

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, September 4, 2008**

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Patrick Dugan, Chairperson; Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson; Richard Buckler, Robert Hicks, Coleman Hillman, David Phalen and Lisa Wainger-Rush.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Thomas Nelson.

RECREATION AND PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation and Parks; Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager; David Guyther, Parks Manager; Tyrone Harris, Special Facilities Coordinator; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Patrick Dugan, Chairperson, at 5:35 p.m. in the public meeting room of the Chesapeake Building in Leonardtown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lisa Wainger-Rush motioned, seconded by Coleman Hillman, to approve the minutes of July 7, 2008; motion carried with all in favor. Richard Buckler motioned, seconded by Robert Richardson, to approve the Executive Session minutes of July 7, 2008. Robert Hicks motioned, seconded by Lisa Wainger-Rush, to approve the minutes of August 7, 2008.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

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

- The attendance at the Great Mills Pool for August was 13,840; this was an increase of 10% over this time last year; this may be because of more favorable weather conditions this season.
- The pool was emptied, washed and refilled for the fall/winter season.
- The air blower at the pool was replaced last month.
- The bubble structure was placed on the pool on September 4th.
- Gymnastics registration is up 32% from this time last year for a total of 373 enrolled in the recreational program.
- Staff hosted a meeting with competitive team program parents to talk about future programs and projects.
- The Department is operating nine before and after school programs in public schools; the teen after school and the infant and toddler programs have been discontinued.
- The Punt, Pass and Kick event will be held on Sunday, September 7, 2008 at Fifth District Park.
- Registration is now open for adult sports programs such as indoor soccer, volleyball and roller hockey.
- Mr. Shepherd announced that Todd French, Sports Coordinator, left his position with the County to move back to Delaware. Interviews for the Sports Coordinator position were held on August 25th and August 27th. The Department hopes to make a selection within the next few weeks.
- The first annual Fall Fitness and Diabetes Health Festival will be held on Saturday, November 1st. Activities include: children's activities, health exhibits and vendors, free health screenings, fitness program demonstrations, food and more. The event will also include a demonstration on "NEOS" – a new, inclusive and interactive piece of outdoor playground equipment for all ages.

PARKS DIVISION UPDATE

David Guyther, Parks Manager, provided an update on park and public landing projects.

- The Cecil Park Tennis Court expansion and renovation project is nearly complete; some minor site work is all that needs to be done. Two courts were resurfaced and two new courts were constructed.
- The Seventh District Park tennis court renovation is now complete. Also, the entrance road at this park was recently seal coated; some ADA walkways still need to be coated.
- A new roof was installed at the Chancellor's Run Regional Park Hall of Fame building. The tennis courts were

color coated at this park and the basketball courts are also set to be color coated.

- Staff recently refurbished and varnished the floor at the Margaret Brent Recreation Center.
- The Wiecks Playground will be treated with protective wood sealant within the next few weeks.
- Staff setup the stage and tent for several special events over the past month.
- Soccer and football fields were prepared for fall league play.
- Staffing was provided at Elms Beach Park for heavy attendance expected during Labor Day weekend. Attendance was about 1,500 people, with about 260 cars counted. This was slightly less than over the July 4th weekend.
- The Park Rock event was held at Chancellor's Run Regional Park over the Labor Day weekend. Attendance was estimated at 3,500 people with 120 bands and vendors. A few calls were received regarding the noise level; this will be more closely monitored next year. Staff is also working on some ways to get the community more involved in the event.

CHANCELLOR'S RUN REGIONAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Rollins introduced Mr. Don Degraives, American Legion Baseball, and Ms. Donna Bowles, St. Mary's American Little League, who were present to express support for improvements at the Chancellor's Run Regional Park 90' baseball field. The FY08/FY09 Chancellor's Run Park Capital Improvement Project includes \$386,037 in funding for various improvements at the park. These include: replacing the playground and small picnic shelter (with state Community Park and Playground grant funds), replacing the Hall of Fame roof, basketball court resurfacing and fencing. The anticipated balance is about \$54,700 after all the improvements are completed. This could be used for improvements to the 90' baseball field.

Staff recently met with representatives from American Legion Baseball, St. Mary's American Little League and the St. Mary's National Little League regarding input on improvements at the 90' field. The items requested by the sports leagues include:

1. Correct a drainage problem on the 90' field (staff estimate \$5,000). This will be done in the near future.
2. Fencing for bullpen area and batting cages for 90' field (staff estimate \$15,000).
3. Improvements to 90' baseball field – making it exclusive for baseball use
 - a. Grass infield – topsoil and sod (staff estimate \$10,000 - \$15,000)
 - b. Irrigation for grass infield (staff estimate \$15,000)
 - c. Netting for extension of backstop (\$TBD)
4. Miscellaneous (\$5,000)

Backstop matting, pitcher's mound improvements and batting box improvements

Staff is not opposed to a grass infield, however, the conversion would require a commitment to extra funding for maintenance, materials and man hours. In the past, staff did not support the conversion because staff needed the flexibility to allow softball and other activities there.

Mr. Rollins stated that the key to a grass infield is additional annual maintenance costs:

1. An estimated \$15,000 for half-time hourly employee for 30 weeks
2. An estimated \$5,000 for fertilization, weed control and miscellaneous

Mr. Degraives expressed support for bull pen areas and a batting cage, for maintenance and safety concerns. He suggested matting to put over the home plate and pitcher's area to prevent holes in those areas. He provided some pictures of other parks in the region that have grass infields and other amenities. He expressed support for correction of the drainage problems on the 90' field; Mr. Rollins stated that will be corrected. He supported giving first priority County leagues, not travel leagues, for use of the upgraded field. American Legion Baseball is a league of 17 -19 year olds and up who try out and travel around the metropolitan region to play baseball.

Ms. Bowles stated she supports items one and two as her league's first concern is safety for players and spectators. She has concerns with changing the field to exclusive use as a 90' field. Her league currently uses the field for practice and would be challenged to find additional practice areas.

Chairman Dugan asked if there are any 90' baseball fields in the County with grass infields; Mr. Rollins responded no, there are no park fields with grass infields; only the high schools have these fields for school use.

Mr. Rollins stated that conversion to a grass infield would require taking out some of the existing infield material and replacing it with topsoil; some sodding and a decision on the type of grass needed; and a decision on whether to irrigate the grass infield area or the entire field (which would increase the cost estimate). Also, the overhang on the backstop is not stopping many of the foul balls from traveling over to the Hall of Fame pavilion area. Staff is in the process of getting cost estimates for the extension of the backstop.

Mr. Rollins stated that the first two items related to correcting the drainage problems and fencing for the bullpen and batting cages can be accomplished; the improvements related to the grass infield and associated costs are items that will need to be discussed with the BOCC. That could become part of the budget process for next year. Mr. Rollins asked the leagues to think about contributing funds for the project if necessary.

Chairman Dugan expressed general support for the project, but deferred to staff on departmental priorities. Mr. DeGraves stated that the grass field would enhance the field and raise the standard at this park to regional park status. Ms. Wainger-Rush asked what would happen to the teams that are currently using the field for practice. Tyrone Harris, Facilities Coordinator, stated that they would be shifted to other practice areas. Coleman Hillman expressed support for the project and stated that it all comes down to scheduling. He also said some sponsors may be willing to donate funds for the project.

PROJECT UPDATES

- **The Wicomico Shores Golf Course Clubhouse** renovation and expansion project is nearing completion. Staff hoped to be in the new facility last week and is working to address a few punch list items. A ribbon cutting ceremony for the project will be held on Tuesday, September 30, 2008. The Clubhouse will feature the new "The Riverview" restaurant; banquet facilities will also be available.
- **Three Notch Trail** – Mr. Rollins reported that Phase II of the trail, from the Northern Senior Activity Center to just past the County line, is nearly complete. The ribbon cutting for this phase is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14, 2008 at 4:00 pm near the entrance of the Senior Center. Mr. Hillman asked if the Sheriff's office could be asked to conduct some bike patrols along the trail. Mr. Rollins talked to the previous Sheriff about this and can discuss with Sheriff Cameron. He noted the Friends of the Three Notch Trail have expressed interest in doing some monitoring of the trail.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Hillman asked for an update on the Department's preparedness efforts with regard to the anticipated tropical storm. Mr. Rollins stated that staff has been communicating with the Public Safety Department. As of now, high winds, tides of one to three feet above normal, and three to six inches of rain are predicted. Staff will continue to monitor the storm as it moves closer to the area.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, November 6, 2008, in the public meeting room of the new Chesapeake Building, at the Governmental Center, in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on November 6, 2008.