

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, March 6, 2008**

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Patrick Dugan, Chairperson, Robert Richardson, Vice Chairperson, Richard Buckler, Coleman Hillman, Thomas Nelson, David Phalen and Andrew Roper.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Hicks and Lisa Wainger-Rush.

RECREATION, PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation, Parks & Community Services (RP&CS); Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, RP&CS; David Guyther, Parks Manager, RP&CS; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Patrick Dugan, Chairperson, at 5:35 p.m. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

David Phalen motioned, seconded by Richard Buckler, to approve the minutes of February 7, 2008. Motion carried with all in favor.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

Director Phillip Rollins introduced Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, who provided a status report on Recreation Division activities and projects. He provided highlights of the following items:

- Community Standards in Youth Sports – A league meeting was held on March 5, 2008 which was very well attended. So far, 95% of paperwork has been received from head coaches; paperwork for assistant coaches is still being received.
- The annual Easter Festival will be held on Saturday, March 22nd, at 10:00 a.m. at the Governmental Center in Leonardtown. Vendors will be located in Leonard Hall Recreation Center.
- The spring Program Guide is now available; leisure class registration is now open.

Mr. Shepherd introduced BJ Waldron, Child Care Coordinator, and Kelly Sifford, Child Care Specialist, who provided specifics on summer programs. Ms. Waldron reported the Department will sponsor eleven camps this summer to include: Camp T.R.E.K. (to also include the former S.O.S.A.R. camps); P.L.A.Y. Camp; Be a T.R.A.I.L. Blazer Camp and Refresher; PTO Camp Discovery; Arts and Crafts; Outdoor Camp; Dodgeball Camp; Books "R" Us; Youth Fitness Challenge; and New Horizons Summer Fun Camp. Some of the camps and been renamed and enhanced from years past and some new camps have been added. Camps include weekly field trips. Summer camp registration (including sports camps) begins on March 19th.

Coleman Hillman asked if water safety will be taught at the camps. Ms. Waldron stated that water safety is not taught at the camps; the outdoor camp at Elms Beach has an environmental focus. Most camps include a weekly field trip to the Great Mills Pool. Mr. Shepherd stated that swim lessons are still ongoing at the pool. All of the Recreation Division staff has been certified in CPR and First Aid. The Division is also advertising for summer staff to work at the camps; the information and application is located on the Department's website.

PARKS DIVISION REPORT

Mr. Rollins introduced David Guyther, Parks Manager, who provided the Parks Division report. Mr. Guyther stated that the new pier project at Tall Timbers public landing on Herring Creek is now complete; the Department is still waiting on permits to replace the pier and do some minor shore erosion control at Paul Ellis landing. Mr. Guyther reported that the

last two winters have been rather mild, which allowed staff to handle more landscaping and maintenance over the winter. He stated that staff is still dealing with vandalism in the County parks. One area of significant concern is the damage caused by illegal ATV usage in parks.

Warmer winters have caused leagues and the public to use the parks earlier in the year; this year the Department installed portable toilets in some parks to accommodate earlier usage. Also, several new leagues have begun using the parks, which has caused scheduling challenges. Staff has held meetings with leagues over the winter and beneficial feedback was gathered. Tyrone Harris, Park Operations Coordinator, has issued 257 permits to use athletic fields and practice areas so far this season.

Due to budget constraints, staff has proposed cutting back the hours of operation at the Skatepark. The Skatepark will be closed on Tuesdays in December, January and February. Staffing is the biggest operational cost; the challenge is that the same costs for staffing are incurred whether there are 5 or 25 visitors.

Robert Richardson asked if the grass cutting contract was awarded; Mr. Guyther stated the contract was awarded to Tru-Green. Most parks will be cut once per week; lesser used facilities may be cut less. Schools may be cut less frequently during the summer when school is not in session.

Also, the Parks Division staff is now certified in CPR and basic First Aid.

CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATES

Mr. Rollins referred to the FY2009 – FY2014 Draft Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget handout previously provided to the Board. He stated that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the draft CIP to go to public hearing on April 22, 2008. This draft represents the projects discussed during the last R&P Board meeting with no changes.

Chairman Dugan asked about the details of the Derelict Boat project. Mr. Rollins stated that this is an annual grant the County receives to remove abandoned boats in the County waterways. Chairman Dugan asked if this covers boats left on the shoreline; Mr. Rollins recommended he contact David Guyther to determine if this would fall under eligible criteria for the program.

FY09 OPERATING BUDGET UPDATES

Mr. Rollins provided a handout of the Department's FY2009 Requested Operating Budget. Item's requested but not approved in the draft were:

- The BOCC did not approve the request for a new Groundskeeper.
- The request for additional hours for Park Attendants was not approved.
- The conversion of an hourly position paid from Activity Fund to full-time merit Sr. Office Specialist was not approved. This position assists Tyrone Harris with scheduling of park fields and facilities.

While all three of these requests are important, the most critical position at this time is the Groundskeeper position.

Richard Buckler motioned, seconded by David Phalen, to authorize the Chairperson to send a letter to the BOCC expressing support for the Department's requests, with the priority being the Groundskeeper position. Motion carried with all in favor.

Mr. Rollins explained that all Recreation Division programs have historically been expected to pay for themselves. The Activity Fund has operated in the red for the past few years, mainly due to costs associated with the Great Mills Pool. The hourly Office Specialist is currently being paid from the Activity Fund, while it doesn't generate revenue to help offset the salary expense.

Mr. Rollins provided a summary handout detailing expenditures for all County Departments. The handout reflects that RP&CS was rather conservative in its request over last fiscal year compared to other County Departments. The BOCC will hold several more budget work sessions to consider the budget before the public hearing in April. He anticipates

that the Activity Fund deficit will be discussed at upcoming work sessions. The BOCC may consider leaving it "as is;" may ask staff to take another look at increasing fees and cutting expenses; or they could provide funding to subsidize the shortfall.

CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATES

- **Three Notch Trail** – Mr. Rollins reported that construction is moving forward on Phase II of the trail from the Northern Senior Center to just past the County line to Deborah Drive in Charles County. Design and engineering on Phase IVA, from Wal-Mart to Chancellor's Run Road, is nearly complete; this section will be out to bid later this year. Design and engineering is also moving forward on Phase V, from John V. Baggett Park in Laurel Grove to MD 5 in Mechanicsville; this section is anticipated to be under construction by late 2009.
- **Seventh District Park** - The new playground, basketball court and expanded parking are complete. Work on the restroom building is nearly complete and will be ready for use this spring. Also, the entrance road and parking areas at this park will be paved later this spring. Finally, the FY09 CIP request includes a project to resurface the tennis courts at this park. That will complete the work to renovate this park.
- **Cecil Park Tennis Courts** – The project to add a new tennis court and resurface the existing court at Cecil Park will begin later this spring.
- **Lancaster Park Improvements** – A picnic pavilion will be installed at Lancaster Park this spring. Also, plans have been approved for the pedestrian pathway around the perimeter of this park; this project may be phased and should begin later this year.
- **Chancellor's Run Park Ball field Lighting** – The purchase requisition for the project to light two existing multi-purpose fields at Chancellor's Run Park has been issued and the project is expected to be completed in time for spring 2008 use. As part of this project, a remote lighting control system will be installed to control switching on and off of all the athletic field lights in the County.
- **Chaplico Park Parking Expansion** – Design and engineering plans for this project to add 100 parking spaces at Chaplico Park were reviewed by the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) in February and agency comments are currently being addressed. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by fall 2008.
- **Public Landings** – See discussion above under Parks Division report.
- **Central County Parkland Acquisition** – Mr. Rollins reported that appraisals have been ordered on three properties. Because of the variance between the appraisals, additional appraisals may be needed before a proper evaluation of the properties can be made. Mr. Rollins hopes to make a recommendation to the BOCC on one of these properties later this spring.

OTHER BUSINESS

Coleman Hillman stated the dog park at John G. Lancaster Park seems to be a big hit with citizens and pets alike. Also, Mr. Hillman recommended the Board take a tour of County parks. Mr. Rollins stated that the Board has done this in the past and that can be done again if the Board wishes to do so.

Chairman Dugan stated that he had the opportunity recently to travel to Ohio with the St. Mary's Gymnastics competitive team. One of our local team members took second place overall in the competition. Mr. Rollins recommended inviting team members to an upcoming Board meeting to recognize their accomplishments.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2008, at 5:30 p.m., in Room 14, of the Governmental Center, in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on April 3, 2008.