



STAFF REPORT ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

To: Mayor Gavin Buckley

From: Michael Mallinoff, City Manager

Date: February 21, 2024

Subject: O-2-24: Hours for Tolson Street Park and Tucker Street Park

Purpose of legislation

The purpose of this legislation is to limit public access to Tolson Street Park and Tucker Street Park at night; closing those parks to the public between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.; and generally related to public peace and order in City parks.

Impact of legislation on operations

While the Department believes this legislation is being submitted with good intentions, it constrains the use of these parks and does not allow the Department of Recreation and Parks the ability to adapt to desired community uses. In the case of these parks, we have heard from the community that many like to do sunrise kayaking, and this legislation may interrupt that use. This legislation, while perhaps not its intent, also 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 Tucker Street. 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 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, its amenities, and the needs of the community 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 Victoria Buckland, Assistant City Manager