

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

Meeting of Thursday, March 3, 2005

MINUTES

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

Board members absent: Robert Harper and Chris Brugman.

Recreation, Parks and Community Services staff present: Phil Rollins, Director of Recreation, Parks & Community Services (RP&CS); Carl "Buster" Williams and Dave Williams, from the Babe Ruth Baseball League; Chris Maher, from the National Little League; Arthur Shepherd and Kenny Sothoron, Recreation Division, RP&CS; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Dr. Andrew Roper, Chairperson, at 5:35 P.M. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Coleman Hillman motioned, seconded by Robert Richardson, to approve the minutes of February 3, 2005. Motion carried 7-0.

RP&CS CAPITAL BUDGET STATUS REPORT

Director Phil Rollins provided a revised spreadsheet and a summary of changes for the FY2006 – 2011 RP&CS Capital budget request. Changes to the draft budget included the following.

- Myrtle Point Park
 - Original submittal \$1.7 million in FY11
 - BOCC work session 3/1/05 \$250,000 in FY10 - \$500,000 in FY11
- Charlotte Hall Recreation Center
 - Original submittal \$2.275 million for construction in FY06
 - Previous BOCC work session \$2.275 million moved to FY07
 - BOCC work session 3/1/05 Project deferred indefinitely
- Margaret Brent expansion will help to meet the needed indoor recreation space.
- Prior approved funding - \$275,000 for A/E & master planning.
- \$50-\$75,000 – Master planning to proceed for 40-acre Charlotte Hall property.
- \$50,000 to be used for fiber optic cable for inter connectivity.
- \$50,000 to be used for beginning Three Notch Trail Phase II design & engineering.
- Seventh District Park Improvements (restrooms, playground, basketball courts & parking)
 - Original submittal \$600,000 in FY07
 - BOCC work session 3/1/05 moved forward to FY06
- Master Planning for Lexington Manor South Parcel
 - Project added at BOCC work session 3/1/05 - \$50,000

The FY2006 recommended budget should be approved by the BOCC in late March; public hearings will be held in April and the budget will be adopted by the end of May.

RP&CS OPERATING BUDGET STATUS REPORT

Mr. Rollins provided a handout that outlined several changes to the department's FY06 Operating Budget request. The FY06 General Fund budget request for the department is \$3,752,407 or \$373,363 more than the prior year, and 11% increase. The requested Recreation Activity Fund budget for FY06 is \$3,067,868, and increase of \$208,255. The increase is a result of the Summer of Safety, Arts and Reading program (formally with the Division of Community Services) being included in the Activity Fund and an increase in youth and adult leisure program offerings. The requested Wicomico Shores Golf Course budget for FY06 is \$1,249,895, and increase of \$11,953. The increase is attributable to merit, cola and health benefits increases and fuel and electricity rate changes.

SPORTS LEAGUE PRESENTATIONS

BABE RUTH BASEBALL – Mr. Rollins introduced Carl “Buster” Williams, President, Babe Ruth Baseball League, and Dave Williams, Vice-President, who were present to provide an overview of the league and its operations. Mr. Williams stated that the league is growing, in part because of the support of Cal Ripken. The league includes the Babe Ruth Division, for ages 13-19, and the Cal Ripkin Division, for ages 6-12. In 2001 the league registered about 390 youth; in 2004 the league registered 450; so far this year; 430 have registered; he expects that number will surpass 2004 levels after the high school ages register next week. The league does not have residence boundaries and serves all of St. Mary's County. The implementation of a Rookie League for 6, 7 & 8 year olds, with pitching machines, has been a very valuable tool in promoting the sport. The league hosts inter league play between Calvert and Charles Counties. The league has a mandatory play rule and a consecutive batting order. Challenges include field availability, finding volunteer coaches and the popularity of other sports (some kids are starting to “specialize” in one sport instead of playing a variety of sports). The league is in the process developing an interactive website. The league would like to see the ball field at Leonard Hall Recreation Center upgraded (additional fencing and maybe adding a rookie field).

Mr. Rollins asked if the league would be interested in supporting a minor league baseball stadium if constructed in Charles County. Mr. Williams stated they would definitely support the stadium; the league sometimes uses the Bowie Bay Sox Stadium. Mr. Williams asked if there were any plans to construct another park with baseball fields in St. Mary's County. Mr. Rollins stated that the draft Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan does recommend acquiring land for a Central County Park. Also, there is the potential for ball fields at Chaptico Park when future phases are developed, as funding permits. Mr. Williams also noted that the league has experienced problems with spectators getting hit with baseballs near the ball fields at John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove; he suggested some protective fencing.

NATIONAL LITTLE LEAGUE – Chris Maher, President, St. Mary's National Little League, stated that Little League split into two leagues about eight years ago. The National Little League boundary is Pegg Road and areas southward; the American Little League runs north of Pegg Road to the Apple Basket store. His goal is to register about 400 kids per year from ages 5 – 18 on the league's baseball and girls softball teams (about 300 of the current players are age 9 or under). He stated that Little League is a non-profit organization and is run by a Board of Directors and has approximately 150-200 volunteers. The league does background checks on all volunteers; not one of his volunteers has ever come up on the offender's list. The coaches are provided with First Aid training and training on the fundamentals of the game. The league's home park is Cecil Park. Some issues with the park include the location of the concession building and the location of the 90' ball diamond. The league would like to light some of the fields and are willing to help with the cost of lighting the fields. They would like to have John G. Lancaster Park as their home park and look forward to playing at the new field at Nicolet Park. Mr. Rollins stated that the County will be doing master planning for the Lexington Manor South Parcel which is adjacent to Lancaster Park. He stated the league would be invited to the public meetings on the plan.

Representatives from Northern Girls Softball, American Little League and T-Ball were invited but could not attend the meeting; they will be invited to attend another Board meeting in the near future.

OTHER BUSINESS

Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan – Environmental Resources Management, Inc., the firm preparing the

County's update of the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), and staff from the Departments of Land Use and Growth Management, Department of Economic & Community Development and RP&CS will present the draft LPPRP to the BOCC on Tuesday, March 8, 2005. It is anticipated that the joint meeting of the Planning Commission, Recreation and Parks Board and the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board will be held in April or early May. The draft plan will be sent to the Maryland Department of Planning in April for review; after all revisions have been made, the final document is due to the State in July 2005.

Charlotte Hall Property Master Plan - The department is moving forward with the site analysis and master planning for the 40 acre Northern Senior Center site, though the Charlotte Hall Community Recreation Center has been deferred. Staff and representatives from the firm of Whitney, Bailey, Cox and Magnani hope to conduct a public input meeting at the Northern Senior Center, possibly as part of the May R&P Board meeting. Future facilities under consideration for the property may include a community recreation center, multipurpose athletic fields, basketball / tennis courts, a north county swimming pool and possibly senior housing.

Chaptico Park/Northern Soccer League Use of Chaptico Park – Mr. Rollins reported that the Northern Soccer League conducted a survey during registration to obtain feedback from families on their opinions about moving some or all of their operations to Chaptico Park. League officials will update the department in the near future on the outcome of the survey. The league has decided to hold four game Saturdays at Chaptico Park; their travel teams will play all of their games at the new park. Staff will be presenting a budget amendment to the BOCC to enable the construction of an accessible playground at Chaptico Park, which was originally planned for Fifth District Park.

Myrtle Point Park Master Planning Workshop – Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the Myrtle Point Park Master Planning Workshop, held on Saturday, February 26, 2005, was very successful with approximately 50 people in attendance. Board members Sam Brown, Jody Payne, Chris Brugman and Coleman Hillman attended the workshop. The introduction and information regarding site constraints and opportunities was provided by Mr. Rollins, Elliot Rhodeside, of the firm Rhodeside and Harwell, Inc., and Sue Veith, Environmental Planner from the County's Department of Land Use & Growth Management. Workshop presenters included Carolyn Laray, the County's Tourism Manager, who spoke about Eco-Tourism/Heritage Tourism opportunities; Dwight Williams, Chief of Calvert County Division of Natural Resources, who talked about Calvert County's nature parks; Dr. Julia King, State Archeologist, Maryland Archeological Laboratory/Jefferson Patterson Park, who spoke about the archeological/historic significance of Myrtle Point Park. After the presentations, attendees broke into small discussion groups to consider their visions for the park. The consultant will now incorporate historical, environmental and other data available on the park and the comments and ideas gathered from the work session into a draft concept plan for the park which will be presented to the R&P Board in April or May. It is anticipated that an approved master plan will be in place by summer 2005.

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, April 7, 2005 in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 P.M.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on April 7, 2005.