



STAFF REPORT ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

To: Mayor Gavin Buckley

From: Michael Mallinoff, City Manager

Date: October 20, 2023

Subject: O-34-23: Street End Park Hours

Purpose of legislation

The purpose of this legislation is to limit public access to the City's street end parks at night; updating the City Code for Chambers Park, Amos Garrett Park and Truxtun Park to the same restriction between sunset and sunrise; and generally related to public peace and order.

Impact of legislation on operations

While the Department believes this legislation is being submitted with good intentions, it is counterintuitive to the use of several parks. For example, Acton's Cove is a street end park that has lights throughout and benches. This park is frequently used at night as a gathering place, a place to walk dogs, and to sit and enjoy the peace and tranquility of the park at night. Truxtun Park has operations of Pip Moyer until 8 pm seven days a week. During daylight savings time, sunset is around 5:30 pm, well before the center closes. Additionally, the basketball courts and tennis/pickleball courts are lit, and people come to play both at night and not at the direction of the Department of Recreation and Parks. We frequently have the fields permitted, not a program of the Department, to outside groups beyond sunset. This is the same for Chambers Park, Susan Campbell Park and Ellen Moyer Park where groups permit the park and have concerts after dark.

This legislation, while perhaps not its intent, creates disparate treatment to many of our parks and can be confusing to our user groups. People will be able to be at Annapolis Walk Park when dark but not Acton's Cove. It also gives the potential to send mixed messages to park users. If there are lights in the park and along the walkways inside the park, the message is

that the park is open at night for people to enjoy; this legislation goes against that message. In Annapolis, we believe there is a deficit of park land for residents. During COVID, Anne Arundel County saw some of the highest park usership in the state with an increase of 387%. Our parks are heavily utilized as intended with the amenities available. Creating limiting hours of usership with a broad brush given the amenities of a park is not something the Department supports. Additionally, we believe the hours of operation of parks should be able to be changed by the Department, as needed, dependent upon the park and amenities instead of set in code as this is an operational decision based on current trends, new amenities, and situational problems or spikes in crime etc. We would be happy to work with the Council to address any issues this legislation is intending to address specifically.

Impact of legislation on staffing

This legislation will not impact staffing within the Department of Recreation and Parks.

Prepared by Roslyn Johnson, Director of Recreation and Parks