department of Recreation, Parks, & Tourism.

It is hoped that this manual will be:

- A. Kept by the President of your organization;
- B. Taken to the meetings of your organization;
- C. Used by the officers and members of your organization.

As you use the enclosed materials, you may find that:

- A. You have some questions that you would like answered; and
- B. There is some information you need that is not included

Please call the Department at (410) 548-4900 or contact your council staff liaison one of the Department's administrative representatives. Let the Department representatives know what would be helpful to your organization. We will work to keep this manual current.

RECREATION COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

The valuable contributions made by Recreation Councils are possible through the accomplishment of numerous objectives. The accomplishment of these objectives varies from month to month and by the type of responsibilities of the council. An example of typical monthly objectives are as follows:

- January: Building an annual operating budget
 Setting fund-raising goals
 Formulating annual objectives (organizational tasks)
- February: Submitting night lighting reimbursement requests
 Selecting committee chairpersons
 Program Open Space requests
 Requests for County assistance
 Setting programming goals and objectives
 Playground equipment inspections and equipment orders
- March: Playground repairs
 Infield fill assessment and orders
 Combined purchases (playing equipment, light bulbs, etc.)
 Facility scheduling
- April: *Spring clean-up tasks/maintenance schedule
 Concession stand stocking
 Concession stand volunteer scheduling
- Summer: May - September
 Programs and facility monitoring
- October: Membership recruitment
 Program/facility performance evaluations
 Recreation Council needs assessment
 Officer recruitment/nominations
- November: Election of officers
 Goal building for next year

*Spring clean up day activities are usually scheduled as an annual event with a very large group of volunteers recruited. The activities include: litter pick-up, infield work-up, fill leveling, liming, fertilizer, seeding, parking lot work, Round-Up application, weed-pulling, etc. Refreshments are usually provided by the Recreation Council.