

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

Meeting of Thursday, October 2, 2003

MINUTES

Board members present: Robert Harper, Chairperson; Andrew Roper; Vice-Chairperson; Samuel Brown (arrived 5:40 P.M.), Kaki Burruss, Coleman Hillman, Jody Payne and Robert Richardson.

Board members absent: Cheryl Blazer and Richard Smith.

Recreation and Parks staff present: Phil Rollins, Director of Recreation and Parks (R&P); Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager; Gary Reed, Leisure Programs Coordinator; Chuck Burghardt, Pool Manger; Brooke Countiss, Assistant Pool Manager; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Robert Harper, Chairperson, at 5:30 P.M. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jody Payne motioned, seconded by Andrew Roper, to approve the minutes of September 4, 2003. Motion carried 6-0.

RECREATION DIVISION UPDATE

Great Mills Swimming Pool - Director Phil Rollins reported that due to the power outage from Hurricane Isabel, the electricity was out for approximately ten days at the Great Mills Swimming Pool. Because of the power outage, the filtration/chlorination system was interrupted and staff has been working to get the water quality restored. The hurricane also held up installation of the air supported structure covering the pool; the "bubble" is scheduled to be installed on or about October 6th; the MD Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene inspection is set for Thursday, October 9th; the St. Mary's County Health Department inspection will be scheduled after that time. A few "punch list" items still need to be taken care of with the contractor. Staff hopes to receive the occupancy permit for the pool by mid October.

Mr. Rollins introduced Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, who reported on the swimming pool fall programming. Pending final permit approvals, the Department plans to open the pool on Monday, October 20th for open swim for the general public (since that time, it was decided that the pool would open on Saturday, October 25th for open swim); classes and lessons will begin the week of October 27th. The Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is tentatively set for Tuesday, November 4, at 3:30 pm.

Mr. Shepherd introduced Gary Reed, Leisure Programs Coordinator, who will directly oversee the pool operation; Chuck Burghardt, Swimming Pool Manager; and Brooke

Countiss, Assistant Swimming Pool Manager; to the Board. Mr. Burghardt has worked at many aquatic facilities and is a certified Red Cross instructor/trainer; he's currently training staff in Water Safety Instruction (WSI) so they can teach swim classes, life guarding classes and CPR and First Aid. Ms. Countiss has a background in competitive swimming and in teaching swim lessons; she'll teach swim lessons and work with the swim teams at the Great Mills Swimming Pool.

Mr. Shepherd provided October/November schedules detailing fees, open swim times, aqua aerobics classes and swim lessons. The fall pool hours are Monday through Saturday, 10:00 A.M. until 8:00 P.M. and Sunday, noon until 8:00 P.M. Currently, patrons must register at the Recreation and Parks main office in Leonardtown; in the near future, that will be expanded to include registration at the pool site.

Skatepark – Attendance has decreased since school started and the weather has gotten cooler; the facility is still “breaking even” and paying for staff and utilities. Staff plans to host several events to promote the skatepark; the first skate party is scheduled for Saturday, October 18th from 7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M. Also, additional hand rails were recently installed to assist beginning “street skaters.” Mr. Shepherd worked with the County's Public Information Office to develop a promotional video of the skatepark; the video was played for the Board immediately following the meeting. Staff is considering airing the video on television stations around the region. The facility will be open year-round depending on the weather and attendance; winter hours could be reduced to weekends only if necessary. Chairman Harper asked Mr. Shepherd for a spreadsheet on the skatepark revenue and expenses for future planning; this information will be included in the Department's next monthly report to the BOCC.

Carver Recreation Center – Mr. Shepherd informed the Board that Recreation and Parks began programming on September 22nd at the former Carver Elementary School gymnasium. The Adult Volleyball league is now using the facility; others to be held at Carver Recreation Center include Wednesday night open gym basketball, teen dances, and youth basketball practices and games. Mr. Shepherd also met with Rhoda Campbell, of Boys and Girls Clubs of America, on a possible partnership with R&P at the site for youth and after school programs.

Mr. Rollins publicly thanked the Board of Education and St. Mary's County Public Schools for working with R&P to provide this space for programming; SMCPS has agreed to continue to fund the cost of utilities at the site for the remainder of the current fiscal year.

Punt, Pass and Kick – Mr. Shepherd reported that 38 children competed in the NFL/Pepsi Punt, Pass & Kick competition held on Saturday, September 6th (staff had anticipated a higher turn out; but unfortunately, due to weather conditions, Pigskin Football cancelled their opening day ceremonies which would have drawn more participants). Nine St. Mary's County youth will compete in the Sectional competition on Friday, October 24th at Kellum Field in Calvert County. Sectional winners will compete at the Washington Redskins Team Championship competition on Sunday, November 9th during the Washington/Seattle game at FedEx Field.

Youth Sports and Facility Use Report – Mr. Shepherd stated that staff has completed the annual Youth Sports and Facility Use Report. A copy of the report will be provided to members and the report will be scheduled for discussion during the next Board meeting.

HURRICANE ISABEL

Mr. Rollins provided a report on the impact that Hurricane Isabel had on R&P parks and facilities (pictures were provided detailing the damage to piers and museums). The Director and Recreation Division Manager worked at the Emergency Operations Center on September 18th and 19th; Recreation Division Coordinators helped staff emergency evacuation centers at Chopticon High School, Leonardtown High School and Great Mills High School. Staff from the Parks Maintenance Division worked long and hard with clean-up efforts including assisting the Department of Public Works and Transportation with road and debris clean-up over the past several weeks.

The damage to County parks from the hurricane consisted mainly of downed trees, limbs and signage; Nicolet Park sustained the greatest loss in downed trees. Four boating and fishing piers remain closed at County public landings due to damage sustained from the hurricane's storm surge. These include piers at Bushwood Wharf, Piney Point Public Landing, Wicomico Shores Public Landing and Piney Point Lighthouse pier (boat ramps are open to the public). The State-owned pier at St. Clement's Island Museum is also closed until repairs can be made, as well as one of the piers on the island.

St. Clement's Island Museum was closed for two weeks after the storm for clean-up and repairs to the museum, grounds and gift shop. The Piney Point Lighthouse Museum & Park remains closed at this time due to flood and wind damage from the storm. R&P anticipates opening the park grounds later this fall; however, the museum and gift shop will remain closed indefinitely. No damage was sustained to collections or exhibits at either Museum since staff moved these items from the sites prior to the storm's arrival.

Mr. Rollins provided a handout detailing the estimated costs for repair and clean-up from hurricane Isabel: personnel services (incurred and projected) - \$87,564; operating expenses (incurred and projected) - \$64,664; TOTAL \$152,228. Total projected lost revenue: St. Clement's Island Museum - \$8,715; Piney Point Lighthouse Museum - \$7,260; Wicomico Shores Golf Course - \$8,300; TOTAL \$24,275. Capital costs: public landings - \$265,000; parks - 6,700; St. Clement's Island Museum - \$45,000; Piney Point Lighthouse Museum - \$50,100; TOTAL - \$366,800. The Department anticipates that some of these costs will be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Local Government Insurance Trust.

ANNUAL REPORT

Chairman Harper reported that the Board presented its Calendar Year 2002 Annual Report to the BOCC on Tuesday, September 30th. Sam Brown noted that during the presentation Commissioner McKay indicated that he would like to see some major corporate sponsorship to assist with the swimming pool; Mr. Brown thought that large scale donations might be difficult since it's a County owned and operated facility. Many businesses currently provide sponsorship for R&P sponsored programs and affiliated league programs. In the event of major corporate sponsorship, the R&P Board would have to consider if it's appropriate to have commercial names on public facilities. The BOCC was very complimentary of the work the R&P Board has accomplished and noted that the Board had a quorum at all its 2002 meetings.

PROJECT UPDATES

Communications Tower at Dorsey Park – Mr. Rollins reminded the Board of the December 19, 2002 letter they sent to the BOCC regarding the Board's endorsement of the proposal to site a communications tower at Dorsey Park. That endorsement was contingent upon the recommendation that any financial benefits derived from the lease agreement go directly toward R&P programs and facilities. The BOCC discussed and considered the issue on Tuesday, September 30th and decided that all rental revenue generated from communication towers located on County property should go into the County's General Fund.

Chaptico Park – Construction continues at Chaptico Park but excavation and site work have been hampered by rain; because of the delays caused by the weather, it is now anticipated that seeding for the soccer fields will be pushed back to late fall or even spring.

Coleman Hillman asked about ponds planned at Chaptico Park and Nicolet Park. Mr. Rollins stated that the only ponds planned at this time are storm water management ponds. The master plan for Chaptico Park does reference a recreational pond for Chaptico Park, but that's not planned for several years and depends on available funding.

Nicolet Park – Additional phase two work to finish the park, including basketball courts, a baseball field, a picnic pavilion, and accessible pathways, will be completed in FY2004/2005 as funding is phased over two years. The phase two construction plans were submitted in September for TEC review; comments are expected the week of October 13th. The project will be bid over the winter and construction will begin in spring 2004. Staff continues to work with the State Department of Health to resolve regulatory issues with the spray ground, which is expected to open in spring 2004.

Mr. Hillman informed the Board that the County's STS bus system now transports northern County citizens to the Skatepark at Nicolet Park, Great Mills Swimming Pool and the Carver Recreation Center.

Wicomico Shores Golf Course Clubhouse - Staff anticipates that the revised Wicomico Shores Golf Course Clubhouse plans will be out to bid by the end of October. Construction should begin by winter and the project is expected to be completed by spring 2005. The specifications have been revised to increase the seating in the banquet room/grill area and to incorporate brick into the exterior finish.

Mr. Hillman thanked the Department for repairing the tennis court at Wicomico Shores. Mr. Rollins stated that, after discussion with the BOCC regarding the phasing for Chaptico Park, staff decided to refurbish the courts at Wicomico Shores. The BOCC was concerned that the courts at Chaptico Park aren't planned for several years; therefore, staff plans to request a Wicomico Shores Tennis Court renovation project in the FY2005 Capital Budget. Chairman Harper asked Mr. Rollins to verify that the tennis courts are not in the private right-of-way at the Golf Course.

Kaki Burruss inquired about the status of prioritization of the four parks that were slated for new master plans in FY2004. Mr. Rollins stated that discussion on the Capital Budget and park master planning is scheduled for the November R&P Board meeting.

Chairman Harper noted that parks not slated for master planning in the next fiscal year should still be addressed for ADA compliance as outlined in the ADA Transition Plan.

Chairman Harper asked if the Land Preservation and Recreation Plan update would be taken into account while the Capital Budget is developed. Mr. Rollins stated that the process to update the 2000 LPRP won't begin until later this year; staff is still waiting for State guidelines on the update.

Three Notch Trail - Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the re-authorization of the Transportation Equity Act was previously in jeopardy; he has since learned that the program did survive, but funding for projects will be limited. Also, Mr. Rollins asked the BOCC to keep in mind the long-range plans for the Three Notch Trail when negotiating any agreements with the State Highway Administration on relocation of a portion of the railroad right-of-way in Charles County as part of the Hughesville by-pass project.

FY2005 BUDGET DISCUSSION

The BOCC will host a budget work session focusing on Enterprise Funds and fees and charges on October 6th. They will study fees currently being paid for services provided by County Departments. Some R&P fees that will be examined include possible athletic field use fees, possible boat ramp user fees, and potential increases in ball field lighting fees, picnic pavilion rentals and Museum admission fees and grounds rental. Mr. Rollins plans to talk to the BOCC about the possibility of the County funding a portion of the cost for use of school facilities. Chairman Harper asked Mr. Rollins to stress to the BOCC that the R&P Board is interested in and willing to participate in the budget process.

Chairman Harper asked Mr. Rollins to remind the BOCC of the fees in lieu of land issue during budget work sessions. The Subcommittee has not met for some time; he asked Mr. Rollins to explore the issue to see if the Subcommittee needs to be re-activated. Chairman Harper expressed support for funding R&P projects with fees in lieu of land rather than traditional fund raising efforts.

OTHER BUSINESS

Blessing of the Fleet Ceremony - Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the Seventh District Optimist Club is requesting an Alcohol Consumption Permit (ACP) for the Blessing of the Fleet activities. **Kaki Burruss motioned, seconded by Andrew Roper, to approve the ACP for the Seventh District Optimist Club. Motion carried 7-0.**

St. Mary's County Government Re-organization - Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the BOCC gave direction to the County Administrator, George Forrest, to develop a draft County Government re-organization plan with the goal of providing cost savings and improved service to citizens. Mr. Forrest recently provided the BOCC with a report on the organizational structure of some other Maryland Counties and outlined his vision of departmental "clusters" grouped by functions. R&P is currently listed in the Community Enhancements cluster which also includes the Office of Community Service, Office on Aging, Tourism, Museums and Housing. The BOCC provided additional insight on the draft proposal and gave direction to Mr. Forrest to report back to them in the next few weeks.

Elms Property Hunting Issue - Chairman Harper asked that Mr. Rollins review the Elms Management Plan and research how to address comments from hunters who feel that hunting areas have been restricted as a result of the new lease area. Mr. Rollins will provide information on this during the next meeting.

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, November 6, 2003 in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

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