

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD  
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY**

**Meeting of Thursday, January 15, 2004**

**Minutes**

**Board members present:** Robert Harper, Chairperson; Sam Brown, Dorothy Gass, Greg Hambright, Coleman Hillman, Jody Payne and Robert Richardson.

**Board members absent:** Kaki Burruss and Andrew Roper.

**Recreation and Parks staff present:** Phil Rollins, Director of Recreation and Parks (R&P); Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Board meeting was called to order by Robert Harper, Chairperson, at 5:30 P.M. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Jody Payne motioned, seconded by Sam Brown, to approve the minutes of December 4, 2003 with two corrections. Motion carried 6-0.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Chairman Robert Harper welcomed new Board members Dorothy Gass and Greg Hambright.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Sam Brown presented the Nominating Committee's recommendations for the 2004 R&P Board officers. He recommended that Robert Harper be nominated as Board Chairperson and Coleman Hillman as Vice Chairperson. All present were in favor of the nominations.

**RECREATION DIVISION REPORT**

**Status of "Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports"**

Director Phil Rollins introduced Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, who provided an update on the National Association of Youth Sports program titled, "Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports." Mr. Shepherd stated that while the County has a network of wonderful volunteers that manage affiliated sports leagues in the County, work needs to be done to raise the standards in youth sports. On January 6, 2004 the Department invited youth league representatives to a meeting to provide information on the program and to gather input from the leagues. Fourteen league representatives attended the meeting. Items discussed included the role of the R&P Department, the draft plan outline, administrator/coaches/parent training, and how the plan would impact the leagues. The league representatives agreed with staff that Kenny Sothoron, R&P Sports Coordinator, should serve as the Professional Sports Administrator. Agenda

items for the next league meeting, to be held on February 17<sup>th</sup>, will include how the program will be implemented, the costs associated with the program, resources currently available, parent/spectator negative behavior and authority that league representatives have in parks and facilities. Mr. Shepherd will speak to a representative from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's department to develop a plan to deal with negative behavior.

### **Maryland's Tobacco Free Sports Program**

Mr. Shepherd briefed the Board on the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's "Tobacco Free Sports Initiative" which staff plans to speak to youth sports leagues about as part of the "Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports" program. He stated that policies to ban the use of tobacco products in certain public places where youth sports are being held are becoming common all over the country. Anne Arundel, Caroline, Carroll, Harford, Kent, Montgomery, Talbot and Wicomico Counties have all implemented various smoke free policies to discourage tobacco product use near county managed athletic complexes. Tobacco policies are usually implemented for specified distances around fields and facilities, and not in entire parks. Most policies are self-policed with signage informing citizens of rules. Mr. Rollins asked the Board to consider "how far should the County go with this policy" and should this policy apply to youth sports only or to all R&P programs and facilities.

Bob Richardson noted that the Babe Ruth Baseball League has its own policy and doesn't allow smoking on fields and in dug outs. Coleman Hillman expressed support for banning smoking for specified distances around athletic fields and noted that there are sometimes conflicts between smokers and non-smokers in bleacher areas. Greg Hambright noted that a policy would be the first step to getting the public acclimated to the rules. Chairman Harper stated that the Board needs to keep in mind the impact on other users of the parks, such as pavilion renters, when considering the policy. Sam Brown thought a 50 yard no smoking limit would be sufficient around athletic fields. Mr. Rollins stated that staff will draft a policy and brief the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on the proposal. Mr. Harper asked that the alcohol policy for parks be reviewed; he has seen individuals leave pavilion areas and carry beer to athletic fields. Some of these issues occur due to lack of supervision in the parks; currently, park attendants greet rental groups and provide them with the sports equipment and rules and regulations, but park attendants aren't present during the entire event to enforce the rules.

### **Great Mills Swimming Pool**

Mr. Shepherd reported that the Great Mills Swimming Pool holiday promotion worked very well to get users into the pool. During the period from December 20<sup>th</sup> through January 4<sup>th</sup> rates were reduced to \$2 for youth (from \$4) and \$3 for adults (from \$5) for the holiday promotion. Total attendance was up significantly and fitness/lap swimming also increased; November 2003 total admission was 1,779 and December 2003 admission was 2,106. Staff continues to work on marketing initiatives for the pool – they include a public service announcement for channel 12, party rentals and Licensed Extended Day program field trips.

### **Gymnastics Center**

The St. Mary's Gymnastics Center Competitive Team received second place in the level four competition in December in Baltimore County (see the R&P website at [www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate](http://www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate) for complete list of meet scores).

Jody Payne stated that she's received phone calls from parents who haven't been able to enroll their children in gymnastics classes due to classes being full and other reasons. Mr. Shepherd stated that the Department does have pre-registration for those already in the program and there is limited space available in some classes. He agreed to forward her comments to staff; perhaps additional classes can be offered and marketing efforts can be enhanced to promote open registration times.

### **Carver Recreation Center**

Mr. Shepherd highlighted recent developments at the Carver Recreation Center (CRC). On December 8<sup>th</sup> a Letter of Agreement between R&P and the Boys and Girls Club was signed enabling the Club to operate after school and Saturday programming at the CRC for youth in the community. The St. Mary's Soccer League began a new indoor soccer program, with 38 teams, at the CRC. Teen Dances have also started at the CRC. Chairman Harper asked if the Center is well received by the community; Mr. Shepherd said a few complaints have been received regarding the teen dances. An information meeting for the community has been scheduled for Tuesday, January 20, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. at the CRC to address concerns.

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the BOCC, R&P and Office on Aging staff, plan to visit the Harford County McFaul Activity Center, a multi-generational facility, on Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Hillman will attend on behalf of the R&P Board. The facility includes a senior center and a large gym and is a partnership between Harford County Recreation and Parks, Office on Aging and Boys and Girls Clubs. The BOCC has expressed the desire to implement a similar arrangement at the CRC.

Chairman Harper introduced Commissioner McKay who visited the meeting. Commissioner McKay welcomed the new R&P Board members and thanked the veteran members for their service to the County. He added that the multi-generational concept is a great idea and indicated that if the plan is implemented at CRC that it could have other applications in St. Mary's County as well.

### **Skatepark**

Mr. Shepherd informed the Board that effective December 1<sup>st</sup> the skatepark began operating on weekends only. The outdoor temperature must also be 40 degrees or above to open on those days. Depending on weather conditions, staff plans to reopen the skatepark on weekdays beginning in March 2004.

### **PROPOSED SPORTS TOURNAMENT FIELD USE FEE**

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that over the years the Department has received an increasing number of requests from non-affiliated leagues to use County fields for fundraising tournaments. The Department is considering implementing tournament fees to help offset the costs associated with athletic field maintenance (preparation before tournaments and clean-up afterwards). Tournament organizers already pay a fee for field lights and a fee for using fields at Chancellor's Run Regional Park (CRRP) for supervision. Other than at CRRP, groups don't pay to use fields at parks. Staff would like to implement fees for the upcoming spring season.

Mr. Shepherd provided a handout which included possible fees for tournaments. Under the draft schedule, current affiliated leagues would pay \$10 or less for tournaments and

independent leagues would pay \$25 to register a team, \$20 per day games (CRRP), \$10 per game at other parks (\$10 no field prep; \$30 with field prep), \$30 for night games and \$10 for park supervision. The new fees would mainly impact independent tournament organizers. Mr. Shepherd estimated that organizers would still make a profit after paying R&P the field use fee.

Mr. Hambright recommended that staff build a model on R&P's true costs of hosting events and list proposed fees accordingly to cover those costs. Mr. Shepherd will re-draft the proposed sheet of tournament fees to reflect that method and present a revised draft during the February meeting.

The Board expressed consensus for supporting staff's concept of charging fees for independent league tournaments. The Board did not express support for charging tournament fees to the youth sports affiliated leagues. As in the past, no supervision would be provided for affiliated league tournaments at parks (except CRRP where such supervision is currently provided). Mr. Richardson did not support charging fees for affiliated youth leagues to have all-star games. Mr. Shepherd stated that fees would not be charged for all-star games; just large tournaments. The fees are proposed to enhance the level of service and to provide park supervision.

#### **WICOMICO SHORES PUBLIC LANDING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Mr. Rollins thanked Mr. Hillman for attending the BOCC Public Forum on Tuesday, January 13, 2004 held at the Wicomico Shores Golf Course Clubhouse. Citizens were invited to comment on the proposed improvements at the Wicomico Shores Public Landing which include a new boat ramp, shore erosion control measures and a new fishing pier. Mr. Rollins provided photos of the damage sustained to the large fishing pier from Hurricane Isabel. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will pay up to 75% of the cost to restore the pier to its pre-hurricane condition. FEMA will not cover the cost to replace the pilings which were already deteriorated. The total cost to replace the pilings and the decking for the pier is \$265,000; FEMA will reimburse about \$170,000 of that cost; the State's Waterway Improvement Program (WWI) may pay some of this depending upon some special Hurricane relief funds from the legislature for FY05. Staff's recommendation is to wait until the County hears from the State regarding the special WWI funding. Under this scenario, if the State funding is approved, the County may receive an additional \$120,000 and would only require approximately \$35/40,000 in County funds to complete the pier project. Staff is recommending deferring the project if the special State funding is not received.

The other projects at this public landing include a new boat ramp, dredging the channel in front of the boat ramp and implementing shore erosion control at the site. Currently, only \$150,000 in State funding is available; the entire project would cost about \$333,000. Staff had originally recommended to the BOCC to replace the boat ramp first and use the material from dredging to assist with the shore erosion control measures. Since it has been determined that the dredge material is unsuitable for the shore erosion project, there's no reason to tie the two projects together. Based on community and staff input, R&P is now recommending using funding currently available for doing the shore erosion control first. Staff then proposes to do the dredging and boat ramp projects next year with possible State funding and "front funding" from the County.

**Greg Hambright motioned, seconded by Jody Payne, to recommend to the BOCC to move forward with the shore erosion control measures as the first priority at the public landing, then proceed with the dredging and replacement boat ramp projects if the County is fiscally able to do so. Motion carried with all in favor.**

Chairman Harper asked if the Homeowner's Association at Wicomico Shores could be asked for support in the event that all necessary funding to replace the pier isn't secured. Mr. Rollins will check explore that option.

### **FY2005 BUDGET UPDATE**

Mr. Rollins provided a spreadsheet which detailed R&P Capital Projects that are proposed to be included in the FY05 Recommended CIP Budget and a spreadsheet of projects not included in the budget. Projects currently included are Nicolet Park, Three Notch Trail, Parks ADA, Piney Point Lighthouse Museum, Tennis Court replacements and Wicomico Courts replacement. Thirteen projects which were previously included but were removed from the CIP include the Drayden African American Schoolhouse, Cecil Park, Myrtle Point Park, Seventh District Park, Elms Beach Park, St. Clement's Island Museum, Central County Park, Chancellor Run Park, Tennis Court replacements, John G. Lancaster Park, Chaptico Park Phase 2 & 3, mobile entertainment stage, and North County Pool.

Chairman Harper asked why the \$50,000 for Wicomico tennis court replacement remains in the budget. Tennis courts were originally scheduled to be built at Chaptico Park to serve northern County residents. Now that Chaptico Park Phase 2 & 3 have been deferred, the BOCC decided to improve the courts at Wicomico Shores. Two of the four courts will be replaced.

Mr. Hambright asked if the residents of Wicomico Shores would rather have the tennis courts replaced or would they support using the funding appropriated for the tennis courts, along with FEMA and WWI funds, to fully fund the Wicomico pier replacement project in FY2005. Mr. Rollins will investigate.

Chairman Harper stated that, according to the handout, it appears that from FY07 – FY10, the County will only allocate \$50,000 for each year for R&P projects. Mr. Rollins stated that impact fees (\$350,000 - \$400,000 annually) and Program Open Space (\$250,000 - \$300,000) funding are dedicated funding sources for parkland acquisition and park development. At this point, these funding sources have not been programmed beyond FY05; the Finance Director has asked the BOCC to consider changing the ordinance to allow the funds to be used for other purposes. The County doesn't have to spend its POS funds as they are allocated, but can let them accumulate for future projects. The danger in doing that is that in tight fiscal times "if you don't spend the funds, you can lose them."

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that he will present an overview of the R&P requested FY2005 Operating Budget during the February Board meeting. Other than implementing step increases for personnel, the request will be a "flat" budget. Staff has been asked to submit separate requests for any increases or requests for new funds; departments have also been asked to prepare a budget representing a 5% reduction.

### **PROJECT UPDATES**

### **Three Notch Trail**

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that he will provide an update to the BOCC on the status of the Three Notch Trail project on Tuesday, January 27, 2004. Board members are invited to attend. The Recreational Trails Committee will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, January 28, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. at the Town of Leonardtown office. Mr. Hillman previously served as the Board liaison on the Committee; he asked for another volunteer to serve in this capacity.

### **Nicolet Park**

The Nicolet Park Phase 2 project will go out to bid in the near future and construction is expected to begin this spring; staff anticipates the project will be completed in fall 2004.

### **SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board of St. Mary's County will be held at 5:30 P.M. on Thursday, February 5, 2004 in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

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Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board February 5, 2004.

A tape recording of the meeting is kept on file in the Recreation and Parks' office for one year.

cc: Board of County Commissioners  
County Administrator  
St. Mary's County Department Heads  
Recreation and Parks Department Division Heads