

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, August 4, 2005**

MINUTES

Board members present: Coleman Hillman, Vice-Chairperson, Dorothy Gass, Robert Richardson and Lisa Wainger Rush.

Board members absent: Samuel Brown, Robert Harper, Jody Payne, Andrew Roper.

Recreation, Parks and Community Services staff and others present: Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation, Parks & Community Services, Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the July 7, 2005 minutes was deferred until next month.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER

Director Phil Rollins introduced new Board member Lisa Wainger Rush to the Board and to the public. Dr. Rush is a research scientist at the Chesapeake Biological Lab in Solomons. Her recreational interests include walking, hiking, biking, kayaking and other outdoor activities. Also, Patrick Dugan has been appointed to the Board by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and will join the Board at the next meeting.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, provided an update on the following projects and programs for the Recreation Division.

- Summer Camps – Over 300 children were enrolled in various summer day camp programs with the Recreation Division.
- New Horizons Camp – Over 50 children with special needs were enrolled in the Division's New Horizons Camp.
- Sports Camps – The Division offered 18 sports camps to young people this summer; over 900 children were enrolled in the camps.
- Partnership with Sheriff's Department – The Division partnered with the Sheriff's Department to conduct background checks for summer employees; this partnership reduced turn around time for the background checks and cut costs for the Department.
- Hooked on Fishing – The Hooked on Fishing program was held in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Saltwater Fishing Association last Saturday at Point Lookout State Park for 55 young people from the SOSAR camp program.
- Great Mills Swimming Pool – The pool experienced a 50% increase in usage over the same period for last year. Much of the increase is attributed to summer camp use and party rentals.
- Sprayground – The sprayground experienced a 43% increase in usage over the same period for last year. Much of the increase is attributed to party rentals.
- Summerstock Musical – This year's performance was Beauty and the Beast and had the third largest crowd since Summerstock began. Approximately 3,400 people were in attendance for five shows.
- Fit for Life 8k Run/Walk and Fall Festival – The Department will sponsor an 8K Run/Walk as part of the "Fit for Life" Fall Festival to be held on Saturday, October 8, 2005 at the Governmental Center in Leonardtown. All

proceeds from the 8K Run/Walk and the Fall Festival will go toward the Department's scholarship program. The program allows those experiencing financial difficulties the opportunity to participate in Department sponsored programs and activities.

PROJECT UPDATES

Mr. Rollins provided a brief update on the following projects.

Draft Myrtle Point Park Master Plan Presentation – Staff plans to present the draft Myrtle Point Park draft master plan to the BOCC for consideration on August 23, 2005.

Draft Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan - The plan is expected to be presented to the Planning Commission for endorsement on August 22, 2005 and will be presented to the BOCC later this summer.

Three Notch Trail - Staff anticipates that construction on the trail will begin in the near future. Phase I of the trail begins at Route 236 in New Market and proceeds approximately one mile north to the new Northern County Senior Center in Charlotte Hall. Phase two of the trail will begin at the new Northern County Senior Center in Charlotte Hall and proceed north to the St. Mary's County line for a distance of approximately two miles. The design and engineering for Phase II is currently underway.

Charlotte Hall Property Master Planning – Mr. Rollins reminded the Board and the public that the Board hosted a public input meeting at the Northern Senior Center on June 2, 2005 on the Charlotte Hall Property Master Plan with approximately 100 citizens in attendance. The two prevailing themes of the 25 speakers who addressed the R&P Board were the need for senior housing and need for additional recreation facilities (soccer fields, indoor recreation facility, pool, skatepark and additional recreational amenities in general) in the Charlotte Hall area.

Mr. Rollins briefed the BOCC on the public input meeting on July 12, 2005. He specifically asked the BOCC for direction on the site concept and if they support senior housing and/or other amenities on the site. He explained that the existing forest conservation easement on the property may need to be relocated if the designated area is to be developed for uses other than passive recreation. He also made the BOCC aware that development of the balance of the property may require looking at an alternative traffic access off of Whalen Road.

The BOCC asked staff to look at all the County-owned properties in the Charlotte Hall area to see if some amenities could be located on other properties. He displayed a map of other County-owned properties in the Charlotte Hall area for the Board. Properties included the future Charlotte Hall Visitor's Center, Fifth District Park, convenience center/transfer center site, a small property just west of the Charlotte Hall Library and a small property just north of the library.

Mr. Rollins met with the Directors from the Departments of Land Use and Growth Management and Public Works and Transportation to examine the possibilities for these properties. There have been discussions held over the years about options for the convenience center property which is adjacent to Lettie Dent School and Fifth District Park. Several years ago the property was examined for possible athletic practice areas and soccer fields, but was not pursued due to site limitations and other issues. There is the potential to use about ten acres of land at the site for additional athletic practice areas. Parking and the distance to walk to the new fields would be a challenge. A park and ride lot is now being constructed on a portion of the property.

Staff determined it was logical to consider senior housing for the Northern Senior Center property. Senior housing would not be feasible on the other County-owned properties in Charlotte Hall. Staff also determined it would be logical to keep the plan for an indoor recreation center and possibly a swimming pool on the site, while retaining as much of the natural area as possible. Staff plans to present research and input from the R&P Board on the County-owned sites in Charlotte Hall to the BOCC in September.

Dorothy Gass asked if there is data available on the need for additional soccer practice areas and game fields. Mr. Rollins stated that there is no concrete data available; it's hard to determine since on some nights the fields are heavily used and on some nights they aren't. He stated that it's hard to get people to practice on some nights, especially Friday nights. The league has indicated they are pressed for additional practice areas, but is not in a crisis situation. Chaptico

Park has taken care of some of the need, but the league has indicated there is still a need for additional practice areas in the Charlotte Hall area.

Robert Richardson stated that baseball assigns mandatory nights for practice. He also suggested the league look into Seventh District Park for practices.

Lisa Rush asked if destinations have been considered along the Three Notch Trail. Mr. Rollins stated that Veteran's Home, the library, the farmers' market, the new Visitor's Center, the two historic sites on the Veteran's Home property and Ye Coole Springs are all located along Phase I of the trail and the County's Tourism Division is planning a walking tour of sites along the trail.

OTHER BUSINESS

Seventh District Park Improvements – The Seventh District Park Improvement Project was funded in the FY06 Capital Budget. Mr. Rollins provided a map outlining the park property and the current amenities at the site. The \$600,000 project includes a new playground, restroom building, basketball court and possibly expanded parking. Staff will work with a firm under an open end contract to do the site planning for the park improvements. Also, staff has had preliminary discussions with St. Mary's County Public Schools' Capital Facilities staff regarding the possibility of using a portion of Board of Education property adjacent to the former Bethune Elementary School to locate the restroom facility and playground.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board of St. Mary's County will be held on Thursday, September 1, 2005 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on September 1, 2005.