

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Thursday, September 3, 2015**

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Nelson, Chairperson; Dick Buckler, Vice-Chairperson; Doug Bellis, Teresa Howard, Caroline King and Ashley Varner.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jake Heibel, Patrick Murphy and James Swift.

RECREATION AND PARKS STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Brian Loewe, R&P Director; David Guyther, Parks Division Manager; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder. David Heilmeyer, Southern Region Manager, MD Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Heritage Service, and Scott McGuire, also attended.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dick Buckler moved, seconded Doug Bellis, to approve the minutes of August 6, 2015; motion carried 5-0.

MYRTLE POINT PARK DEER HUNTING PROPOSAL

Director Brian Loewe introduced David Heilmeyer, Southern Region Manager, MD Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Heritage Service, and Scott McGuire, citizen and representative for the Mill Cove Neighbors Group.

Mr. McGuire provided an overview of the proposal which included:

- Mill Cove Neighbors are seeking measures to reduce the local deer population in the area. Damage to lawns, gardens and fields has been experienced.
- A community meeting was held on March 19, 2015 with County and State government staff to discuss the issue.
- As a result, a proposal was developed for bow hunting at the park.
- Proposal calls for DNR Wildlife Heritage Service to manage the hunting activity.
- DNR to issue permits to properly licensed hunters.
- County staff to take plan under advisement. Considerations include: hunting areas, buffer zones, hunting season, and days hunting may be permitted.
- The County Attorney and Local Government Insurance Trust will need to review the final proposal.
- The final proposal will be presented to the Friends of Myrtle Point Park for comment.
- Then the proposal can be presented to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County for approval.
- Formal agreement would then be drafted by DNR and approved by the County.

Board member Caroline King expressed concern with hunting six days per week; she suggested no hunting on Saturdays (biggest park patron day). Chairperson Tom Nelson asked for park visitation numbers; staff will send that to Board members. Dick Buckler was concerned about the size of park in relation to the hunting areas.

PARKS DIVISION UPDATE

Director Brian Loewe introduced David Guyther, Parks Manager, who provided a report on activities of the Parks Division. Highlights included:

- Parks Division staff are busy making preparations for fall sports (23 fields)

- Improvements at Jarboesville Park parking area
- Noted that parks and public landings are experiencing heavy usage
- Chancellor's Run Park will receive asphalt overlay in the coming weeks
- Things to be done in the future include: fencing replacements, Cecil Park lighting, and sprayground resurfacing.
- Repairs to the Wicomico Shores Landing pavilion were made after storm damage

Mr. Guyther noted that the playground at Meidzinski Park will be replaced in FY2017. Members expressed the desire to see some sort of "fantasy" playground, and not the traditional style and colors as other park playgrounds. Staff would like to avoid wood structures if at all possible due to maintenance and splintering concerns and will research options.

DORSEY PARK COMMUNICATION TOWER

Director Brian Loewe introduced Bob Kelly, Director, Emergency Communications and Information Technology, who provided an overview of the communications tower project. Highlights included:

- There is an important safety initiative underway to improve radio coverage for first responders. The initiative includes the addition of seven (7) new towers throughout St. Mary's County. The 911 Communications upgrade will result in a total of thirteen (13) towers which will provide 95% radio coverage for first responders operating in the jurisdiction.
- Locating a communications tower in Dorsey Park will require a Program Open Space conversion approved by the State as the property was purchased with POS funds for recreation and open space.
- The proposed area to be converted is located in a wooded area of Dorsey Park, is not being actively used for park purposes.
- The telecommunications facility consists of an approximate 2,500 s.f. compound that includes a monopole, equipment shelter, generator, and power cabinet, all enclosed within a chain link fence. A separate gravel access road to Hill Crest Drive, also about 2,500 s.f., is part of the area.
- Several sites in the Hollywood area were studied as potential sites to locate one of the communication towers. The originally identified location at the Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department was eliminated due to Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) height restrictions due to the proximity to the St. Mary's County Airport.
- The POS conversion application will be presented to the CSMC in the near future. The application will then be forwarded for State consideration and approval.

PROJECT UPDATES

Director Brian Loewe provided an update on the status of several park and facility improvement projects.

Three Notch Trail Phase VI - Construction on this phase began in March. This Phase will run from MD Route 5 in Mechanicsville to MD Route 236 in New Market for a distance of about five miles. This section will link already completed sections in Laurel Grove and Charlotte Hall and will provide 11 miles of trail in the north county area. **Three Notch Trail Phase VII** - The concept planning process which will begin this winter will produce alternatives and recommendations for the trail alignment in the California (Wildewood) and Hollywood areas.

LPPRP Update – This project consists of updating the County's 2012 approved Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan. The plan is due to be completed by July 1, 2017.

Drayden African American Schoolhouse Project – A generous benefactor came forward and offered to donate the materials and services needed to repair the Drayden Schoolhouse. The project is approximately 30% complete.

OTHER BUSINESS

Director Brian Loewe asked members if they had suggestions for meetings or site visits for the future.

The November meeting is anticipated to be held at the Loffler Senior Center at Chancellor's Run Regional Park. Recreation and Parks will be hosting the first annual Youth Celebration of Sports banquet. The event will recognize and honor the outstanding participants and coaches from each organization from the local 2015 sports season. There will be more information to follow on this event.

NEXT MEETING OF R&P BOARD

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on October 1, 2015.