

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

Meeting of Thursday, July 10, 2003

Minutes

Board members present: Robert Harper, Chairperson; Andrew Roper, Vice-Chairperson; Cheryl Blazer, Samuel Brown, Kaki Burruss, Coleman Hillman and Jody Payne.

Board members absent: Richard Smith and Robert Richardson.

Recreation and Parks staff and others present: Phil Rollins, Director of Recreation and Parks (R&P); Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manger; Kathy Bailey, Recorder; and several citizens interested in the Great Mills Swimming Pool discussion.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Robert Harper, Chairperson, at 5:35 P.M. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown. Chairperson Harper welcomed new R&P Board member, Sam Brown, to the Board. He also welcomed member Cheryl Blazer back after her absence due to an automobile accident.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jody Payne motioned, seconded by Sam Brown, to approve the minutes of June 5, 2003. Motion carried 7-0.

GREAT MILLS SWIMMING POOL

Director Phil Rollins introduced Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manger, who will oversee management of the new Great Mills Swimming Pool; Gary Reed, Leisure Programs Coordinator, as the supervisor of the pool operation; Ben Peterson, as an advisor who will assist in the facility operation; and members of the Chesapeake Bay Aquatics Club.

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that pool construction is moving forward after experiencing delays related to the rainy weather; the contractor anticipates the pool and the bathhouse will be finished sometime in August. County staff is working with the developer to address issues with the existing road to the site.

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) clarified during Mr. Rollins' monthly report to the BOCC on July 1, 2003 that they expect the pool to be as self supporting as possible through the Recreation Enterprise Fund. They are looking for the Enterprise Fund to help cover any deficits; but expect to revisit the issue after several months of operation. The BOCC provided direction to the R&P Board and staff on when to open the pool, based upon fiscally prudent management options.

Cheryl Blazer asked if the \$29,000 for grass cutting services was restored in the FY2004 budget; Mr. Rollins stated that it was not restored. Ms. Blazer stated that, in her opinion, the R&P Board should make decisions related to the pool based upon community need and not fiscal parameters. Mr. Rollins stated that staff

recommends opening the pool in September (target date is Saturday, September 6, 2003), with the bubble in place (provided the pool is finished in August). Staff originally projected that approximately \$15,000 could be saved by delaying the pool opening until January. However, all revenue and expense projections are estimates at this point; until the pool is opened and operated for a period of time that information won't be known. Ms. Blazer stated that it would be difficult to market the pool in January; swim teams will already commit elsewhere. Another issue is that the pool would need to be maintained and chlorinated even if it's not in use until January.

Jody Payne stated that she attended the recent swimming pool meeting with staff and swim team representatives. Swim team members expressed concern that the pool might not be opened until January; they want to keep kids active and swimming throughout the fall and winter. They also expressed support for the establishment of a St. Mary's County Public Schools swim league.

Mr. Shepherd reported that staff's proposal calls for the pool to be outfitted and for pool staff to be hired in late August. Pool employees would begin work on Tuesday, September 2nd with the grand opening and ribbon cutting proposed for Saturday, September 6th. Program offerings planned for September include open swim, swim lessons and party rentals. In October, full program offerings would begin with the addition of water aerobics, parent/tot swimming, senior swimming and swim team use. Hours of operation will vary depending on demand. A pool manager, an assistant manager and lifeguards will be hired in August. Staff will provide final operating budget projections to the Board during the August meeting; the handouts will be e-mailed to Board members before the meeting.

Chairman Harper solicited comments on the pool from the audience. Trevor Richards, President of the Chesapeake Bay Aquatics Club, stated that additional opportunities for year-round swimming are needed. He also stated that there's a great need for a high school swim league in St. Mary's; we're the only County in the Tri-County area that doesn't have a school swim team.

Chuck Jacobs, Chesapeake Bay Aquatics Club, asked if Recreation and Parks plans to start a swim team; Mr. Rollins stated that if there's community interest/need, a summer team could be developed.

Cheryl Blazer motioned, seconded by Coleman Hillman, that the Great Mills Swimming Pool open in September, provided pool construction is complete. Motion carried 7-0.

Kaki Burruss stated opening in September would provide baseline information for future programming. Ms. Blazer expressed concern with vandalism if the pool is finished in August but not opened until January. Andrew Roper stated that, if the BOCC expects the Enterprise Fund to cover the pool deficit, and if no additional General Funds are provided, that R&P would have to examine all user fees in order to fund the pool and continue other programs. Chairman Harper stated that this issue can be discussed further with the BOCC during the upcoming presentation of the Annual Report.

RECREATION DIVISION UPDATE

Scott Verbic Memorial Golf Tournament - The Scott Verbic Memorial Golf Tournament was held on Friday, June 6th. The tournament raised approximately \$6,000 for the R&P youth scholarship program.

Great Turtle Race – The Great Turtle Race was held on Friday, June 20 at Leonard Hall Recreation Center. Approximately 160 turtles were entered in the race.

Junior Counselor Training Program - The Junior Counselor Training Program held its graduation ceremony today at Esperanza Middle School; graduates will now work as interns for three weeks at various day camp sites.

Summer Camp Olympics - The R&P Summer Day Camps held their first Summer Camp Olympics event on Tuesday, July 8th on the Governmental Center lawn; over 250 campers participated.

Summer Stock Musical - Tickets are on sale now at R&P for the 20th Annual R&P Summer Stock Musical performance; this year's show will be "Les Miserables."

PROJECT UPDATES

Nicolet Park and the Skatepark – Mr. Rollins reported that the skatepark will open this Saturday, July 12; the balance of phase one improvements (except the spray ground which will open in spring 2004), will be ready for use later this summer. The skatepark hours of operation for the remainder of the month of July are weekdays from 2:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and weekends from noon to 8:30 p.m. A fee will be charged for admission to the skatepark. Helmets, safety pads for elbows and knees and wrist/hand guards must be worn at all times while using the facility and will be available for rental in the near future. The skatepark will be operated and supervised by R&P staff. All patrons must complete and sign a waiver form to enter the facility; skaters under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian sign the form. Skateboarding lessons are also planned for the future.

Chaptico Park – Site work is moving forward on construction for Chaptico Park; work was delayed for several weeks due to rain.

Three Notch Trail – The BOCC recently approved a National Recreational Trails grant application for additional funding for phase two of the Three Notch Trail. Design and engineering for phase one is nearing completion; construction should begin in late fall or early 2004, weather permitting.

WICOMICO SHORES GOLF COURSE CLUBHOUSE

Mr. Rollins reported that in May the Board of County Commissioners appointed a Wicomico Shores Golf Course Clubhouse Task Force to "develop a scope-of-work to renovate the Wicomico Shores Clubhouse and prepare a proposal on how to move the project forward within thirty days." The Task Force presented its report and renovation options to the BOCC on 6/24/03. On 7/1/03 the BOCC voted to move forward with replacing the Clubhouse. After considering the Task Force report on renovation options and estimated costs, the Board determined that a replacement facility was the best alternative. The Commissioners have directed staff to explore a "design/build" or value engineering process with the current Clubhouse plans to identify additional cost savings. The Board also gave direction to increase the seating in the banquet room/grill area and maximize the view from the eighteenth green by extending those areas out onto what was previously proposed as a covered deck. Finally, the Board directed staff to incorporate brick into the exterior finish. These revisions were the result of input that the Commissioners received from golfers about the proposed new facility. The BOCC also established a limit of \$1 million to be financed for the facility; the balance of funding needed for the project would come from the Golf Course Enterprise Fund. The term of the loan will

be reduced from fifteen years to ten years.

Ms. Blazer asked if staff had considered the implications of the current low interest rates and the significantly higher annual payments on a ten year versus a fifteen year loan; Mr. Rollins stated that staff has considered this and that the Finance Department is currently conducting a financial analysis for the project. Mr. Harper asked if the financial data could be provided to Board members.

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the BOCC also gave direction to staff to re-establish the Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board to advise the BOCC directly on Golf Course issues (would be similar to the Museum Board of Trustees). They suggested a five member Board made up of County residents, the R&P Director and Golf Course Manager. A few years ago, a Golf Course Advisory Board was operating as a subcommittee of the R&P Board, but is now defunct. Establishment of the new Advisory Board would take golf related issues "off the plate" of the R&P Board, which the Commissioners believe is quite full even without the Golf Course.

Cheryl Blazer motioned, seconded by Andrew Roper, to send a letter to the BOCC recommending that they do not establish an Advisory Board solely for the Golf Course. Motion carried 7-0. She expressed support for establishing an R&P Board Golf Course subcommittee which would report to the R&P Board, who would then make recommendations to the BOCC.

Mr. Harper expressed concern that golfers at Wicomico Shores serving on the Advisory Board would be reporting directly to the BOCC. Ms. Blazer stated that the R&P Board should be making recommendations to the BOCC on County recreation as a whole and support Special Olympics, Junior Golf, and other special events/programs at the Course. Ms. Burruss asked if there's a mechanism/Committee for golfers to bring issues and recommendations to staff; Mr. Rollins stated that currently, there is no such Committee. Annual meetings, with R&P Board and staff representation, are held at the Golf Course to solicit citizen/golfer input. The Golf Course Manager maintains an "open door" policy to address concerns and recommendations.

ANNUAL REPORT

Chairperson Harper asked the Board to refer to the draft 2002 Annual Report which was previously e-mailed to members. Dr. Roper provided a correction on page four; he was in attendance during the dedication of the Francis Wathen Trail. Ms. Blazer suggested making the wording stronger under bullet three on page eleven regarding budgetary constraints; Chairperson Harper stated that the Board could expand on that verbally during the presentation to the BOCC.

Cheryl Blazer motioned, seconded by Andrew Roper, to incorporate the changes and approve the draft Annual Report for submission to the BOCC. Motion carried 7-0.

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, August 7, 2003 (changed to September 4, 2003) in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on September 4, 2003.

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