

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, March 1, 2007**

MINUTES

Board members present: Patrick Dugan, Chairperson; Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson; Richard Buckler, Robert Hicks, Coleman Hillman, Patrick Murphy, David Phalen, Andrew Roper and Lisa Wainger-Rush.

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Robert Hicks motioned, seconded by Andrew Roper, to approve the minutes of February 1, 2007. Motion carried 9-0. Lisa Wainger-Rush motioned, seconded by Robert Hicks, to approve the Executive Session minutes of February 1, 2007. Motion carried 9-0.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports

Director Phil Rollins introduced Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, who provided an update on the Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports initiative and a status report on the activities of the Recreation Division.

The initiative requires training for volunteer league administrators and coaches, a code of ethics for parents, background screening for two coaches per team, implementation of a smoking policy, a crisis intervention plan and liability insurance (all the volunteer leagues now have liability insurance). Volunteers and coaches in RP&CS sponsored programs also have to participate in training and have background checks. Mr. Shepherd provided a handout with the numbers for background checks and coaches training completed for the Department's fall/winter sponsored youth sports leagues. This includes youth basketball, indoor soccer, indoor lacrosse, indoor field hockey, roller hockey, wrestling and swimming (community team using Great Mills pool). The report indicated that approximately 310 coaches were expected to have background checks; the actual number performed was 314 with 4 disqualified; 302 coaches completed the coaches training.

Mr. Shepherd reported that monitoring the program is a challenge. Staff has a list of approved coaches for the youth basketball program and they are monitored to determine if they are the ones coaching the kids. In the future, staff will provide reports for each sport season; last fall was the first season for implementation of the program. Eventually, the Department would like to see 100% of the coaches screened.

Patrick Murphy asked if background checks on coaches would be done each season. Mr. Shepherd stated that would be done annually per coach. The Department has a data base listing coaches, training completed and background checks done. Mr. Murphy asked how the Department will monitor who is on the field on game day and if there are penalties for non-compliance. Mr. Shepherd stated that after the program is fully implemented, staff will probably do random checks on game days. The data will be evaluated to determine the level of compliance and if any actions are necessary. Currently, the Department is relying on the leagues to monitor the program. If it is determined that a league is not in compliance, then information will be presented to the R&P Board, and then shared with the County Commissioners; it is a possibility that leagues who do not comply could lose playing fields.

Mr. Murphy asked if there was any data to refer to regarding these types of programs. Mr. Shepherd stated that Charles County has a similar program; they have staff at parks to help monitor the program. Many counties require that

sponsored leagues have background checks; but many don't require background checks for volunteer leagues. Mr. Murphy was concerned that someone who might be disqualified as a coach is on the sidelines. Mr. Shepherd stated that the program has a crisis intervention plan and in the past, no trespassing notices have been issued when problems have occurred.

Programs and Events

- ❖ All-star Youth Basketball games will be held at Chopticon High School on March 6-9th.
- ❖ Middle School Select basketball games have been ongoing this season at Chopticon High School on Saturdays; this includes boys and girls teams and cheerleading.
- ❖ Special Olympics practices will begin this month at the Great Mills Pool.
- ❖ Open registration for leisure begins on March 7th.
- ❖ Summer camp registration begins on March 12th.
- ❖ Disability Awareness Day is scheduled for Saturday, March 24th.
- ❖ Easter Festival and Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, April 7th.

PROJECT UPDATES

Charlotte Hall Property Master Plan – A follow-up presentation on the Charlotte Hall Property master plan was made to the BOCC on February 20th and the plan was unanimously adopted. The plan includes senior housing, an indoor recreation/multi-generational center and a swimming pool. At this time, there is no timetable for moving the project forward; that would depend BOCC direction, resolution of the public sewer issue, road access issues, future funding appropriations and decisions on the direction of the senior housing portion of the plan.

The senior housing portion of the plan and related sewer requirements have been a significant challenge and the Committee determined that it wasn't feasible to move forward with the project without access to public sewer. Traffic concerns and the possible need for additional access from Charlotte Hall Road and from the rear of the property also need to be considered. The zoning of the property and the existing forest conservation easement would also need to be addressed.

Lancaster Park Off-leash Dog Park – Mr. Rollins announced that the new off-leash dog park at John G. Lancaster Park officially opened to the public today.

Tennis Court Replacement Project – The BOCC approved a grant application for approximately \$50,000 for the U.S. Tennis Association to assist with the project to construct two new tennis courts and renovate two existing courts at Cecil Park. Members of the St. Mary's County Tennis Association attended the BOCC meeting to show support for the project.

DRAFT FY08 RP&CS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

Mr. Rollins provided a handout last month of the proposed RP&CS Capital Improvements Program. The Board discussed the following projects:

- ❖ **Three Notch Trail** – Project continues development of the Three Notch Trail, a 10 ft. wide, multi-use trail on the former railroad right-of-way. Phase II, from the Northern Senior Center to Deborah Drive, just beyond the County line, will be out to bid within the next few weeks. Mr. Rollins informed the Board that FY08 funding will be used to assist with three phases of the trail; Phase II construction in the amount of \$178,815, Phase IV construction in the amount of \$360,000 and Phase V design and engineering in the amount of \$150,000. This funding is a combination of County, state and federal funding for the project.

Mr. Murphy asked if there's a plan for resurfacing the trail. Mr. Rollins stated that has not been addressed at this time; the trail has been constructed to standards so that resurfacing should not be needed for quite some time. That will be addressed in later years of the capital program.

- ❖ **Tennis Court Improvements** – This project includes the construction of two new courts and renovation of the two existing courts at Cecil Park in FY08. It also includes replacement of two courts at Seventh District Park in

FY09 and to install lighting at Dorsey Park. FY10 includes the replacement of two courts at Jarboesville Park; FY11 includes replacement of two courts at Fifth District Park; and FY12 includes replacing two courts at Chancellor's Run Park.

Mr. Murphy expressed concern that of the total proposed Tennis Court Improvements project budget there was no funding identified for maintenance. Mr. Rollins stated that maintenance has been covered in the Parks Division's operating budget.

- ❖ **Lancaster Park Improvements-** If funded by the state, the project will utilize a \$125,000 Community Parks and Playgrounds grant to construct a picnic shelter and complete the hard surface pathway for walking and jogging.
- ❖ **Park Maintenance Building-** This project proposes to expand the existing Park Maintenance building by approximately 450 s.f. Additional space is needed for a meeting and training room as well as office work space.
- ❖ **Park Roads and Parking Lot Improvements** Project would pave park entrance roads and parking areas at Seventh District Park, Elms Beach Park and Cecil Park.

Mr. Murphy asked if, from an environmental standpoint, "has all the additional run-off for the new pavement been addressed." Mr. Rollins stated that County parks have to meet all applicable standards and regulations regarding stormwater management. Mr. Hicks noted some serious issues with pot holes at several parks including Myrtle Point Park. Parking lots are considered impervious no matter if they are gravel or paved (because it's assumed they will be paved in the future).

- ❖ **Chancellor's Run Park Improvements** – Project proposes to add lighting for two existing multi-purpose fields in FY08 to enable additional playing time for soccer and lacrosse; in FY09 replace the aging playground, construct a new picnic pavilion in FY09, replace deteriorating baseball/softball field fencing, and resurface and color coat the basketball court.

Mr. Hicks asked about the possibility of clearing the nature trail at Chancellor's Run Park. Mr. Rollins stated that's something that needs to be addressed; a previous Board member and a group of volunteers had "adopted" the trails as a project, but unfortunately she is no longer in St. Mary's County. He also asked if there would be an impact from the Chancellor's Run Road widening project on the park. Mr. Rollins stated that there is enough setback so park facilities won't be impacted; some of the green space in front of the park will be used for the project and expanded storm water management.

Mr. Murphy noted that a group of seniors walk in the park roadway on a daily basis. He felt it would be safer if the park road was designated as "one way." There is a possibility that a walking trail will be installed around the perimeter of the park as part of the Chancellor's Run Road project's required mitigation. Mr. Murphy noted people are driving on the grass and suggested that the posts and cable be reinstalled at the park. Mr. Rollins stated they were removed since the posts were deteriorated; he will check into getting those reinstalled.

Mr. Murphy asked about turning on the lights for soccer practice since people are turning their headlights on and playing at night. Mr. Rollins stated that the leagues pay for the lights and then they are turned on.

- ❖ **Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields** – Project proposes to construct five multi-purpose playing fields in FY09/10 on approximately ten acres of County property at the Charlotte Hall Convenience Center adjacent to Lettie Dent Elementary School and Fifth District Park. The need for the project came out of the master planning process for the Charlotte Hall Property.
- ❖ **Chaptico Park Parking Expansion and Phased Development** – Project proposes to construct additional parking in FY08 for the existing soccer/lacrosse complex. Additional Phase II facilities proposed include constructing tennis and basketball courts and picnic areas and shelters in FY10/11 and constructing horse riding trails, restrooms and a park roadway in FY12/13.

Bob Richardson asked if additional park supervision is planned at Chaptico; Mr. Rollins stated that the

Department hired some park attendants to help with the parking situation at this park last year and funding has been requested in the FY08 Operating Budget to increase this.

- ❖ **St. Mary's Gymnastics Center** – Project would construct or acquire an existing building for a 15,000 s.f. gymnastics center in FY11/12. This also falls under the Parkland and Facility Acquisition project if a building becomes available.
- ❖ **Northern County Pool** – Project would design and construct a public indoor aquatics center at the Northern Senior Center property in Charlotte Hall in FY13/14.
- ❖ **Parkland and Facility Acquisition** – Project will enable acquisition of property for County parks, public landings and indoor recreation facilities.

OVERVIEW OF DRAFT FY08 OPERATING BUDGET

Board members reviewed the spreadsheet of the draft FY08 RP&CS Operating Budget. The overall FY08 General Fund budget request for RP&CS is \$4,519,186 or \$568,031 more than last year, a 14% increase.

\$186,598 is attributable to merit and cola increases within Administration, Parks, Museums and Community Services Divisions; \$218,958 in new funds is for the cost of salaries and fringe benefits as follows: Administration proposal includes \$68,422 for a proposed new Capital Projects Manager; Parks Division - \$80,248 for two proposed new Groundskeepers; \$31,696 for additional hours for Park Attendants for park supervision; Museum Division – \$25,330 to convert an hourly Museum Site Supervisor for the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum to a full time merit position effective July 1, 2007 and \$13,262 for two hourly Museum Assistants.

The Recreation Activity Fund is a separate enterprise fund established to account for programs offered through the Recreation Division which are financed by fees established for recreation activities. The requested Activity Fund budget for fiscal year 2008 is \$2,560,326 a decrease of \$368,579. The decrease is a result of reducing the hours of part time staff, personal services contracts, transferring of \$157,377 in operating costs for the Chancellor's Run Regional Park, skatepark, sprayground, pavilion rentals and athletic field lighting to the Parks Division and reducing costs in the child care and summer camp sections; this will make the \$157,377 increase in the Parks Division budget essentially "a wash."

The operations of the Wicomico Shores Golf Enterprise Fund are financed primarily from greens and cart rental fees generated through golf course operations and the revenue collections from the restaurant, banquet facility and golf shop. The requested Wicomico budget for fiscal year 2008 is \$1,331,826, an increase of \$13,035. The increase is attributable to merit, 3% cola and fuel cost increases.

Operating Budgets will be discussed in budget work sessions with the BOCC in March. The recommended budget will be approved for public hearing by March 31. The Public Hearing is scheduled for April 24, 2007 at Leonardtown High School. The budget will be finalized by the end of May.

Mr. Murphy asked if there was a line item in the Parks budget for maintenance. Mr. Rollins stated that the Parks Division has a detailed budget that outlines costs for items such as the grass cutting contract, maintenance supplies, electric, fuel, etc.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Robert Hicks motioned, seconded by Lisa Wainger-Rush, to meet in Executive Session to discuss matters of property acquisition as provided for in Article 24, Section 4-210(a) 11. Motion carried 9-0. (Andrew Roper left the meeting before the Executive Session).

Present: Patrick Dugan, Chairman; Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairman; Richard Buckler, Robert Hicks, Coleman Hillman, Patrick Murphy, David Phalen, Lisa Wainger-Rush, Phillip Rollins, and Kathy Bailey.

Authority: Article 24, Sections 4-210(a) 11.

Time held: 7:10 p.m. – 7:50 p.m.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, April 5, 2007 at 5:30 p.m., in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on June 7, 2007.