



**Kent County Parks and Recreation Commission
Meeting Notice and Agenda
1683 New Burton Road
Dover, Delaware 19904
B & G Conference Center
Thursday, February 12, 2026**

6:15 PM, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Call to Order and Roll Call

- Kevin Zimmerman, Chairman (District 4)
- John Stant III., Vice-Chairman (District 2)
- Walter Carroll (District 6)
- Edward Coker (District 1)
- James Long (District 5)
- Brian Michalski (At Large)
- Walter Waite, Jr., (District 3)

Approval of Minutes

Commission Minutes

Department Staff Reports

Department Staff Report

Old Business

New Business

Public Comments

Commission Comments

29 Del.C. §10004(e)(2). The Agenda items as listed may not be considered in sequence. This Agenda is subject to change to include additional items including Executive Sessions or the deletion of items including Executive Sessions, which arise at the time of the meeting.



Item Cover Page

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE: February 12, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Marissa Warren, Community Services

ITEM TYPE: Minutes

AGENDA SECTION: Approval of Minutes

SUBJECT: Commission Minutes

ATTACHMENTS:
[Jan 8, 2026 KCPR Commission Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

KENT COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
January 8, 2026

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mr. Zimmerman called the meeting to order at **6:15 p.m.**

Present:

Kevin Zimmerman, Chairman
Walter Carroll
Ed Coker
James Long
Brian Michalski

Jeremy Sheppard
Michael Rigby
Marissa Warren
Commissioner Joanne Masten

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Long made a motion to approve the minutes for the December Commission meeting, seconded by Mr. Carroll. Motion passed.

COMMENTS:

Mr. Sheppard stated before we get started with normal things I would like to happily introduce Commissioner Masten, who is now the Community Services Chair for Kent County Levy Court. If we could kind of give her a little bit of your background really quick and who you are even though we said roll call, as I'm trying to be formal - I know we're very loosey goosey here but just a just a touch of formality please it's our first meeting.

Mr. Zimmerman stated I've been here 17 years for this I'm originally from Detroit and I do this for the County we need Parks and Rec here, we need it and they do a great job here with the small budget they have to have these services provided for County residents.

Mr. Carroll stated I'm really from Hackensack, New Jersey that's North Jersey, then down here in Delaware for about 10 years and I've been on the committee about 7 or 8 years I forget you know when you get older forget things but I live in Felton, I enjoy these kids I've been involved with kids since 1979 and now that I'm a senior I'm getting involved with the seniors as well

Mr. Zimmerman stated these next to are impressive I want you to hear how long they've been on the Commission.

Mr. Long stated I've been on the committee since 1973 off for 4 years for the politics space - one time and I got throwed out, anyway I've been through buildings used to work for the County, as a camp director for Parks and Recreation and glad to see the gyms hope to get more to go and just proud to be on the committee.

Commissioner Masten stated Congratulations on your tenure

Mr. Coker stated I've been here forever, I've been appointed by you couple times yeah, I enjoy being here coming to the meetings, working with the kids it's a great outlet and proud to be a member of it.

Commissioner Masten stated thank you, well you're to be commended for your years of service, it's greatly appreciated by Mr. Coker.

Mr. Zimmerman stated I love jumping on this – Mr. Coker how long have you been on the board for Dover Little League.

Mr. Coker stated it's about 58 years old I'm not even metal.

Mr. Zimmerman stated that it's just amazing and I always have to break that up because it's impressive.

Commissioner Masten stated well it's important.

Mr. Michalski stated I think since 1999 on the Commission, a Delawarean since 79 and I really enjoy working with Kent County Parks and Recreation seeing how they grow and being able to participate in that, and Jeremy, Mike and everybody does a phenomenal job, they do a lot of their own in-house stuff and saves County tons of money and just a great outfit to be associated with and often feel like we're almost just yes men and women cause because they do such a great job we hardly ever we hardly ever had odds with each other and glad to be a part of it

Mr. Coker stated when we first started the punch card business I remember we had a lot of discussion about whether we should do it or not and I think it's one of the greatest things we have ever done.

Mr. Rigby stated I'm the Assistant Director, I've been here 31 years, as of I think last Friday, obviously I enjoy it or I wouldn't of been here this long - I started out in the Parks working part time years ago while I was in college and just worked my way to where I'm at today, so certainly enjoy it.

Commissioner Masten stated well your service is greatly appreciated.

Mrs. Warren stated I have been with the County since 2023, I was in the Sheriff's Department moved from the Sheriff's Department to Parks and Recreation, before then I was in the legal field for years and worked at the YMCA part time as well too, so I just love being here because working with the community has always been my first love.

Commissioner Masten stated wonderful, I'm happy to hear that, you all are happy.

Mr. Zimmerman stated now that you're in the Parks and Rec you'll be going by noticing more about the parks and what they do with their staff, it's just amazing - the parks are unbelievable and just driving by it not really paying attention or involved with this these guys have unbelievable people.

Commissioner Masten stated, well I have Big Oak in the Smyrna area, it's nicely maintained, especially since so many people go there on the weekends and it may be not so pretty on Sunday

but I know from seeing that and I've been to Browns Branch and I've certainly been to Brecknock but I haven't been to the other locations but they're all beautifully maintained and all I hear is a good thing, so it all goes back to the staff includes everybody.

Mr. Zimmerman stated go by Tidbury it's always a story there it's exciting.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Mr. Rigby's detailed report on Parks and Recreation items is attached to the meeting minutes.

Mr. Sheppard stated I just wanted to add to the parks report some of the new, kind of I'm not really new projects but things that were are new things that we're really trying to bring forward to for many years our signs at all of our parks have been kind of fading away and we haven't really attempted to try to produce new signs there previously was some aversion from former County Administrator to signs and parks but now that we're not under that jurisdiction especially you're starting with Big Oak we're doing a full inventory of every parking sign, every road sign, every stop sign, every informational sign, any type of really there's kind of like 3 classifications there's all your road signs, so that includes the parking, one way, stop signs, all that sort of stuff and you have your informational signs that we've put up, so no bus parking or you know this is to the right or something like that and then there's I just lost the word what's the word for the park huh,

Mr. Rigby stated interpretive.

Mr. Sheppard stated interpretive signing, so years ago when Carl Solberg was here and he did a lot of interpretive signage and it's just gotten to the point where it's you know kind of just faded into oblivion we're just going to go through that taking inventory get some price quotes try to do as much as we can through this year 's operational budget but we may have to ask for either potentially Capital dollars because number one the interpretive sign is tends to be stupid expensive it's just one of those things, so hopefully we can get all the road signs, all the parking signs, some of our informational signs - we have at the Big Oak ball fields the 305 foot marker out there is painted by our park staff, it's a hand painted sign, so it's not going to be worth anything on eBay, years from now, so we're just going to replace it with a real sign, so these are some things that have been long waiting to do just needed the support or the you know losing of the reigns sort to speak but hopefully we'll start with Big Oak, then we'll move to the other parks year by year, so over the next couple of years we'll have replaced all of our signs in all our parks.

Commissioner Masten stated Jeremy, do you have a target date, not completing the work completing the evaluation of what we have versus what we need.

Mr. Sheppard responded, yes, before March.

Commissioner Masten responded, I'll say by the end of March – end of first quarter.

Mr. Sheppard responded, yeah, they're working on it now, I made it a winter project for them.

Commissioner Masten responded, okay, thank you.

Mr. Sheppard stated typically you know when once the grass starts growing our guys are just busy as can be cutting grass, so that's why we have to do as much of this type of work during the wintertime we can.

Mr. Sheppard stated also just wanted to go back to the Rec programs, I'm really happy about soccer and I know I say this all the time about how our soccer is grown but the High School Leagues this year, especially with the Girls High School League having 12 teams hopefully by today if Calvary signed up today but last year in that league we had 5 teams, so it exploded and we're very happy about it, we actually have Odessa High School brought 2 teams down to us so they were very happy to be here I talked to him on Tuesday night thank them for coming down because it really adds to the overall competitiveness of that program and there's 2 reasons why you get involved in a high school league number one if you're the if you're a varsity you want to make sure that you have some good competition or number 2 you just want to get your kids some extra touches throughout the winter to get ready for the spring season and these 12 teams have allowed us allowed us to have actually 2 levels so we almost have like a varsity level and like a JV level, so we are super busy on Tuesday night Friday nights is the Boys High School Soccer League and that was 14 teams last year that's just that's going like gangbusters, so this place is just rocking on Tuesdays and Fridays for sure and I'll say this really for the benefit of Commissioner Masten, these are some of the things that end up blocking out any other time in the Rec Center honestly and, so now we're starting to get calls from people like where's pickleball, where's drop in basketball and we're like well it's winter programs and that's part of the reason we want to build on to this facility, is to take those field sports and put them in the Fieldhouse, so that we can still program the same amount of the people that want to play pickleball, volleyball and basketball and the actual court sports, so I'm really happy that it's going super well but it also highlights the fact that we're still limited with the space that we have.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Sheppard stated Goggin continues to it moves forward just at a slow pace, as you all know just to review by the end of the year we're waiting on the National Park Service to make a full determination of all of the construction plans that Barton Ross came up with - before I left for vacation they had asked for a little bit more information saying that was the last bit of information that they needed, so waiting to hear back from them hopefully you know by the end of the week that that that we can start to compile that and bid that stuff out, so that's really the next step is just getting the authorization from NPS to do the work, then producing the bid packs which will be extensive but that's what we're paying Barton Ross to do and then bid them out bring all that stuff to Levy Court for approvals, then start the construction process, so I'm just hoping praying that it comes quickly because we have until September of 26 to finish that stuff up.

Mr. Sheppard stated again Mike just gave you a little highlight of the official's room renovation, so last month Levy Court approved the contract with Conventional Builders out of Houston, Delaware we've had a kickoff meeting with them this week just to get it started here in the new year they're going to be working on permitting so we have to go to Kent County to get our permit of course so we're communicating with Becker Morgan who's the architect of record

to get the stuff that they need for permitting, we're starting to get in submittals for all the construction pieces of it, so we got to choose carpeting we got to choose cabinetry we got to choose countertops we got to look over electrical stuff, which was really isn't that our thing but Becker Morgan is going to help us out with that there's just all these little bits to the process in order to make sure that everything that's going to be happening is the right thing so we're meeting in the second meeting is scheduled for the 19th of January just to regroup and see where we're at on the 19th of January, so then we'll have a good idea if there's anything else they need for permitting from us in order to work with Kent County and really hopefully based on our first conversation they should be demoing the room come February, so it's going to be a little bit of a mess for a few days and then there's going to be a construction area in there, so we've talked about safety for the Boys and Girls Club because kids come across they're supervised but you know kids want to peek in or whatever we want to do that make sure everybody 's safe and make sure the area stays as clean as possible because in any construction zone there's a lot of dust and once you start taking dust everywhere it just makes a mess, so we'll see how it goes, as it is our busiest time to be doing it but we need to get it done, so hopefully we'll be able to get it done in about he said 60 to 90 days, which means by the end of March hopefully we'll be fully complete with that process and just to remind you that we're taking 2 rooms make it into one room that services as, our only break room, a team room, so we can have meetings, we could potentially even have this meeting over there instead of in here and have all the computer, big screen display that sort of stuff and also kind of like as an event center for tournaments whether it's officials being in there just to have the place to get away from the people or the tournament organizers having a home center like when we do pickleball tournaments in the past we'd have that event center like in the corridor in there and it's kind of in the way when it's busy you don't need anything extra in the way, so this will be a very serviceable facility for us once we're done with this.

Mr. Sheppard stated I would say for everybody 's benefit when they designed this building this wing (Boys & Girls Club), as it says on the entrance is supposed to be a Conference Center right so the thought process at the time was is that the outside groups had come and rent rooms and have meetings that they could open all these things to you know a huge space and have the events and they quickly just made classrooms out of them and now you have this.

Mr. Sheppard stated youth volleyball I just wanted to take a quick stab youth volleyball league for us that's still a kind of a new venture, as recreational volleyball is growing leaps and bounds everybody is doing it now, City of Dover is really gotten into it, Holy Cross continues to do it they're in the fall and spring, we did it in the summer time had about 50 kids, were doing it again in the winter time about 40 kids, we may get some late stragglers but we're still kind of moving into that arena trying to make us, as we can have 6 volleyball courts out there if we wanted to for competition and the more volleyball we get in here the better it's a great girl sport and a lot of girls sports are struggling these days, so we want to make sure we do that also – a reminder that in March we will have 2 volleyball tournaments here, it is competitive volleyball, so it's more like a futsal tournament that we run but that will be our first attempt to kind of see how that type of an event works within this facility because every time we do something we learn how it's

supposed to work after we learn how it didn't work very well, so that's our strength is adjusting the next time that we do it and learning from our mistakes moving forward.

Mr. Sheppard stated the volleyball club for Kent County Club is called Coastal Volleyball Club and we tried to model the tournament after what we're dealing with the futsal club which is Route 1 or DFA (Delaware Football Academy), so essentially they will run the tournament will assist, we'll do a revenue sharing, so that we all are happy about it that way they don't have to pay upfront for the exorbitant cost to rent the place and just take care of it themselves. Coastal travels to parts all around Delaware outside of Delaware and Maryland and Virginia, New Jersey and Pennsylvania right, so what happens is you go to their tournaments and then they reciprocate by coming to our tournament, so we should have teams from Maryland and Delaware, so this will actually be more of like a tourism driver than the futsal now the futsal will have 100,120 teams, as they're smaller teams but a lot of them will be from Delaware, the peninsula rather than being from New Jersey or further over in Maryland across the Chesapeake.

Mr. Sheppard stated it won't be as big as soccer, here's why, there's so many more teams, more parents and we have we have the possibility of having 4 courts competition courts going at once but the difference on how a volleyball tournament works is that essentially you are there all day long, you'll play you'll have a you'll be in a pool and then you'll have a playoff and this is how it works every time, so in the morning time until early afternoon you'll play your pool, then in the early afternoon to about 6:00 o'clock, you'll play your playoffs and you stay the entire day, so with futsal or other tournaments you may come and you may leave, now these people, they stay there the whole time because you don't have like a 4 hour break you have an hour maybe here or there, so what we're doing is one of the courts is going to be called a camp court, so essentially all the people, as a team they congregate in an area, put up their chairs and all their bags in that area, then when it's time for them to go play a game they go to that court, come back and they go to the court and they come back, so while we could really run 4 courts of action then we don't have places to put the camp right, so we have to start with like okay let's just start it at its base and then see where it goes, so if we had more room for camp, then we could run all 4 courts, so we'll have 12 teams each day and we could have 16 if we had another court but that's just how it works it's that's how it's limited can't work any other way because that's how they do it.

Mr. Sheppard stated in March we have 2 weekends, one day on the first week in the Saturday will be like 10U, then Sunday will be 11U, the next Saturday, next Sunday will be 12U, 13U, so you only do one group per day, so they're not staying overnight necessarily unless they're traveling from a long ways and need to grab a hotel for Friday night for Saturday or for an early Saturday morning game or something like that but still there'll be you know getting gas eating hopefully in the restaurant before they go home that's sort of stuff, so it's new business and we're happy to have it.

Mr. Zimmerman stated I do have a question about originally when this was built it was shared space where boys and Girls Club gets one of the gyms, why can't like what this is originally for be used on a Saturday, Sunday late Friday to open the partition here and have this as a camp area.

Mr. Sheppard responded maybe if all this stuff was in here and the condition of the room and I don't think that it would be approved number one and I don't really want to bring people over here.

Mr. Sheppard stated other projects as around here at the Recreation Center we have a few other projects that are dependent upon the work that Becker Morgan is doing for a revised site plan they're still working on it it's getting very frustrating, so I'm going to have to really pull some strings over there, as the projects that is dependent upon is the parking the additional parking that they've designed but just haven't quite gotten everything right we're also putting in a storage building on the South side of the bathrooms to hold all of our outdoor equipment, so that it's just not outside all year round, as to help it lasts a lot longer and also hopefully the mobile stage will go in there too, so that it's out of the weather whenever we have it parked, as currently the mobile stage is in the blessing barn.

Mr. Sheppard stated about the mobile stage working with the library staff to hammer out the Arts in the Park schedule and we have some conflicting views on how to best use the mobile stage, as my view is that we bought \$127,000 stage we're going to use it as much as possible and part of the reason we did that was, so we could have these entertainment things at other parks, so we're going to continue to work together to hammer that out and be able to present the community with a good quality schedule that includes Browns Branch, Big Oak Parks because not everybody can get to Brecknock all the time - kind of catering to the Camden area a little bit probably more because we have a lot of our facilities are right here but there are County taxpayers from North, South, East and West, so I'll continue to update you on that progress.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Sheppard stated a reminder that we are in budget time for Kent County, I've been working with all of our staff to put together next year's operational budget request we're also going to be working on putting together basically like a 5 year capital improvement plan for all of the parks, so we may bring some stuff to you next month to for you to look it over and it may not be overly extensive but we just want to make sure that we are telling Levy Court what needs to be done in the parks moving forward whether it gets done next year, 2 years or 10 years from now – we'll give a priority list of things that we want to make improvements of. One neat thing that the County is doing right now for the budget is we're going to be migrating from all these spreadsheets that we used to fill out a very disjointed and frustrating process into a cloud based solution called clear.gov which you still have to input all the data but it clearly is a little bit more intuitive than the spreadsheets and everything is presented in a better way and what's good for the public is once it's all approved by Levy Court it gets published, you could just go out on the website and be able to dial into whichever department or division you want and be able to see their budget, not really detailed but you'll be able to see some of the things in the projects that have been approved on the operational funding that's been approved at that time, so it's just a better process for everybody but we're just getting started with it this week and after doing a lot of budgeting in November and December now it's kind of redoing it taking it back out of that and put it into the next thing which is a little bit of a headache but I can see how it's going to be very good for the County in the future.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Masten stated like Jeremy mentioned to you, he's going to be working on the budget and the 5 year plan, things are a little bit different Levy Court now, than what maybe they were in the past, there's not one Commissioner there that has a desire to find out from the street or in the paper that there's a need for Parks and Rec, for paramedics, for sewer plant or any place else, the days of the kicking the can down the road has to stop, I mean we've done that at the sewer plant far too long and now we have a tremendous amount of money that has to be spent there and thank God we had ARPA money in order to build 2 new paramedic stations and get a new command vehicle and also purchase land in between the old blue mall and Chesapeake utilities for another paramedic station for Dover, now I don't beyond don't begin to have 5.5 million to build the building but we did pay 450,000 for the land, so we've done that but what's important is we can't have another Piccadilly Castle again deteriorate, deteriorate, deteriorate to the point where now it's probably over a million dollars, so when you see things that need to be done Jeremy has a budget although I think it's somewhere around what I think funds there I think somewhere around 200,000 but when you see things that need to be done bring them to his attention and make sure they get all on a list somewhere, so that when he comes to workshop he can bring them forth I can't promise you neither can the other Commissioners that we're going to tell you yes to everything but to me if you don't ask and we find out about it shame on you guys are all very smart you've been doing this for my God over 150 years collectively you know what needs to be done you know what the needs of the community are please speak up that's what our workshops are for you're all welcome to attend a workshop to know what we're discussing the agendas are out there not everything gets you yes but very few things are turned down but as he's told me when I first met with him what back in November about a 5 year plan that's really critical because Susan Durham can't figure out how much money to set aside each year if we don't know you have a need, so I came from the corporate world for 41 years, so I don't like that kicking the can down the road in the corporate world, if it was needed to be done in Nanjing Province in China or if it needed to be done in Bali it was done or replay was put into place on the 3 year period you get it done. I operate that same way here at the County, we have ABC amount of money to do XYZ amount of projects, so get your needs out there no matter whether you think they're small or big put them out there and it's up to Jeremy to make sure that he brings it to the workshop that he's fully prepared and if it goes to the workshop when it comes to Levy Court always make sure you have the 4 votes to secure it because that's what it takes, 4 votes to get anything done but we're all very sincere when we tell you we really want to see the Parks and Rec area grow I think it's needed more and more people are moving here God knows more and more senior citizens are moving here we've got all these developments in Smyrna that are nothing but over 55 you got a huge one that's going to be expanded tremendously, which is Nobles Pond we're one of your members live and the need is here but you got to put out the ideas what you want to have done you got to get a dollar amount on them and you got to bring them forward and every meeting I come to I'm going to tell you the same thing make sure what your needs are make sure it gets then make sure it gets the Levy Court, then he can give you the feedback on hey it's a yes, or hey it's no for a number of the following reasons but maybe we can do it in 2027 but the sewer plant right now is a tremendous expense that we're facing what in excess of 50 million dollars over maybe 5 years but we started with a bio size project and we're

moving forward to bring it up to date plus we were in trouble with DNREC and I just signed a conciliatory agreement with them that has a list of stipulations like this and they're holding our feet to the fire for all because we haven't been proactive in the past reactive no longer works it's the same way Parks and Recs, we can't just react we have to be proactive and throw it out there and I will tell you that every meeting keep them in the loop and make sure we know what you need and get a dollar figure, so we can figure out how to pay for it, it's so important in today's world, nothing gets cheaper.

Mr. Zimmerman stated, so what I'm understanding from that is no problem adding to the rest of the gym, as Mr. Long has been waiting for this forever.

Commissioner Masten responded, well I didn't quite say that but put it out there, then gotta figure out where the money is coming from.

Commissioner Masten stated could do it easily with a tax increase?

Mr. Zimmerman responded I think the County should have a tax increase, the problem that I want to talk without going into politics, is the schools are blowing up because the Planning Commission in CR school district, 22 housing permits, so they're aiming for a referendum for that to build schools and it's just crazy.

Commissioner Masten responded yes, it is but live in Smyrna and have your town taxes go from 47 cents to 94 cents with no warning, so I feel your pain, as everybody's in the same boat but again make sure you feed your needs all of, Mike too to Jeremy on what has to be done, I mean don't let our parks go down let's have pristine parks, as best we can.

Mr. Walter stated Jeremy, have you heard anything about the Marydel ball park.

Mr. Sheppard responded there's really no update on that and the way it was left the individual that we talked to us about it, his job was to reconstitute the Little League organization as a 501(c) 3 compliant organization and it's never happened, so he mentioned to me a few months ago that he had some movement but since then nothing.

Commissioner Masten stated speaking of that the other action item I think you had is about Joe Halpern 's property there on Dover, Kenton Road making sure you put together a plan for that.

Mr. Sheppard responded, yeah, I was requested by the County Administrator to draft a response to the lease agreement that Mr. Halpern gave and I gave that to him today, so he's going to review it before he disseminates it, I assume because I just made comments to the different codicils of the lease, which wasn't good.

Commissioner Masten responded it was really in favor of him.

Mr. Sheppard stated, so clearly this can't move forward that way and council said the same thing but I'm kind of surprise this didn't die at Levy Court that day, as we framed it based on our knowledge of pickleball in this area and our experience for nearly 10 years of pickleball and I don't think I'm going to be insulting anybody by saying what I'm going to say but there are essentially 2 factions of pickleball players, there are the pickleball players who just want to play

just want to enjoy themselves, it's a recreational sport and then there are the people who take themselves way too seriously and want to have a level to play with to some exclusivity and our experience over the years has been that the people who have migrated to the exclusive club environment did, so because they didn't like some of the offerings here at Kent County at the recreational level, so I'm saying that just to let you know that when we framed it we framed as if to be a working club we need to operate it as a working club not as just a whatever and clearly in order to do something well you need people with boots on the ground in order to ensure that things work well, so the majority of the cost probably 60% of the cost was in personnel, so having a club manager having, some part time people making sure that if members were there they were really members or they were providing other types of services like rental of equipment or just check in check out or what have you informational, then of course there was other costs for just maintaining the facility and the cost was roughly about \$120,000 a year in expenses with an expected revenue based on numbers provided by us by Mr. Halpern of \$30 to \$40,000 dollars in revenue, so it was a huge loser and I mean everything we do is essentially I'll call it a loser because we don't make money here we are subsidized by County tax dollars and we operate as a service, so there was clearly some people that were very much like heck no this is terrible and there were other people like well we do provide services, so maybe it's not as much about the money with that in mind I thought about that overnight and I came back and talked with staff the next day and I said listen let's see if we can reframe this to think about it in a different realm and to say that this isn't going to be a successful model but just a different model with the idea that it's a service rather than a club I said well what would what would happen if this facility were to be up uplifted uprooted and placed at Big Oak County Park to say if you've been out there the 60 space parking lot we have the multi-purpose field let's say just put it right out there in that field and that's where it was well number 1 would we pay for somebody to be out there to watch it, no we wouldn't, it would be just like another softball fields we don't have somebody overseeing the softball fields, we take rentals and we'll schedule activities or events but other than that it's just a free place to go play and hopefully they play nice with each other and that sort of works, so we would just be in charge of basic maintenance I said well what if we reframed this like another County Park you go there, it's available, you play, if it's not available, you don't play and we start shading some of the other club type of amenities off of that such as the clubhouse right the clubhouse is a huge risk for us but of course the only thing it provides that's necessary is a restroom, so we would we need to figure out a restroom facility but if we could just run it as a typical County Park that we maintain but we don't supervise on a day-to-day basis maybe but I really don't think that the owner wants that I think the owner wants a club that he, his family and his people that he knows can go to that he just doesn't have to worry as much about anymore, so the County will only makes decisions like do we just want to pay a lot of money for something or do we or will he take very low level recreational amenity so.

Mr. Sheppard stated anyways right now I'm just working on the lease and submitted that of here's what we would ask to change or this is definitely what we wouldn't do and we'll still continue to talk with the County Administrator to see how we want to present that to Levy Court

Mr. Zimmerman stated this wouldn't be better for City of Dover Parks and Rec since it's in their area.

Mr. Sheppard stated well it technically isn't, it's outside of the City of Dover and that's why this is more on our plate, which is fine, it's just risky.

Mr. Sheppard stated if I had \$120,000 dollars extra tax dollars to spend on something it wouldn't be pickleball it'd probably be somewhere else, so that's how I look at it, but I try to do what I'm asked to do.

Mr. Michalski asked do you have any idea of your programs at what capacity you are here with this facility?

Mr. Sheppard stated we don't have statistics that shows hours of usage versus open hours - You there 3 types of lies, lies, damn lies and statistics, so the answer is no just base wise the answer is no, we go by just knowing how many people, how much we program, so yeah I think there's room for growth, it just has to come later at night time, so we try to get everything done before 9:00 o'clock but if we needed to expand people would have to just come in here later and typically that's going to be the younger athlete than it is a pickle baller that's not coming in for a 9:00 o'clock session.

Mr. Michalski stated years ago we had a plan drafted to make this facility much bigger, I think Kevin 's Commissioner kind of shot that down at that time, so now we're finding we need areas that need expansion and we're putting in more parking, so we really shot ourselves in the foot.

Mr. Zimmerman responded, Brian on one thing on that with the Commissioner Buxton what it was he was pushing for, you can correct me, the turf field out there, so if you got the turf field the cost of it stopped us from building the biggest, we could, is that correct.

Mr. Sheppard responded the turf field was a way to address a need for turf sports and he didn't believe at the time that operating indoor turf was feasible 365 days a year but we know in the business from many different locations across the 45 state area that they operate year round you know that they're just enough kids that will be playing summer leagues, fall leagues, everything indoors in a climate controlled area but that you know I think he also had at the time other people in other organizations, outside organizations that were asking for things that never ended up happening anyways such as youth tackle football, so he had some people banging on his door for that, so in his mind that was like a compromise, yes Parks and Rec gets a turf maybe the community gets some turf but they ended up not wanting to pay for to use the turf they just wanted it for free.

Mr. Zimmerman stated it gets used a lot and with the lighting stuff but at the time there's no way this was going to be an add-on after because all the infrastructures set in for was 30,000 square feet.

Mr. Sheppard responded for the site plan had an additional 30,000 square feet so the stormwater management plan for the site was based off of that and the and the parking level at that point now that being said I mean not to get too far into the future the additional parking that we're putting in because we need it now is going to take up a lot of that square footage, so when we do get to the point of designing really designing the new building it's going to have to go back to case Kent Conservation to probably do additional stormwater management that time.

Mr. Sheppard stated we started planning for it quite honestly years ago when Commissioner Buckson was here and he was a proponent of us starting the design process, which you've all seen and we paid Becker Morgan to create our design that's what we thought we needed and we still have that and we're going to use that to continue to tell the story.

Mr. Michalski stated I think you just gotta be like the movie, if you build it they're going to come because there's too many people coming in this County right now, the growth is just so explosive, not only retirees but people with families with household more than 4 people in there and the schools are overcrowded, so there needs to be an equal amount of recreational opportunities and parks to fill the need otherwise the kids are going to be on the streets.

Mr. Zimmerman stated I comment at this every month about Kaitlyn's soccer it's crazy I don't know how you guys manage that many people buying coaching that's just that's a lot of people.

Mr. Michalski stated my other question is Mike puts all together these numbers that are phenomenal but are we supposed to be making money or are we supposed to be breaking even - in my mind we're supposed to be giving that back to the County, as a low cost for people to be able to get in these programs.

Mr. Sheppard responded we provide the numbers for informational purposes, so again our charge has always been since I've been here in 2001 that our programs are to pay for themselves and that's defined, as if there's a direct program cost, then the registration revenue should cover all that, so for example the Kent Youth Soccer League (KYSL), we have 400 to 450 participants every time we do it, it brings in revenue from registration roughly between 32 and almost \$40,000 dollars, so from that \$40,000 dollars we need to purchase equipment, purchase supplies such as balls and whistles, pennies, paint for the robot painter, pay for officials, pay for additional supervisors and essentially managers out on the field in order to run these things we pay for all of that stuff right, so as long as that program is paying for its direct program costs it doesn't pay for my salary doesn't pay for the electricity of this building it doesn't pay, it just pays for the direct program costs.

Mr. Sheppard stated if anybody asks me do we make money I say of course we don't make money we provide a service we're the government we're intended to provide a service at the lowest cost that we can reasonably apply, there's some market analysis that you can do to determine where you should fit in there but in some of our programs make more than others by make there's a better revenue over expenses ratio and some of them are terrible, there's some art program that it's technically a loser but as long as the entire package works then we're providing a great spectrum of things for the community, so, yes, we provide those numbers and Susan Durham has always said to me you just need to talk about your participation and I'm like well I get that but for all these 21-25 years I've been here the Levy Court Commissioners who really want to ask me questions always ask me about the money.

Mr. Michalski stated I have to agree with her (Susan Durham) it should be about the participants because I would hate to think there would be a family looking at one of your programs going I can't afford it and that would be a travesty.

Mr. Sheppard responded, certainly there are families who still can't afford us either but in large we are the cheapest in everything that's out there, even the people that say that they're doing it for poor people.

Mr. Sheppard stated thank you for those questions, I appreciate that.

Mr. Zimmerman stated I want to back up something, we all talked a little about ourselves I know nothing about Commissioner Masten except she doesn't care for Walter, so Commissioner tell us about your past and where you're at.

Commission Masten stated I was born in Dover hospital, lived at Woodland Beach, so don't hold that against me my parents moved to Smyrna and January of 1950 I still live in the same house that I grew up in, I graduated from Smyrna High School immediately went to work, I went to work actually for Hercules Incorporated in Wilmington, Delaware I ended up with an International job, so for 38 of my 41 years I traveled throughout Europe, Asia, Latin America, Canada, Mexico, had worldwide responsibilities I had 155 people reporting to me I'm responsible for everything involving a customer from the time the sale was made to the time the shipments were made I was responsible for all the logistics both air and ocean, as well as it as well as US trucking responsible for all warehousing and pricing whether it be delivered pricing or FOB at the plant pricing I retired September 30th of 2010 after 41 years and Wilmington I stayed retired 2 weeks I was bored stiff because there's nothing else to clean, so I reach out to the Mayor of Smyrna and said do you have anything I could do and one of the things I had responsibility for was ethics for a large chemical company, so she put me on the ethics Commission, so I served on the ethics Commission for about 4 months and there came a couple of spots on town council and I thought you was I could do that job, so I ran for town council I served 2 years of my 3 year term, the mayor retired and I thought I can do that job I had worldwide responsibility, so I ran for mayor, which is a 2 year term, I ran, I won and I decided well I'll do it again, so I did it again and so I served 4 years as Mayor of Smyrna, 2 years on council my husband retired in the meantime and we had done absolutely nothing because I was always busy with the town and during that time I was trying to get a new library built this front so I fought town councils for 12 years to get a library built in Smyrna and 12 years later the library in Smyrna has opened Duck Creek Regional Library, so I can honestly tell you I spent many hours, many days, many years getting that library built and when it was built the cost was 18.8 million dollars and it was paid for when the door opened thanks to ARPA money both at the State level and the Federal level, so I took about 3 years off to do some cruising and then Brooks Banna who has been my mentor and I've known him since I was 5 years old had always said to me when he when he ran for office when he was done he wanted me to run in his spot, so one fine day he called and told me that January 9th he needed me to go to the Department of Elections and file for his position. I thought oh boy you know if I could do this or not, so I did and then I went to meet in his office at 2:00 o'clock that day for a press release and I ran for Levy Court in the middle of a pandemic, so I had a primary I didn't expect, I won the primary and low and behold I have to run against the medical doctor in the middle of a pandemic, so that wasn't fun but you do what you got to do because you can't door knock everything 's on the telephone, so I won my first 4 years a Levy Court, loved every minute of it met the nicest people and then I

decided I'm going to run one more time and then I'm done, so I just started my second year of my second term I have what 3 years left and then I'm done, I'll be 80, so that's old enough to be in office, so I've enjoyed my time on Levy Court I actually sit on a 15 boards not just Levy Court stuff but things in the Smyrna Clayton area I'm treasurer after doing a favor for Bruce Ennis in 1996 for the Smyrna Clayton July 4th Association, we do all the parades, all the activities the fireworks everything I said on the Duck Creek Regional Library board, Division of Tourism, Friends of Belmont Hall, Lillian Smith Senior Center on the Duck Creek Historical Society, the Smyrna Opera House and others that I would have to look at my sheet but I keep very busy, I've been married will be 58 years April 15th, I get a card and Uncle Sam gets the check I have one son, 4 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren, love to travel, love to meet new people, like to do new things and at every Levy Court meeting I go to I try to learn something new every meeting and try to retain that when I joined Levy Court a lot of the terminology was the same that we have with the Town of Smyrna obviously a lot of it was very different, the Town of Smyrna follows Roberts Rules of Order the County follows Masons Rules of Order, so it's a little bit different and trying to program yourself to go from A to B sometimes a little hard sometimes I embarrass myself but you know you live and learn I try to stay very active and that's about me, as I try to stay busy and I'm never bored and if my schedule permits I'll try to come to all the meetings, if I don't have a conflict with something.

Mr. Long made a Motion to adjourn, second by Mr. Carroll, meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.
Motion passed.

Marissa Warren
KCPR Office Administrator



Item Cover Page

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM REPORT

DATE: February 12, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Marissa Warren, Community Services

ITEM TYPE: Report

AGENDA SECTION: Department Staff Reports

SUBJECT: Department Staff Report

ATTACHMENTS:
[1-8-26 Department Staff Report.pdf](#)

Kent County Parks and Recreation

Recreation Report – January 8, 2026

- December revenue was \$48,985.00
- Winter revenue starting on December 8th is \$52,888.00.
- Punch Card sales from December 11th till today are 297 and the revenue was \$5,940.00.
- Overall Punch Card sales to date are 14,307 and we have generated \$256,540.00 in revenue.

Fall Revenue Per Activity

1. Arts and Crafts – \$4,765.00 with 47 participants
2. Fitness – \$2,075.00 with 30 participants
3. Music and Dance – \$1,677.00 with 33 participants
4. Sport Instruction – \$9,890.00 with 189 participants
5. Sport Leagues – \$26,018.00 with 210 participants
 - a. Adult Co-Ed Indoor Soccer League has 7 teams
 - b. Boys HS Soccer League has 14 teams
 - c. Girls HS Soccer League has 12 teams
 - d. Instructional Youth Soccer League has 33 participants
 - e. Boys HS Lacrosse League has 11 participants
 - f. Youth Lacrosse League has 22 participants
 - g. Youth Basketball League has 29 participants
 - h. Youth Volleyball Leagues has 41 participants

Projects

1. Browns Branch Pavilion construction has started. Once the footing inspection is approved staff will pour concrete around the post, then install the trusses, decking and the metal roof material.
2. Officials room renovation project has been awarded to Conventional Builders from Houston, DE. Construction should begin sometime in February.

Kent County Parks and Recreation

3. Tot soccer field irrigation installation should begin in a couple weeks. Park staff will be doing installation.

Parks Report

1. Staff have been working on the sitework and post installation of the new pavilion at Browns Branch.
2. Staff has been fabricating a Kesselring County Park sign to be installed by the New Burton Road entrance.
3. Removed the leaves from the gutters of the houses and shops at the parks.
4. Staff continue to prune all the landscape trees at each park.
5. Thorough cleanup of the St. Jones greenway trail.
6. Continue to perform routine maintenance of all the parks.