

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

Meeting of Thursday, December 2, 2004

MINUTES

Board members present: Dr. Andrew Roper, Chairperson, Coleman Hillman, Vice-Chairperson, Sam Brown, Dorothy Gass, Greg Hambright, Jody Payne and Robert Richardson.

Board members absent: Robert Harper.

Recreation, Parks and Community Services staff present: Phil Rollins, Director of Recreation, Parks & Community Services (RP&CS), and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Coleman Hillman requested that the sentence be deleted regarding the signage at Chaptico Park, under Project Updates, Chaptico Park. Jody Payne motioned, seconded by Sam Brown, to approve the minutes of November 4, 2004 as amended; motion carried 6-0.

MYRTLE POINT PARK

Director Phil Rollins provided the Board with some history and background information on Myrtle Point Park and the park's master planning process to date. The County acquired the 192-acre waterfront property on the Patuxent River in the mid 1990's and since that time it has been used by the public for hiking, nature study, bird watching, picnics, wading along the two miles of shoreline and fishing. Improvements on the property include: an old water tower (installed for a previously planned development), 2 miles of nature trails, picnic tables, portable toilets and gravel parking areas. The site also includes several documented archeological sites, several marsh and tidal pond areas, a FIDS habitat, a Washington Gas Light easement area, an old tobacco barn and an old livestock barn. There is currently a significant problem with non-native invasive plants on the site.

Several handouts were provided and included the draft scope of work for the upcoming master planning project, the previously approved and later rescinded master plan for the park, a Report and Recommendations developed by a Myrtle Point Task Force in March 1995 (without attachments) and a Proposed Plan for Myrtle Point Park submitted by the Friends of Myrtle Point Park group.

In the 1980's the property was part of a larger property known as Hanover Run and was approved for a major housing development. Because of forfeiture on the mortgage of the previous property owner, the property ended up being owned by the federal government. The property was determined to be covered by the Coastal Barriers Act and thus was first offered for sale to state and local governments. The Potomac River Association approached the County Commissioners and urged the County to purchase the property. After much study by the Recreation and Parks (R&P) Board, a Myrtle Point Task Force, the Economic Development Commission, and County staff, the County Commissioners decided to purchase the property for park and open space uses.

The 1995 Myrtle Point Task Force recommended that if the County pursued acquisition of the park, that it should be used as a nature park. The 1995 R&P Board also endorsed that recommendation. In 1998, the Board of County Commissioners provided direction for the park program that included athletic fields and active recreational facilities. The resulting master plan was adopted in 1998 by the BOCC. In March 1999, a new BOCC rescinded the previous Board's decision and directed staff to have park planners determine the best use for the property and to revise the concept for the park. A draft concept plan was presented to the R&P Board in June 1999 and a presentation by the consultant to the Planning Commission was scheduled for July 1999, but was subsequently cancelled when the Commissioners at that time decided to place the master planning process on hold until they could devote the necessary time to properly address the project. The present BOCC funded master planning for the park in the FY05 County budget.

The draft scope of work has been forwarded to a consultant for a cost proposal. The draft scope of work includes examples of amenities to be considered for the park program such as: trails, a canoe/kayak launch, amphitheatre, restroom facilities, picnic areas and shelters, play area, nature/heritage/visitor center, multipurpose grass fields, scenic overlooks, beach access and parking areas. Staff has received direction to begin with the vision of the park as a nature park and to gain public input on the amenities desired/needed at the park. It is anticipated that the master planning process for the park will begin in January 2005 with the consultant making a presentation to the R&P Board; after input and consideration from the public, Planning Commission and the BOCC, staff expects the master plan will be adopted by summer 2005.

A previous need for additional soccer fields in the southern portion of the County has been met with the construction of the Hollywood Soccer Complex and the fields at John G. Lancaster Park. The challenge of providing additional public motorized boating access to the Patuxent River still exists; areas for motorized boating access at Myrtle Point are limited though, due to environmental, archeological and other constraints.

Greg Hambright requested that additional information be provided to the Board on the membership and mission and of the Friends of Myrtle Point group. Mr. Rollins stated that this is a very dedicated group that has requested time on the Board's agenda to present their proposed plan for the park. Kaki Burruss, former R&P Board member, was a member of that group and assisted in the development of the trail system for the park before moving out of the area. Coleman Hillman stated that the Friends group would like Board members to come out, walk the trails and tour the park.

OTHER BUSINESS

PROJECT UPDATES

Land Preservation, Park and Recreation Plan – There is some additional work that needs to be completed on the Agricultural Preservation chapter of the plan before the full plan is presented to the BOCC and presented at a joint public meeting with the Planning Commission, R&P Board and Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board. The draft of the Recreation section of the plan has been posted on the RP&CS department website.

Punt, Pass & Kick – Robert Richardson reported that eight youth from St. Mary's County have been invited to compete in the Washington Redskins Team Championship Punt, Pass & Kick competition to be held Sunday, December 5, 2004 during the Redskins/Giants game at FedEx Field. Invitees include: Carly Joseph, girls 8-9 year-old division; Dakota Lowe, boys 8-9 year-old division; Kelly Sothoron, 10-11; Brianna Jenkins, 10-11; Isaac Indgjer, 12-13; Anna Ridgell, 12-13; Kirsten Indgjer, 14-15; and Ben Windsor, 14-15.

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, January 6, 2005 in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on January 6, 2005.
A tape recording of the meeting is kept on file in the Recreation, Parks & Community Services' office for one year.