

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, February 5, 2009**

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson; Richard Buckler, Al Harrison, Robert Hicks, Thomas Nelson and Lisa Wainger-Rush.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Patrick Dugan, Sabrina Hecht and David Phalen.

RECREATION AND PARKS STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation and Parks (R&P); Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager; David Guyther, Parks Manager; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson, 5:35 p.m., in the Chesapeake Building in Leonardtown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lisa Wainger-Rush moved, seconded by Richard Buckler, to approve the minutes of January 15, 2009, with one correction; motion carried 6-0.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

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

- Gymnastics - 488 young people registered for the recreational section in January with 174 of those being first time participants. Last year at this time, there were 367 registered and 87 new participants. This was an increase of 122 total registrants and 87 first time registrants; the section has met 60% of projections so far for this fiscal year.
- Community Meetings at Carver Recreation Center – The first in a series of community meetings was held on January 22, 2009 with about 35 people in attendance. The next meeting is scheduled for tonight, at the Center. Programming has been assigned to Coordinator BJ Waldron. Staff has tentatively planned to open for evening programming on March 16, 2009. Space has been identified for a computer lab and IT plans to install twelve computers at the site. Staff plans to work with the Carver Heights community to identify volunteers to assist with marketing, coordination of volunteer efforts, fundraising and community projects.
- Will Smith Memorial Youth Basketball Awards – R&P will present the first annual Will Smith Youth Basketball Leadership Awards on Friday, February 6, 2009 at Great Mills High School. This program will recognize R&P Youth Basketball participants that

demonstrate excellent character and are leaders among their peers. Recipients were nominated by team coaches and provided letters of support from two teachers.

R&P FY2010 BUDGET UPDATES

Operating Budget

Mr. Rollins referred to the FY2010 Operating Budget handout provided. The baseline budget column represents a 2% increase and the requested budget is a 3% increase for a total of \$3,924,291. The budget includes a \$50,000 subsidy to the Great Mills Pool to help cover the shortfall in the Enterprise Fund. The Recreation Enterprise Fund FY2010 requested budget is \$2,683,234 and the Wicomico Shores Golf Course requested budget is \$1,872,660. This represents a total Department request of \$8,480,185 for FY2010.

Highlights from the FY2010 Request:

- Administration - (Increase of \$45,881) - \$45,458 over FY 2009 for merit and health insurance increases; \$423 increase for fuel and oil for county vehicles used by the Department.
- Parks Division - (Increase of \$41,550) - \$18,329 over FY 2009 for merit and health insurance increases; \$11,967 in new funds for the cost of salaries and fringe benefits for a seasonal groundskeeper (870 hours); decrease of \$2,800 for FY 2009 non recurring equipment (bush hog); \$8,656 for increased fuel and oil, mileage reimbursements, equipment rental and equipment maintenance; decrease of \$15,602 for grass cutting and telephone based on current expenditures and \$21,000 in new funds for a replacement infield machine and a paint striping machine.
- Museum Division - (Increase of \$22,658) - \$25,754 over FY 2009 for merit and health insurance increases; decrease of \$3,096 for telephone, postage, fuel and oil and mileage reimbursements based on current expenditures.
- Recreation Division Activity Fund - (Decrease of \$134,289) - \$134,289 decrease is a result of change in programs; this request fluctuates from year to year.
- Wicomico Shores Golf Course - (Increase of \$196,642) - \$12,796 over FY 2009 for merit and health insurance increases; \$121,615 for additional hours for seasonal help in the restaurant/banquet facility; \$25,520 in additional funds to replace the golf cart fleet and \$36,711 for cost changes for food, supplies and utilities.

Bob Richardson asked about the decrease in grass cutting and if it would impact park activities. Mr. Rollins stated it should not; this level of funding reflects the actual amount needed to accomplish the necessary number of cuts. Staff is not proposing to change the schedule of cuts for parks. Lisa Wainger-Rush asked if direction is received for cuts, how the Department would determine what would be cut. Cuts could be recommended as a percentage or made line by line. Mr. Rollins anticipates bringing any recommendations for reductions to the Board, either at an upcoming Board meeting or via e-mail.

The BOCC will approve the draft FY2010 budget to take to public hearing in late March. A public hearing will be held in April and the budget is set to be adopted in late May.

Capital Improvements Budget

Mr. Rollins referred to the handout regarding the FY2010 Capital Improvements budget. Projects currently in the draft plan include: Piney Point Lighthouse Museum; Parkland and Facility Acquisition; Tennis Court Improvements; Park Roads, Parking and Access; Chaptico Park – Phased Development; Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields; Recreation Facilities and Parks Improvements; and Carver Heights Park. Public Landing projects included in the draft plan: Derelict Boat Removal and St. George’s Island Pier Replacements. Highlights and changes include:

- Carver Heights Park - to be funded in FY 2009.
- Chaptico Park - Phased Development - moved from FY 2010 (\$125,000) and FY 2011 (\$1,115,000) to FY 2011 (\$125,000) and FY 2012 (\$1,115,000).
- Three Notch Trail – Phase VI - Mechanicsville to New Market (Route 5 to Route 236, four-mile section) - moved from out years to FY 2011 and FY 2013. Cost Estimate: \$2,184,500 (Const. \$1,700,000; A&E \$212,500; Project Management/Inspections \$51,000; Signage/Landscape \$51,000; Contingency \$170,000). Completion of this phase will connect other completed sections in the Charlotte Hall and Mechanicsville areas to provide an eleven mile section of trail.
- Three Notch Trail Phase VII - Wildewood to Hollywood (FDR Blvd. to Hollywood Road (four-mile section) - Moved from FY 2011 and FY 2013 to FY 2015 and out years. Cost Estimate: \$2,184,500 (Construction \$1,700,000; A&E \$212,500; Project Management/Inspection \$51,000; signage/landscape \$51,000; contingency \$170,000). Sources of funding: FY 2015 - \$212,500 for A&E (County funds); out years - \$1,972,000 for construction (Federal \$1,372,000, state \$350,000, county \$250,000).
- The St. Mary’s Gymnastics Center was removed from the plan do to the current fiscal situation. Patuxent River Public Landing and the Wicomico Shores Public Landing have also been removed from the plan; they can be added to the Parkland and Facility Acquisition project if land is identified on the Patuxent and funding becomes available.

Al Harrison asked about the Derelict Boat Removal program process. David Guyther, Parks Manager, reported that citizens should call DNR to report abandoned boats. DNR will attempt to locate the owner and have it removed at the owner’s expense. If the owner can’t be located, the Parks Division arranges for the County marine contractor to remove the vessel (or other debris) and arrange for disposal.

Park Impact Fees

Mr. Rollins reported that the current Impact Fee for new home construction is \$4,500; \$3,375 goes to schools; \$450 for roads; and \$675 for parks. Due to economic conditions, collects are down significantly from this time last year. There has been some discussion about changing the amount of the allocation going to schools, roads and parks. The Board noted that there are unmet recreational needs and noted that projects have been removed from the Capital Budget in recent years due to lack of funding. Those projects include Elms Beach Park improvements and expansion; Cecil Park expansion; Myrtle Point Park development; and construction of a County Gymnastics Center. All of these projects are directly related to park or recreation facility usage increases from the growing population.

The consensus of the Board was that while the total fee may need to be examined in light of the increased population and demand for facilities, they felt strongly that the percentage of the impact

fee funding going to parks should not be reduced.

Robert Hicks motioned, seconded by Lisa Wainger-Rush, to send a letter to the BOCC not to change the current impact fee allocation for parks. Motion carried 6-0.

ELMS BEACH PARK

Mr. Rollins provided the Board with a handout on the proposal from staff on recommendations for Elms Beach Park. The waterfront park has experienced significant increases in visitation numbers over the past several years, especially on weekends and holidays. With the increased usage, come difficulties with limited parking and overcrowding at the park and pavilion. Staff has documented numerous issues with visitors which include: parking in undesignated areas; vandalism; issues with alcohol; conflicts between patrons; and increased trash left behind by visitors.

On average, staff estimated 300 to 500 visitors per weekend in 2007; 400 to 600 visitors per weekend in 2008; on holiday weekends, the park typically has 1,000 -1,500 visitors. The current parking area has the capacity for only 50-75 vehicles.

Staff has proposed the following changes for the management of Elms Beach Park beginning in the spring of 2009.

- Establish a user fee for each vehicle entering the park on weekends and holidays. Recommendation: \$5 daily pass for County residents; \$8 daily pass for non-county residents. This would run April through October (perhaps Memorial Day through Labor Day) as determined by staff.
- Provide a staff person at the park entrance to monitor parking and also provide additional hours for staff needed for clean-up after busy weekends.
- Provide additional portable toilets and a larger dumpster to handle increased waste.
- Discontinue renting the picnic pavilion on holiday weekends; it was previously decided this pavilion would be alcohol free.

Thomas Nelson motioned, seconded by Lisa Wainger-Rush, to endorse the proposal presented by staff with regard to Elms Beach Park to include the park entrance fee for weekends and holidays beginning in the spring 2009 season. Motion carried 6-0.

Robert Hicks asked if there was enough land at the park for expansion. Mr. Rollins stated that an inland expansion of additional parking and picnic areas could be done, but funding constraints prevent that at this time. Park usage will continue to be examined and a Capital Project for improvements at Elms Beach Park could be brought forward next year. Mr. Hicks noted the needs at Elms Beach Park provide an example of why the park impact fee allocation should not be changed.

BRIEFING ON POSSIBLE LEONARDTOWN LIBRARY LOCATION

Mr. Rollins informed the Board of the upcoming BOCC Public Forum on Tuesday, February 10,

2009, at 6:30 p.m. in the Chesapeake Building. One of the topics to be discussed is the location for a new Leonardtown Library. George Erichsen, Director of Public Works & Transportation, and Kathleen Reif, Library Director, will be present to provide information and answer questions. The County is evaluating sites that include: the Governmental Center Campus (athletic fields at Meidzinski Park), the Hayden property on MD 245, and other space on the Campus. Expanding the current library is also possible, though that option has some constraints. The R&P Department has concerns with losing the baseball/softball and soccer/lacrosse fields at Meidzinski Park as they are heavily used from early spring through late fall. The Department and County government frequently uses the front lawn area for events such as the Easter Festival, Disability Awareness Day, Wellness Day, Flag Day, Fire and Rescue Appreciation Day and the Fall Festival in addition to several summer sports camps. Data was provided with number of teams and users of the fields. This is an existing park which is named for an individual who donated a significant amount of funding for the playground. Staff supports the library and its expansion, however R&P would like to see the new library at a location other than Meidzinski Park. Members were encouraged to attend the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Tour of Three Notch Trail

Ms. Wainger-Rush thanked the Department for the invite to attend the January 20, 2009 tour of the railroad right-of-way and Three Notch Trail. She stressed the scenic beauty of the trail and suggested that Planning Commission members be invited to future tours to view the significance of the rural character and the trail.

Disc Golf

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that Mr. William Franklin and he will be giving a presentation to the BOCC on Tuesday, February 10, 2009 and requesting approval to move forward with the disc golf course at Lancaster Park/Lexington Manor south parcel. Board members will be emailed with the time of the presentation.

Master Planning for Carver Heights Community Park

The County is moving forward with the master planning for the new Carver Heights Community Park and Lexington Manor South parcel. It is anticipated that the R&P Advisory Board for April will be held at the Carver Recreation Center to solicit public input on the project.

The Carver Heights property consists of approximately 60 acres, is located on MD Route 235, in Lexington Park, Maryland. This project is an outgrowth of efforts to preserve the former USO building. After much discussion and consideration with the Save the Village, Inc. group, it was determined that the USO building would be demolished as it would be cost prohibitive to renovate the aging building. The County agreed that a memorial and community park would be established on nearby County-owned property to commemorate the contributions of the African American community during the Civil War and WWII eras; to incorporate an existing playing field as well as a new picnic area and a playground on the park site; and continue to discuss ways to enhance services for citizens in the Lexington Park/Carver Heights community.

The Lexington Manor South Parcel is approximately 50 acres, is located on MD Route 235, in

Lexington Park, Maryland and is adjacent to Lancaster Park. This is part of the former Lexington Manor Navy housing neighborhood; all but one of the 171 former blighted dwelling units has been demolished. This unit has been preserved and will be interpreted as a reminder of the historical significance of the neighborhood. It will also be used for park purposes such as a restroom and/or storage. The property consists of a network of former streets and has a significant number of flowering cherry trees.

Mr. John Baggett

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the Department lost a true friend recently with the passing of Mr. John V. Baggett. Mr. Baggett was the former Director of Recreation and Parks (1969 to 1991). The John V. Baggett Park in Laurel Grove was named for him in 2002. He began our Parks system by starting from scratch and spent much time and energy in land acquisition, program development and establishing the County's Museum Division. He was a great public servant and continued to be active after retirement by volunteering with such groups as: the Friends of St. Clement's Island Museum Board; the County's Ethics Commission; the St. Mary's Animal Welfare League Board and the C.A.S.A. Board for Abused and Neglected Children.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, March 5, 2009, in the public meeting room of the Chesapeake Building, at the Governmental Center.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on March 5, 2009.