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## **Vic Garber named Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation assistant director** *Long-time Parks & Rec professional ready to join effort in growing Harrisonburg department*

HARRISONBURG, Va. – A Parks & Recreation career that started in 1979 at Harrisonburg’s Community Activities Center has now come full circle, as Vic Garber is ready to come home as Harrisonburg Parks & Rec’s new assistant director.

Garber, who currently serves as the deputy director of the City of Charlottesville’s Parks & Rec department, is no stranger to Harrisonburg. He grew up in Rockingham County and often took part in Harrisonburg Parks & Rec programs. His first parks and recreation job was as center supervisor of what is now known as the Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center at Westover Park – a facility named in honor of a man who helped form his values and appreciation for the field today.

That job kicked off a career filled with more than 30 years of leadership experience at recreation departments in Fayetteville, N.C., and at Roanoke and Charlottesville. But, for Garber, it’s not just a career – it’s a life-long passion.

“I have always enjoyed participating in outdoor activities and have a real appreciation for the healthy impact being outdoors has on people,” he said. “I am an Eagle Scout, which instilled many of my outdoor values and appreciation for environmental education – as well as being a lifeguard, tennis instructor and was heavily involved in high school sports. In college I originally thought I would pursue a degree in Forestry until I took an Introductory course in parks and recreation which combined many academic disciplines. I learned quickly that my real passion was to bring people together for enjoyable healthy experiences and that I am really a people person.”

While Garber has experienced many special moments in his career, one hard-to-reach accomplishment stands out in his mind as a favorite moment – serving as the chair of the national accreditation process for the City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation Department when his team earned accreditation.

“We immediately called our accreditation team members who were anxiously waiting in our office conference room in Roanoke,” Garber remembered. “I will never forget the amazing feeling of hearing our team celebrate over the phone that we were finally nationally accredited.”

Harrisonburg Parks & Rec Director Brian Mancini hopes Garber gets to celebrate a similar moment one day soon in The Friendly City. One of his goals for the department is to gain national accreditation, and Garber will play a key role as the new assistant



*(Above) Vic Garber, the new Assistant Director of Harrisonburg Parks & Rec.*

director. But that's only a small part of what Mancini is looking forward to seeing Garber – who is experienced as a project manager for numerous park master plans, community-wide comprehensive master plans and facility design projects – accomplish for the growing department.

“I’m greatly looking forward to Mr. Garber bringing a lot of gained experience from his previous stops in Roanoke and Charlottesville where he has accomplished so many great things for those communities,” Mancini said. “His years of experience in the recreation field will be an asset to our team and will enhance what we are already doing here in Harrisonburg. And his passion for recreation will go a long way in helping us further our mission of enhancing the quality of life of those in our community.”

As Garber prepares for his first day on Monday, Oct. 17, he is looking forward to being back with Harrisonburg Parks & Rec, getting to know the team and learning more about what the community values in its parks and recreation system.

“I am very grateful and excited to have been chosen to assist Mr. Mancini in leading the department,” he said. “I was very impressed with the level of maintenance and cleanliness observed at all facilities during my initial tour. Additionally, the new facilities such as the pickleball and futsal courts, soccer complex and A Dream Come True Playground” are high quality community facilities. These new facilities are exciting for all ages and abilities and indicate to me that Harrisonburg is progressive and understands the benefits of a vibrant, best practice parks and recreation department. I am very excited to be joining the team at Parks and Recreation!

More information about the department is available at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/parks-recreation](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/parks-recreation). You also can follow the department at [www.facebook.com/harrisonburgparksandrecreation](https://www.facebook.com/harrisonburgparksandrecreation) and [www.instagram.com/harrisonburgparks](https://www.instagram.com/harrisonburgparks).

***The City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to 51,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).*



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