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\$1 JANUARY 24-30, 2020

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**InTheKnow**



**PET SHELTER DELAYS**

The county's new \$15.1 million animal shelter opening pushed to late 2021.

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**SOLE POSSESSION**

Osborn Park's girls basketball takes over first in the Cedar Run District.

» PAGE 15



**RING THE BELLS**

"The Hunchback of Notre Dame" comes to Hylton stage Jan. 25-26.

» PAGE 19

# County staff getting \$5.6M in pay raises

## Larger \$10.8M adjustments await difficult budget season

» EMILY SIDES  
esides@insidenova.com

The first round of sweeping pay increases for more than 1,700 Prince William County employees will be reflected on Jan. 31 paychecks.

It's the first phase of salary adjustments approved by supervisors in November that will mean raises for 896 full-time employees, 245 part-time employees and 569 provisional employees (employees who don't qualify for benefits). That represents about 25 percent of the county's workforce.

The first phase of pay increases will be paid for from savings from vacant positions. This first phase is estimated to cost \$2.8 million in the current fiscal year 2020 and \$5.6 million in fiscal year 2021, the first full year the new salaries will be in place, according to the county.

Hourly wages are set to increase by anywhere from 1 cent to \$10.83 an hour for

employees who were identified to receive an increase based on a study that was presented to the board in 2019. The study cost about \$920,000, according to documents obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request by InsideNoVa.

The board of county supervisors voted 7-1 on Nov. 19 to approve new job classifications for 4,282 employees, along with the new pay levels. Gainesville Supervisor Pete Candland opposed the measure. The county has a total of 6,840 employees.

In the second phase, the consultants recommended pay adjustments for 1,592 employees based on their years in a position. That is expected to cost about \$10.8 million in fiscal year 2021.

County Executive Christopher Martino is expected to recommend how to pay for those salary adjustments in his fiscal year 2021 budget to be presented in February.

The board will have to determine how to

**INSIDE:**  
Who are the top 10 salaried employees in Prince William County government and how much do they make?  
» PAGE 10

**ONLINE:**  
Read this story on Inside-  
NoVa.com for a list of all Prince William County employees who earn more than \$100,000 per year.

implement the second phase. Chair Ann Wheeler said she will wait to comment on budget items until the board has heard Martino's proposal.

She said she knows the county has unmet needs, which is why budgets are difficult.

"There are strategic objectives that need to be addressed, as well as a changing state component," she said. "I'm also excited to hear from the residents of the county about their

PAY » PAGE 10

# Italian in Occoquan



Jim Novak, owner of D'Rocco's, presents desserts to guests at a preview dinner in Occoquan on Jan. 11.  
PAUL LARA | FOR INSIDENOVA

# Signature restaurant, bar getting new life

» BY AILEEN M. STRENG  
FOR INSIDENOVA

After about 50 years — and various owners — the Occoquan Inn is gone. In its place will be an Italian restaurant under development by a familiar face.

"I love broken things and want to fix them," Jim Novak said.

In the 1980s and '90s, the Occoquan Inn restaurant was run by Novak, who was 23 when he took over. His father handled the business aspects.

From the beginning of his involvement with the property, Novak understood the benefit of having a tourist sign for the business on Interstate 95. "I remember people pulling up with their suitcases," he said. "I would have to say 'No, we are a restaurant.'"

Business needed a boost, Novak said. "In the Occoquan Inn, there was no business anymore," Novak said. "It was running but it was only two or three tables every night,

D'ROCCO'S » PAGE 3

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### COUNTY'S TOP SALARIES

Through a Freedom of Information Act request, InsideNoVa obtained county salary information for fiscal year 2019. Below are the top 10 salaried positions. You can find hundreds more of the top salaries at [InsideNoVa.com](http://InsideNoVa.com).

	Name	Job title	Total pay 2019
1	CHRISTOPHER MARTINO	COUNTY EXECUTIVE	\$350,142
2	KANCHAN CLARK	MEDICAL DIRECTOR/PSYCHIATRIST	\$290,161
3	MICHELLE ROBL	COUNTY ATTORNEY	\$277,162
4	NINA KHACHIYANTS	PSYCHIATRIST	\$249,843
5	PAUL EBERT	COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY	\$249,200
6	LAURA HARVATINE	PSYCHIATRIST	\$236,618
7	RICHARD CONWAY	CHIEF DEP COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY	\$215,441
8	HARRY WOOD	FIRE AND RESCUE LIEUTENANT	\$211,277
9	CHRISTOPHER PRICE	DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE	\$210,211
10	BARRY BARNARD	POLICE CHIEF	\$208,100

#### PAY >> FROM PAGE 1

priorities."

Supervisor Jeanine Lawson, R-Brentsville, is one of only three current board members who were on the eight-member board when the first phase of pay increases was approved. She said this week that the county wanted to ensure that employees receive competitive wages and that the county can retain employees.

"Workforces change with time and technology," she said. "Considering we haven't really studied all the job classifications for over 20 years, we knew that there was a need for a fresh look."

Lawson said no employees are set to receive a decrease in pay because of the study.

"I think it was well overdue, and we obviously want to invest in our employees that make our county run everyday," she added.

During the budget process last year, the board knew the study was underway, but didn't know how much the consultant's recommendations would cost, Lawson said. "The money has got to come from somewhere. Right now it's up in the air with everything else until we go through the budget process. But it's certainly a priority."

The consultants also recommended the county winnow its job classification system from 644 job titles to 287 job titles.

The new job titles ensure job duties are clear to candidates seeking a job with the county, according to county staff. With a new job classification system, the county has a minimum salary for each position based on the study's findings.

County spokesperson Nicole Brown pointed to one example of a position that received a higher salary due to the study. Since May 2019, two human services coordinators have resigned and stated that their salaries were a significant part of their decision and did not accurately reflect their level of responsibility, she said. Following the study, the county adjusted the salary range from \$62,029.50-\$105,300 to \$85,015-\$149,052. The position title has also been renamed human services program manager.

After implementing the salary increase, the county hired two new employees to fill the vacancies, Brown said.

"This is an example where we have preliminary data that shows how the new classification and compensation structures allow the county to recruit competitively," Brown said.

The average hourly increase for full-time employees is \$2.45, according to county data received by InsideNoVa under the Freedom of Information Act. For instance, some maintenance and operations workers are set to receive a \$2.36 hourly increase from their 2019 wage of \$16.58 per hour. One maintenance worker is set to receive an hourly wage increase of \$9.44, bringing their hourly wage up from \$9.50 an hour to \$18.94 per hour.

The average hourly increase for part-time employees who are set to receive a raise is \$2.70. Hourly increases for provisional employees range from 3 cents to \$9.29, with an average of \$2.53.

Gallagher Benefit Services recommended that the county update its salary structure each year "to keep pace with the market" and also review its job classifications each year. The consultants also recommended the county complete a comprehensive market compensation study at least every three to five years.

The consultants compared the county's pay structure with other employers, and identified six area local governments for comparison: Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun counties, the city of Alexandria, and Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland.

Consultants also recommended freezing salaries for 155 employees who are paid more than the maximum range of competitive salaries.

This study excluded about 1,800 uniformed employees in police, fire and rescue, sheriff's office and at the adult detention center. In 2016, the board of supervisors requested a separate public safety recruitment and retention study, which looked at those 1,800 employees. That study's recommendations cost about \$13 million to implement over two years, fiscal year 2019 and fiscal year 2020.

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**TURNING THE CORNER**

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» PAGE 15



**CINDERELLA'S DANCING SHOES**

Virginia National Ballet brings fairy tale to Hylton stage

» PAGE 18



Colonial Downs Group was seeking a permit to build a Rosie's gaming parlor (artist's rendering, inset) in the Triangle Shopping Parlor. EMILY SIDES | INSIDENOVA

## Stuck at the Starting Gate

### Dumfries council halts Colonial Downs permit

» EMILY SIDES  
esides@insidenova.com

Colonial Downs Group has more work to do before it can secure a permit for Northern Virginia's first Rosie's Gaming Emporium after the Dumfries Town Council rejected a permit request Tuesday.

The company, which runs a horse-racing track in New Kent County and gaming parlors in Vinton, Hampton and Richmond, had settled on the Triangle Shopping Plaza for its Dumfries location, but council members split over a one-time \$100,000 payment for transportation impacts.

The council voted multiple times, but in the end a resolution to approve the conditional use permit without the \$100,000 condition failed 3-4. Mayor Derrick Wood and council mem-

bers Charles Brewer and Brian Fields voted for the resolution, while members Monaé Nickerson, Melva Willis, Selonia Miles and Cydny Neville voted against it.

After the meeting, Neville said she believes there are other business opportunities that

the town could attract to the site. She said she has previously told the applicant that she doesn't support the proposed location because children walk to the nearby library in the same shopping center.

"So, hopefully they'll go back to the drawing board," she added.

Although this permit has been denied, Wood said after the meeting that

he remains hopeful there is some path forward to bringing Rosie's to the town.

"I'm a bit surprised it failed, because the community asked us to do this," he said, refer-



*"In a single jump, we could raise the median income by one business coming here if we could agree."*

— DERRICK WOOD,  
DUMFRIES MAYOR

COLONIAL DOWNS » PAGE 3

## New control tower pitched in Manassas

Airport cites deterioration, leaks and bee infestations

» JARED FORETEK  
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Virginia's busiest general aviation airport is looking for momentum behind a proposed multi-million-dollar control tower and is finding fresh support in Congress.

The current 124-foot tower at Manassas Regional Airport is slowly deteriorating and no longer offers the best sightlines for air traffic controllers, said director Juan Rivera. Officials hope to enter into an agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration to fund a replacement. Rivera said a new tower would cost around \$8 million.

It's the 145th busiest general aviation airport in the country, handling 238 takeoffs or landings a day, according to the FAA. A 2017 study by the Virginia Department of Aviation found that the Manassas airport created \$375 million of economic activity the year prior, with 1,351 aviation jobs and wages totaling \$117 million.

But the airport's hand-me-down tower (Manassas bought it in 1992 from a small airport in Colorado) is almost 60 years old, according to Rivera. It's too small for some of the new equipment the FAA recommends and the structure itself is deteriorating, suffering leaks and a persistent bee issue.

"We're constantly fighting the battle of bringing the Orkin man in to keep it under control," Rivera said. "Every year we're sinking money into a facility that really has outlasted its useful life."

The airport will soon pay about \$50,000 to replace the tower's roof and catwalk, money that Rivera says is hard to recoup with the FAA paying only \$15,576 a year to lease the facility. The director said he'd like to renegotiate the agreement, but in order to do so the fa-

TOWER » PAGE 3

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# Hospitals prepare coronavirus response

» JARED FORETEK  
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With two people already isolated and tested for the deadly coronavirus in Northern Virginia in recent weeks, area hospitals are preparing for any local impacts of the outbreak.

Both of those tested in Northern Virginia did not have the virus, but the Centers for Disease Control has identified 11 cases in the United States, with dozens more patients waiting for test results.

Travelers through Dulles International Airport are undergoing health screening if they have travelled or been in contact with someone who has travelled to the region of China where the outbreak began.

At Novant Health UVA Health Systems hospitals in Manassas and Haymarket, every incoming patient is being immediately screened for symptoms and travel history regardless of what they're being treated for, said Cristyn Dinges, the regional infection prevention manager.

So far, no patients at the facilities have shown a possibility of infection. If someone did, Dinges said they would immediately be placed in an airborne isolation room for further testing. The hospitals have been encouraging all providers to pay special attention to hand and respiratory hygiene, such as covering up coughs and washing hands thoroughly.

"We're just encouraging continuous use of precaution," Dinges said. "Making sure hand hygiene is a must and educating patients as well for when they're out in the community."

As of earlier this week, there were 20,708 confirmed cases of the virus worldwide, and 427 people — all but one in China — have died from the outbreak.

Patients are being treated for the virus in Arizona, California, Illinois, Massachusetts and Washington, according to the CDC.

U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared a public health emergency on Jan. 31 to put more federal resources toward the coronavirus response.

At this time, the virus is not currently spreading in the community in the United States, CDC officials noted in a statement Feb. 3.

The federal government has implemented travel restrictions that delay entry for foreign nationals who have been to

China in the 14 previous days and temporarily hold U.S. citizens who have been to China's Hubei province over the same time period. Dinges said because of their proximity to Dulles, area hospitals should take special precaution when screening patients.

In a statement, Sentara Healthcare's Chief Quality and Safety Officer Joel Bundy said that Sentara hospitals have implemented their emergency protocols and "are standing up a dedicated team to monitor and follow the coronavirus closely. Currently there are no potential coronavirus patients at any Sentara hospital. If this changes, our highly-skilled team is trained to safely care for any potential patient while ensuring we have zero exposures to our staff and other patients."

## COLONIAL DOWNS » FROM PAGE 1

ringing to a referendum supporting a gaming parlor that was approved by voters 468-306 in November.

Wood said Rosie's will bring more jobs to the town. The company has said the local site would have 150 employees with an average annual salary of \$47,000. The parlors feature slot-like machines based on historic horse race results, a restaurant and live entertainment. The company announced in January it would increase its minimum wage at all locations to \$15 an hour and \$9 an hour for tipped positions.

"In a single jump, we could raise the median income by one business coming here if we could agree," Wood said.

Colonial Downs estimates it would pay the town \$640,000 yearly in local gaming tax revenue, according to the permit application. The company also plans to donate \$100,000 a year in the areas they operate as part of a charitable giving program.

Colonial Downs was proposing to lease 18,364 square feet at the shopping center from Curtis Properties Inc., according to its application. The plaza has 79,435 square feet in all.

William Capers, the town's planning and community development director, recommended approval of the permit with several conditions, including the \$100,000 payment for traffic impacts at Curtis Drive and southbound U.S. 1. The money would go toward planned road improvements in that area.

Council members Brewer and Willis said they didn't agree with the road payment because it would set a precedent that could deter other businesses from moving to the town.

Wood said after the meeting that the company had agreed to pay the \$100,000,

adding the amount was determined based on a traffic impact analysis.

Town staff has also recommended maximum hours of 8 a.m. to 2 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 4 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

Colonial Downs also submitted a security improvement plan that stated Rosie's would coordinate with Dumfries police and maintain security cameras 24 hours a day, as well as other security measures.

No one spoke during a public hearing on the project before the council's vote.

## TOWER » FROM PAGE 1

cility would have to be upgraded to more recent FAA standards. That, according to Rivera, is impossible to do with the current tower.

On Monday, Rep. Jennifer Wexton, D-10th District, came to lend her support, getting an up close look at the tower and meeting with Rivera to discuss next steps. Wexton said she was there to learn how Congress might be able to persuade the FAA to help with the tower.

"This airport plays a very important role in terms of training and location for a lot of our national security folks," Wexton

said. "So I think it is an important thing for us to take up at the federal level."

According to Rivera, the FAA would first need to conduct a study at a cost of about \$500,000 to determine the recommended height, location and price for a new tower. From there, Rivera sees two paths: The FAA could either fund, build, maintain and operate the new tower, or it could enter into an agreement with the city in which a bond issued for the cost of the tower would be repaid by the authority.

Wexton said she planned to take what she saw back to Washington to vouch for

the project's necessity.

"There's certainly a desire to move forward on infrastructure, that's something we're getting cooperation on across the aisle. The only issue is how are we going to

pay for it?" Wexton said. "... [Next] I move forward with the FAA and the Department of Transportation and see if there's a way that we can move this project up the list."

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### COVID-19 IN PRINCE WILLIAM

All numbers through Wednesday, Sept. 2

**13,328**  
**Total confirmed and probable cases**  
 » Prince William: **10,944**  
 » Manassas: **1,813**  
 » Manassas Park: **571**  
 » Statewide: **122,542**

**218**  
**Deaths**  
 » Prince William: **187**  
 » Manassas: **24**  
 » Manassas Park: **7**  
 » Statewide: **2,641**

**1,041**  
**Hospitalizations**  
 » Prince William: **860**  
 » Manassas: **128**  
 » Manassas Park: **53**  
 » Statewide: **9,678**

**21**  
**Outbreaks\***  
 » **16** long-term care facilities  
 » **3** congregate settings  
 » **1** educational setting  
 » **1** correctional setting  
 » **531** outbreak associated cases  
 » **676** cases in healthcare workers  
 » Statewide: **845** outbreaks

For daily updates, visit [InsideNoVa.com](http://InsideNoVa.com) and sign up for our email newsletters and breaking news alerts.

SOURCES: Virginia Department of Health; Virginia Employment Commission.

\*-- An outbreak is defined as two or more cases in one setting. Outbreaks are reported for the Prince William Health District, which consists of the county and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park.

## Virtual fall arrives for students, teachers

### Concerns persist as 1,600 prepare for in-person class

» BY EMILY SIDES  
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Instead of climbing off school buses and filing into classrooms, students across Prince William County will be sitting at kitchen tables to kick off the new school year virtually Tuesday.

Some other area school divisions started classes last month, offering some early lessons to avoid first-day glitches, but the day after Labor Day will see students in Prince William, Fairfax and Loudoun counties logging on for the first time.

It's already not a seamless start. On Monday, Prince William schools Superintendent Steve Walts noted in a letter to parents that 44,000 devices had been distributed to students to assist with virtual learning, but some families with elementary school children are being asked to

» **INSIDE:**  
 • 'Grammy Schools': Relatives step up to help with virtual learning Page 7  
 • Just a few 'hiccups' as Manassas schools open virtually, Page 11  
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split the use of one device for two or more students due to "national supply-chain challenges." "As soon as we receive additional devices

SCHOOLS » PAGE 12

## Park of Memories

### Bike and skateboard facility to honor Lake Ridge resident

» BY EMILY SIDES  
 esides@insidenova.com

Before he died of suicide at the age of 22, Lake Ridge resident Charlie Boone loved to ride his bike and skateboard.

His mother, Wendy Boone, is hoping to honor his memory and keep his passions alive by building a bike and skate park in Woodbridge.

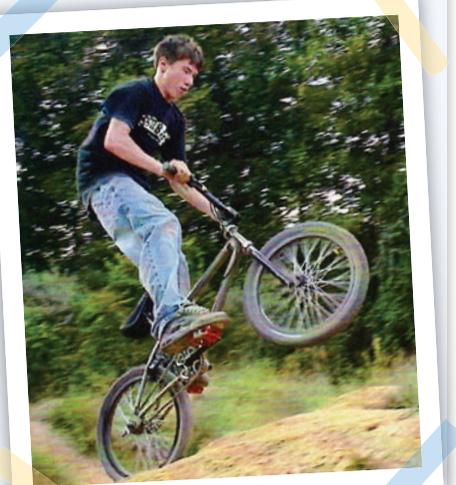
She is president of the Charlie Boone Trails Memorial Foundation, which is working to raise \$500,000 for the park to be built on

county-owned land at the northwest corner of Smoketown and Old Bridge roads.

"Charlie was always on his bike and on his skateboard; it was a big part of his life," Wendy Boone said in an interview last week.

Charlie Boone was working as a high-level security officer for the government when he suffered injuries in a motorcycle accident. Depression that he suffered as a result of those injuries contributed to his suicide. But his mother believes he was also distressed

SKATE PARK » PAGE 11



Growing up in Lake Ridge, Charlie Boone enjoyed biking and skateboarding. Now his friends and family are leading an effort to build a bike and skateboard park there.

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# Manassas begins virtual-only classes with just a few 'hiccups'

» BY JARED FORETEK  
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About 7,700 public school students in Manassas started a school year Monday that will look different than any before it, as classes began in an online-only format for the majority of students.

Some English-language learners and special education students will eventually receive limited in-person instruction, and the city's school board will consider transitioning to some in-person learning for all students regularly, but as of now all students are learning through a computer screen.

The school year also began in Stafford County on Monday as the two systems provided a preview of next Tuesday, when virtual learning begins in Northern Virginia's three largest localities: Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties.

Manassas school board member Tim Demeria visited Round, Baldwin and Jennie Dean elementary schools on Monday and told InsideNoVa afterward that from what he saw, things were going relatively smoothly. Some teachers are beginning virtual instruction from inside the school buildings, while others are teaching from home.

"Despite some glitches and then learn-

ing curves, the attitude of the teachers is high," Demeria said. "They understand the hurdles in front of them and realize that it's not going to be the same as in-person learning. But they're making the best of it and they seem confident that they're going to be able to do the job as far as keeping the kids on task and keeping them moving forward."

Parents and other guardians were invited to an in-person orientation for the start of the school year last week, where they could pick up Chromebooks if their child needed a device to access the lessons and a wifi hotspot if their home was without internet access. According to Superintendent Kevin Newman, the schools got around 80% participation. Demeria said he saw some families who were a little behind picking up devices on Monday, but that's fairly normal for any school year.

While some teachers are working out of their classrooms, others have arranged what they hope are ideal home setups. Mike Rannells is a history teacher at Osbourn High School, where his wife also teaches English. This year, he'll be working from the downstairs area of their home while his wife works upstairs. He says the school district has been very effective in lending teachers the assistance they need,

and that some of the day-to-day burdens are shared by groups of teachers, more so than in years before.

He compares this fall to being a first-time teacher again, but for his part "good instruction is good instruction. I know I can't be there in front of the kids but I can still put some things together that are as interactive as possible," Rannells said. "Still make them write, still make them read, still give them the critical skills."

But if the core of his job remains the same, Rannells said he's aware that the lives of some of his students may look significantly different. Many of his high school students have younger siblings who they'll be responsible for supervising with their parents at work. And some will be expected to work themselves.

"Especially in high school, a lot of them [are] helping siblings with their distance learning ... and culturally for a lot of our kids, the expectation is if you're not in a school building you're gonna work," Rannells said. "But you know, teaching at a school like Osbourn, we already do deal with and have to accommodate and help kids that come from tough situations ... we've been adapting for a long time at Osbourn."

After his visit to a number of schools on

the first day, Newman's outlook was positive.

"I'm just so pleased with the effort from our teachers and our staff, and the effort from our parents and our students," Newman told InsideNoVa.

From speaking with teachers, Newman estimated that average attendance on day one was somewhere in the 21 out of 24 range, which he said tracks with previous years. The superintendent said that after the first 10 days the district will have a better sense of what enrollment will look like for the semester, but that before the start of the school year about 77 more families submitted paperwork for home-schooling than last year.

Special education and English-learning students are beginning the school year with their peers in their virtual classrooms. Newman said the district will present a plan for their limited in-person instruction to the school board at its Sept. 22 meeting.

"I think we had a great first day. Does that mean that we had a couple hiccups that we had to work through? But every teacher that I talked to today was excited, of course there were some that were a little nervous," Newman said. "... Was it perfect? No. But it wouldn't have been perfect on an in-person day."

## SKATE PARK » FROM PAGE 1

seeing the dirt jumps and trails used by him and his friends -- and decades of riders before them -- become bulldozed and flattened.

"The last 10 years of his life was spent there and suddenly it was gone," she said.

Her goal with the park is to provide a safe place for youth, because she said that's an important outlet for mental health.

"That aspect of things, which is part of our vision, is to help kids, teens and young adults coping with difficulties with depression and anxiety and help prevent the rise of teenage suicide and self-harm," she said.

The foundation's plans for the 5.6-acre park include a walking path, picnic area, skateboarding bowl and half-pipe area, a pump track, BMX trails and a parking lot.

"We wanted a bowl and areas with different levels of difficulty for younger kids getting sea legs on a skateboard and also the ones who are already seaworthy and can go and do tricks and all that," Boone said.

She also envisions a memorial wall with names of young people in the community who have died too early, regardless of the cause.

In November, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors agreed in a memorandum of understanding to allow the foundation to build the park and maintain the walking and bike trails once complete. The county's parks, recreation

and tourism department is set to help with other maintenance of the park, according to the agreement.

The county spent \$13,800 for an environmental analysis of the property, completed in May 2018, and that will be its sole financial contribution to the park's construction.

In December, the county planning commission approved a public facility review for the park.

"So we had our marching orders, so to speak," Boone said.

NOVA BMX, a bike track in Woodbridge, previously raised \$3,000 for the foundation, which helped pay for the park's design by Pillar Design Studios, Wendy Boone said. Pillar Design, an Arizona-

based architecture firm that works in action sports projects, provided the foundation the \$500,000 cost estimate to build the park, Boone said. The firm is also helping with fundraising efforts.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the foundation had to cancel planned fundraising events. Over the summer, it pursued grants, Boone said.

"We did as much as we could," she said. "We haven't been idle."

After 33 years in Lake Ridge, Boone and her husband moved to the Outer Banks of North Carolina in 2013, but she has remained active in the Lake Ridge community and visits frequently. Their two daughters and grandchildren still live in Lake Ridge.

Boone's daughter, Lynda Lee, is a business owner and the foundation's vice president and has three children,

Lilyana, Brandon and Aiden. Boone's other daughter, Leslie Schmidt, and her husband have two daughters, Leah and Hannah. Leslie Schmidt is a Girl Scout

leader, her mom said.

"This park will be a place to build friendships and make memories, as Charlie and his friends did," according to the website.

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