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GLOUCESTER COUNTY NEWSNEWS

Boy Scouts turn over deed to camp, office in lieu of foreclosure

By FRANCES HUBBARD
FHUBBARD@DAILYPRESS.COM | JAN 16, 2016 AT 8:12 PM



The Colonial Virginia Council of the Boy Scouts of America has turned the deed's to its Bayport Scout Reservation in Middlesex Co. and their Newport News headquarters offices and Scout Shop over to Bayport Federal Credit Union because it can no longer meet the monthly payments on the loan used to purchase the camp.

MIDDLESEX — Bayport Scout Reservation is no longer home to the Colonial Virginia Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Fundraising efforts for more than a year have not been able to secure the camp's finances.

The council recently turned the deed to the 300-acre property in the Jamaica area of Middlesex County over to the bank, as well as the deed to its staff offices in Newport News, after it was unable to pay the debt owed on the camp.

"This council's camp debt has been an issue for this council for several years and we've consistently communicated the challenges with our members and lenders," Scott Rehrauer, the council's acting executive director, wrote in a statement. "While it's not the path we desired, the council's volunteer and professional leadership took the difficult step of resolving this matter with our lenders by turning over the deed to the property."

A representative for Bayport Credit Union in Newport News, the lender on the property, confirmed that the council had surrendered the deeds in lieu of foreclosure – meaning that the council and the bank came to an agreement that the Scouts would voluntarily turn over the properties without having to go through foreclosure. It accomplishes the same thing but it's a voluntary process, the credit union said.

"We had to make some tough decisions and that seemed to be the right one," said Jeff Wassamer, council president. "While it was hard, we think we are in a better place. We look forward to 2016 being a rebound year."

Since mid-2014, the council has been looking to raise over \$5 million to pay off the note remaining on the property. The funding campaign began because the council no longer could make its monthly payments on the camp. The amount of the monthly payment was not released.

After last summer, the council stopped using the camp for activities. Still attempting to raise money, Wassamer told the Daily Press last fall that handing over the deeds would be a worst-case scenario.

The Colonial Virginia Council, which serves the greater Hampton Roads region, purchased the camp in 2006 after selling its camp in Williamsburg. The sale, due to intruding commercial development, netted the Scouts \$5 million.

The council purchased Bayport for \$16 million. It used the proceeds from the Williamsburg camp along with contribution pledges of \$10 million to finance the purchase. By the middle of 2014, the contributions were falling short of the pledges and no additional contributions were being made. The camp is not named after the credit union.

The council's Scout Service Center and Scout Shop located at 11721 Jefferson Avenue in Newport News was part of the collateral in the loan.

"The camp would have been nice to keep but really we have spent a lot of time trying to raise money to pay off debt and it's hurt our programs," Wassamer said. He sees this an opportunity to turn the council's focus back to its mission of providing character-building and leadership opportunities.

Bayport Scout Reservation served about 3,000 campers every year from a variety of programs and organizations. The camp served Scouts from the Middle Peninsula, Peninsula and southward, and from as far as Washington, D.C., New York and New Jersey.

Scouts typically rotate the camps they attend each year, Wassamer said, so there are plenty of opportunities in the region to meet the camping requirements.

"The (Boy Scouts of America) has been an active part of Southside and the Peninsula for more than 100 years and we will continue our ongoing service to youth and families," Rehrauer wrote. "Our programs to local youth continue without disruption and the council is committed to providing the Scouting experience to all youth that wish to participate."

The Bayport camp is on the Rappahannock River and offered a variety of activities, including archery, rifle shooting, swimming, rope climbing, sailing and canoeing.

In addition to cabins, the camp has a new 16,000-square-foot air-conditioned mess hall and multipurpose building, along with private shower and bathhouses and a "Scoutcraft" and nature pavilion.

A representative for Bayport Credit Union said the bank is looking at options for the property, including ways to keep it a camp. However, the credit union does not hold onto these types of properties and will be selling it.

Wassamer said the council is looking at a new location for its offices.

Hubbard can be reached by phone at 757-298-5834.

Topics: [Boy Scouts of America](#)

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CONTACT



Frances Hubbard is the Gloucester-Mathews reporter for the Daily Press. She is an alumnus of Christopher Newport University and has been with the Daily Press Media Group since 2003. Born and raised on the Middle Peninsula, she has a genuine love for the community she covers. Her passions include her family, writing, running, sunshine, sand, and water.

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