

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, August 5, 2010
MINUTES**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Rush, Chairperson; Richard Buckler, Vice-Chairperson; Patrick Dugan, Al Harrison, Sabrina Hecht, Robert Hicks, Julie Lemmon Tom Nelson and David Phalen.

RECREATION AND PARKS STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Phil Rollins, Director; Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager; David Guyther, Parks Manager; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder. Dr. Jennifer Schmidt was present for the presentation on the Child Obesity Epidemic issue.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Lisa Rush, Chairperson, at 5:30 p.m., in the Chesapeake Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

David Phalen moved, seconded by Robert Hicks, to approve the minutes of June 3, 2010; motion carried 8-0.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

Arthur Shepherd provided an update on Recreation Division programs and events.

- Summerstock Musical – The summerstock production of Cinderella was a great success. Total attendance was 3,480 for ten performances. An extra show was added for the summer camps. This year's show had the third highest attendance of all time in the 27 year history of summerstock. The Cinderella Tea Party pre-event was sold out with 150 in attendance.
- Summer Camps – Five summer day camps averaged 244 participants weekly for the month of July. This is an increase of 82 participants over last year's numbers at this time. This season has gone smoothly with no major incidents.
- Leonard Hall Recreation Center – Interior and exterior painting will be done in the next few weeks.
- Great Mills Pool – Underwater light repairs were recently done. The pool will be closed from Sept 7 -19th to install the air supported structure and for fall maintenance.
- Gymnastics Center – Session VI of the recreational program registered 244 participants. So far, 2010 is up by 133 participants over last year.
- Fall Fitness Festival – The third annual Fall Fitness Festival is scheduled for Saturday October 23rd, 10am -2pm.
- Youth Football – Staff continues to work with the clubs on plans for opening day of youth football, officials, weigh ins, game day supervision and other plans to make this a great football season. Opening day is scheduled for August 28th. There are 4 clubs with 40 teams this year.

Sabrina Hecht asked if there were any former leagues that have decided not to come into the County program. Mr. Shepherd stated that, while there have been some issues

to work out, that hasn't happened. One of the challenges was that there were not enough teams to have 105 lb. and 125 lb. weight divisions; therefore, they had to be combined.

PRESENTATION ON THE CHILD OBESITY EPIDEMIC ISSUE

Mr. Rollins introduced Dr. Jennifer Schmidt and board member Julie Lemmon who provided a presentation on the child obesity epidemic issue. They provided a Power Point presentation titled "Child Obesity – What Can One Community Do?" Information from the presentation included:

Childhood obesity epidemic:

- 1 in 4 four year olds is obese (Washington Examiner, April 2009).
- "Without intervention, the next generation will be at very high risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, cancers, joint diseases, and other problems connected with obesity." (Dr. Glenn Flores, pediatrics and public health professor at University of Texas SW Medical School).

Reasons for childhood obesity

- At the individual level, childhood obesity is the result of an imbalance between the calories a child consumes as food and beverages and the calories a child uses to support normal growth and development, metabolism and physical activity.
- Obesity results when a child consumes more calories than the child uses.

What can we do?

- A single "stop the snack" policy could be an effective first step.
- The recommendation would be to do away with the traditional snack schedule; parents could still bring snacks for their child if desired.

Examples of snacks provided at sports games (it's customary for a child to receive a drink and a snack after games)

- Bag of chips – 150 calories (1 oz)
- Cookies – 150 to 300 calories (6 cookies)
- Juice – 80 to 120 calories (6 – 8 oz box)
- Gatorade – 120 calories (16 oz)

Exercise v. calories burned

- 30 minutes of running = 350 calories burned for an adult (less for a child)
- One pound of fat = 3,500 calories.
- To loose about one pound per week you need to have a 500 calorie deficit every day, for 7 days.
- Most kids only play for about 20 minutes per game; most are not burning enough calories to burn off high calorie snacks.

Why is this harmful?

- Children are sometimes learning that even a small amount of physical activity is followed by a food reward, sometimes any unhealthy reward.
- Most importantly, kids are often consuming more calories than they are

actually using during the sports activity.

Conclusion

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has identified obesity as a major health concern. The Center currently funds programs in 25 states to help address the problem.
- The State of Maryland is not funded under this program.
- Doing away with the “snack list” is a small step in the effort to change how youth view physical activity and “rewards.”

Ms. Hecht asked if the Department is considering recommending to leagues that concessions not be sold at County parks. Mr. Rollins stated that the Department has not been involved over the years in what volunteer leagues do for snacks and fundraising. Staff could implement a policy for the programs administered by R&P; that’s mostly indoor sports. She asked if vending machines would be taken out of Leonard Hall Recreation Center. Mr. Rollins stated that’s a consideration for the future; at least healthier choices could be provided. Ms. Hecht supported the idea of R&P providing guidance on healthy choices; she did not support a government policy on snacks.

Mr. Hicks stated that information on healthy eating and habits could be provided to families with the code of conduct. Mr. Shepherd stated agreed, that’s something that could be done through the Raising Community Standards program. Perhaps a flyer on healthier alternatives could be provided. Mr. Hicks also suggested “did you know” types of signage that could be installed at centers, parks and trails. Ms. Lemmon suggested the R&P Program Guide could be used to get the word out.

Mr. Rollins provided copies of article from the NRPA’s Parks and Recreation magazine titled “Healthy Choices – Fighting the Obesity Epidemic.” He noted the article described potential funding opportunities for future programs to target this issue. He referred members to the website www.nrpa.org for several articles on healthy choices in the July 2010 issue.

Ms. Lemmon noted that Civista Hospital, the Charles County Health Department and the County’s Recreation Division recently received a collaborative grant to address the problem of childhood obesity through a program called “Yes We Can.”

Mr. Rollins stated that R&P would like to be proactive in getting information out to the public without appearing heavy handed. Staff will report back to the Board on this issue in September or October on some recommendations.

PARKS DIVISION REPORT

David Guyther provided an update on Parks Division projects and activities and provided a Power Point handout with pictures of some recent park improvement projects.

- Chancellor’s Run Regional Park – An issue with erosion around the tree areas near the Hall of Fame building was corrected with retaining walls, new topsoil and plantings.
- Lancaster Park – An issue with erosion was also corrected at Lancaster Park which required retaining walls, proper drainage and plantings.

- Bat Racks – Staff designed several racks for baseball bats at Chancellor’s Run Park. The plan is to install these at all County parks with baseball fields.
- Basketball Court Renovations – The basketball court at Fifth District Park was recently refurbished with new surfacing; staff hopes to refurbish several others in the near future.
- Annual Bernie Fowler Wade In – The annual Bernie Fowler wade in was held at Myrtle Point Park and organized by the Chesapeake Charter School.
- Myrtle Point Park – Staff continues to deal the challenges that increased usage has brought to Myrtle Point Park (trash, after hours use, overnight camping, open fires, etc.) The Sheriff’s Department and the Friends of Myrtle Point Park have been assisting with monitoring weekend activities at the park. The County Times newspaper featured the park last week in its Hidden Gems article. Similar issues are still being experienced at Elms Beach Park.

PROJECT UPDATES

Three Notch Trail Phase V – Concurrence in award was recently received from the State Highway Administration and the construction contract should be officially awarded in the next few days. Staff expects construction will begin in September. This phase runs from John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove to MD Route 5 in Mechanicsville.

Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields – Staff has received all the necessary plan approvals for the project. It is anticipated the project will be out to bid this fall.

Elms Hunting - The Department is now accepting applications for bow hunting permits to hunt deer on the 85 acre County managed Elms hunting area. Hunting season starts in mid-September.

Civil War Memorial – Staff continues to work with the Unified Committee on Afro-American Contributions (UCAC) to develop a memorial at Lancaster Park that will recognize the contributions of the United States Colored Troops, and all Union soldiers and sailors from St. Mary's County, who fought during the Civil War. The project will pay particular tribute to James H. Harris and William H. Barnes, Medal of Honor recipients from St. Mary's County. The group received two bond bills in 2010 totaling \$300,000 for the construction and site improvements. The bond funding must be matched. Staff is also working with the UCAC and the Young Marines group to refurbish the former Flat Tops house at this site for meetings, storage and other park and community uses.

Mr. Harrison asked how the site was selected for the memorial. Mr. Rollins stated that it moved forward as part of the master planning process for the Carver Heights Community Park. The Save the Village group plans a memorial at CHCP for the activities at the old USO building at that site.

Several sites in the Lexington Park area were looked at for the Civil War memorial during the process; the UCAC ultimately expressed strong support for this site at Lancaster Park. The Lancaster Park property is owned by the US Government and leased to the County. The park is named after John Lancaster, an African American educator, volunteer and former County Commissioner.

Dorsey Park Tennis Courts – The St. Mary’s County Tennis Association has agreed to assist with funding to help defray the electricity costs at the Dorsey Park tennis courts. The courts were lighted using County and USTA Mid-Atlantic Maryland funds earlier this year. The annual cost for electricity for the lights is estimated at \$600.

OTHER BUSINESS

Gymnastics Center Lease Agreement – Patrick Dugan asked when the Gymnastics Center lease agreement was up for renewal. Mr. Rollins stated he recalls it was for ten years, ending in 2012.

New Water Trails Guide – Phil Rollins and Kathy Bailey reported that the County recently worked with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources on a new guide called “Water Trails in Western St. Mary’s County, Maryland.” The guide promotes several canoe/kayak routes on the Potomac River and its tributaries. It includes maps of six suggested water trails, detailed trip information, and rules and regulations for public landings. The back side has information on sites and attractions, land trails, wildlife, outfitters, boating safety tips and leave no trace information. A local water trails committee was developed to work on the project. The committee consisted of: Lisa Gutierrez, MD DNR Boating Services; Rebecca Deprey, St. Mary’s County Division of Tourism (co-managed the project with R&P); David Guyther and Debra Pence from R&P; Laschelle Miller, Leonardtown Administrator; Lynn Erwin of the Paddle Quest group; and outfitters - BluHaven Piers and McIntosh Outfitters.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, September 2, 2010, at 5:30 p.m., in Chesapeake Building in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on September 2, 2010.