

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, April 6, 2006**

MINUTES

Board members present: Andrew Roper, Chairperson, Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson, Patrick Dugan, Coleman Hillman, Jody Payne, and Lisa Wainger Rush.

Board members absent: Sam Brown, Dorothy Gass and Robert Harper.

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 Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson, at 5:40 p.m. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown. Andrew Roper, Chairperson, arrived at 5:50 and chaired the rest of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lisa Wainger Rush suggested two changes to the minutes; one under the Operating Budget Discussion, paragraph two, and one under the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department Request for Land at Chaptico Park discussion, paragraph two. **Lisa Wainger Rush motioned, seconded by Jody Payne, to approve the minutes of March 2, 2006 with changes. Motion carried with all in favor.**

YOUTH SPORTS DISCUSSION

Director Phil Rollins informed the Board that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) endorsed and adopted the Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports Initiative on March 7, 2006. The President of the National Alliance for Youth Sports, Mr. Fred Eng, called Mr. Rollins to congratulate St. Mary's County in taking the step forward to improving the youth sports experience for kids.

Recommendations are based on changing the culture of youth sports through reform, education and accountability. RP&CS will work with leagues and make sure they are complying with standards for training for league administrators and coaches, a code of ethics for parents, coaches screening, a smoking policy, a crisis intervention plan and liability insurance (all the volunteer leagues now have liability insurance).

Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, provided a handout of the draft plan of implementation. Meeting with leagues are planned for April 11th, 12th and 25th. The plan includes the following items.

Training

- Administrators – RP&CS will utilize NYSCA program
- Coaches – utilize NYSCA program or comparable positive youth development training. Staff will review the league's training program each year and if appropriate, approve the program including all corresponding videos.

Background Checks

- Need to develop a screening process
- Need to select a screening company that provides background checks
- Background check process will be administered by RP&CS staff
- Develop disqualifiers (Mr. Shepherd provided a list of potential disqualifiers proposed by National Alliance for Youth Sports)
- Plan to present proposed disqualifiers to R&P Board in June 2006 for approval

Parent Code Ethics

- League must have a Parent Code of Ethics signed annually by parents and kept on file with the league throughout the season (Mr. Shepherd provided a sample for review).

Crisis Prevention

- Mr. Shepherd provided a copy of the draft Crisis Intervention Plan to the Board which detailed steps for effectively managing potential crisis situations during sports practices or games.

Smoking in County Parks

- Smoking is prohibited within 150' of playing fields
- Parks staff will install signage in the parks
- Expected to be self-regulated

Reporting

- Staff will provide a report to the R&P Board twice a year that summarizes areas of compliance and non-compliance by youth sports leagues

Mr. Rollins noted that the Department's FY07 Recommended Budget includes a new staff position to help administer the program. The Recommended Budget also includes \$15,000 for a scholarship program for those who can't afford the cost of registration for youth sports programs. If most leagues are already providing scholarships, it will be proposed that the funding be used to help offset the cost of implementing the Raising Community Standards Initiative.

Bob Richardson asked if Charles County has a smoking policy for their parks. Mr. Shepherd stated that they do have a policy of no smoking within 150' of athletic fields and the policy is working very well. Patrick Dugan asked if the screening would include coaches and assistant coaches? Mr. Shepherd stated that it would include assistant coaches, with two coaches screened per team.

Mr. Rollins stated the BOCC discussed the RP&CS Department's Youth Football Proposal on Tuesday, April 4th. The Board decided not to implement the Department's proposal but to wait and see if changes within the Pigskin League improve the situation. The league was affiliated with Pop Warner Football; and the County Administrator, George Forrest, will be the County's representative to the Pigskin Board of Directors. Additionally, the BOCC gave direction to staff to assist the new Southern Youth Football program with getting established. Staff has been in touch with Calvert County Parks and Recreation and it appears the new league may be able to play in Calvert (as they won't have enough teams at the onset to just play internally). RP&CS will also work with the new program to provide County fields.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

- Summer camp registration began on Monday, April 3, 2006. There are still openings in various sports and summer day camps.
- The annual Easter Festival will be held on Saturday, April 15, 2006 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The festival includes a traditional egg hunt and decorating contest for all ages, pony rides, craft making, balloons, a moon bounce, miniature train rides, costumed characters, face painting, games, and leisure class demonstrations.

MECHANICSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT REQUEST FOR LAND AT CHAPTICO PARK

Mr. Rollins briefed the Board on the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department's (MVFD) request for about three acres of land at Chaptico Park for a future substation. He provided a copy of the MVFD proposed concept plan to Board members and showed how it related to the park master plan. They have searched for land in the Chaptico area for the past few years, but haven't been able to identify land for the facility.

The park currently includes a nine-field soccer complex, practice areas, a restroom concession building, a BMX track, and a children's playground that is currently under construction. Future phases of park construction include horseback riding rings, trails, picnic areas, pavilions, tennis courts, basketball courts and additional athletic fields. Other items identified in the master plan for future phases of development include a recreational pond, an indoor recreation center, swimming pool, baseball fields, irrigation, a maintenance building and asphalt roads and parking.

If this request is granted, it would have to go through the established Program Open Space (POS) conversion process and the County would need to replace the land with land of equal or greater recreational and open space value. This has only been done once before in St. Mary's County for Henderson Park when Great Mills High School was expanded. The replacement property cannot be land that is currently designated as parkland. The Department has concerns about the precedent this would set for other organizations that may come to the County looking for land and the loss of the soccer/football practice area. Mr. Rollins had previously suggested to the MVFD that they consider the parkland on the west side of the adjacent residential property, with access via the park entrance. The MVFD has talked to the owner of a parcel of land on the west side of the park about getting access across the property for a separate entrance for the substation, but that doesn't seem to be an option. Mr. Rollins expressed these concerns to the MVFD, and they have since suggested adjusting the location to have less of an impact on the practice area. The MVFD volunteered to help clear some land and construct additional practice areas at the park. The BOCC will hold a public hearing on the request on Tuesday, April 11, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. at the Northern County Senior Center.

Patrick Dugan expressed concern with giving away public land and how to you respond to the next group that asks for donated County land. Chairperson Roper also expressed concern for the precedent this would set and had concerns with locating the facility in a heavily used park. He would rather see it in another location and was concerned with the impact it may have on the Farrell property. Ms. Wainger Rush stated that there appears to be a considerable amount of undeveloped land in that area and maybe another site could be found. Mr. Richardson expressed concern with having a fire call on a Saturday morning when the park is heavily used by soccer.

Coleman Hillman expressed support for the request for the citizens of Country Lakes, Wicomico Shores and the race track at Budd's Creek. He stated the Fire Department could be a "watch station" at the park and deter undesirable activity; EMS would also be in the area for injuries that could occur at the park. He suggested a Sheriff's substation there too. Mr. Dugan stated that he agreed that a Fire Station may be needed in that area, but maybe not at this property.

Patrick Dugan motioned, seconded by Robert Richardson, that the Board send a letter to the Board of County Commissioners expressing support for the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department, but the Board does not support the land donation request. Motion carried 5-1.

FY07 BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the BOCC will hold a budget hearing on the FY07 Recommended Budget on Tuesday, April 25, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. at Great Mills High School. Key

elements to note for the RP&CS Recommended Budget include the addition of a full-time sports coordinator, a new full-time parks maintenance position, \$15,000 for the youth sports scholarship/Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports funding, and a new dump truck and tractor for the Parks Division. The requested funding for a Museum site supervisor was not included in the Recommended Budget. The request for a full-time Teen Court Coordinator requested by the Division of Community Services was included in the Sheriff's Department budget. Mr. Rollins explained that this position is now being filled by a Division of Community Services VISTA volunteer; according to VISTA regulations, we can no longer have the volunteer fill this capacity. By moving the position to the Sheriff's Department cases can be referred from the State's Attorney's Office; this will benefit more youth in the County.

PROJECT UPDATES

Three Notch Trail – Mr. Rollins reported that paving of the trail is almost complete; trail shoulders are being graded and seeded and should be completed within a few days. Other permanent signs will be placed along the trail within the next few weeks. A ribbon cutting ceremony with the BOCC will be held on Saturday, June 3, 2006. Construction is expected to begin on Phase II in the summer or fall of 2006 and be completed by spring 2007. Phase II of the trail will run from the Northern Senior Center to the County line in Charlotte Hall.

New Park Playgrounds – New playgrounds are being constructed at Chaptico Park, St. Clement's Shores Park and Seventh District Park. Ribbon cutting ceremonies will be held for the playgrounds at Chaptico and St. Clement's Shores parks in May; the Seventh District will have a ribbon cutting ceremony after other park improvements are completed later this year.

Charlotte Hall Property Master Plan – Master plan work is continuing for the Charlotte Hall property. Senior housing, an indoor recreation/multi-generational center and a swimming pool are all items being considered and are compatible and complimentary to the existing Senior Center. The senior housing portion of the plan has been the biggest challenge for the group. A preliminary plan is expected to be publicly presented on at a joint meeting of the R&P Board and Commission on Aging later this spring or summer. The meeting will be held at the Northern Senior Center.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the State of Maryland has enacted an outdoor burning ban which includes charcoal grilling in parks as a result of recent dry conditions. The RP&CS Department is following this ban and recently sent out a press release to inform citizens that there is a ban on charcoal grilling in County parks until further notice; gas grilling is still allowed.

Mr. Hillman stated that on a recent weekend the restroom facility at the Wicomico Shores Public Landing was closed during the day. Mr. Rollins said the facility should have been open and he will follow up with staff on the matter.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Jody Payne motioned, seconded by Robert Richardson, to meet in Executive Session to discuss matters of property acquisition as provided for in Article 24, Section 4-210(a)11. Motion carried 6-0.

Present: Andrew Roper, Chairman; Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairman; Patrick Dugan, Coleman Hillman, Jody Payne, Lisa Wainger Rush, Phillip Rollins and Kathy Bailey.

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

Time held: 6:40 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board of St. Mary's County will be held on Thursday, May 4, 2006, at 5:30 p.m., in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on June 1, 2006.