

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

Meeting of Thursday, April 7, 2005

MINUTES

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

Board members absent: Sam Brown, Chris Brugman & Dorothy Gass.

Recreation, Parks and Community Services staff present: Phil Rollins, Director of Recreation, Parks & Community Services (RP&CS); Trude Kemp, Pigskin Football League and Cheerleading; Kelly Imhoff, Gymnastics Booster Club; Arthur Shepherd, Kenny Sothoron and Gary Reed, 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

Jody Payne motioned, seconded by Coleman Hillman, to approve the minutes of March 3, 2005. Motion carried 6-0.

FY2006 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

Director Phil Rollins informed the Recreation and Parks Board that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted the FY06 Recommended Budget on March 29, 2005. A public hearing on the budget will be held at Great Mills High School, on Tuesday, April 26, 2005, at 6:30 P.M. The BOCC is expected to adopt the final FY06 Budget by May 31, 2005. The RP&CS budget included all the changes and updates previously presented to the R&P Board during the last Board meeting.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, provided an update on the following projects and programs for the Recreation Division.

- Summer Day Camps and Sports Camps – registration is now open for summer day camps and sports camps.
- SOSAR Camps – two Summer of Safety, Arts and Reading camps will be offered again this year. These programs were previously managed by the Department of Community Services; with the April 2004 merger of the Department with Recreation and Parks, the programs have been shifted to the Recreation Division.
- Great Mills Swimming Pool – the pool continues to offer ½ price discounted admission for days when school is closed. The pool will be closed for maintenance beginning on May 21, 2005 through May 27, 2005. The air inflated “bubble” will also be removed during that time.
- Skatepark – attendance at the skatepark continues to increase as the weather gets warmer. The park opened for spring/summer hours effective April 1, 2005. Hours are weekdays, 2:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M. and weekends, noon until 8:00 P.M.
- Pavilions – applications are currently being accepted for picnic pavilion reservations. Picnic pavilions at parks can be reserved for weddings, family reunions, office picnics, etc.
- Youth Basketball – championship games were held from March 28 through April 1, 2005 at Chopticon High School for the 108 teams in the Department sponsored basketball league.
- Easter Festival – over 600 children participated in the Annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday March 26, 2005;

approximately 1,500 attended the Easter Festival.

- Verbic Golf Tournament – The Scott Verbic Memorial Golf Tournament, held to benefit the Department's scholarship program, will be held on June 10, 2005. The Verbic Tournament is held each year in memory of Scott Verbic, dedicated youth sports coach and former member of the Recreation and Parks Board who passed away while serving on the Board.
- Summerstock Musical – the annual Summerstock Musical will be held from July 28 – 31, 2005 at Great Mills High School. This year's musical will be "Beauty and the Beast."
- Fall Festival – This year's Fall Festival will include an 8K Run/Walk for kids and adults. Proceeds will also go toward the Department's scholarship program.

SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

Mr. Rollins introduced Kenny Sothoron, Sports Coordinator, who described the Mid Atlantic Recreation and Parks Youth Sports Alliance organization and award program. The Alliance is comprised of more than thirty Recreation & Parks departments and sports organizations throughout the Maryland, Northern Virginia and Metropolitan region. The mission of the Alliance is to develop and communicate a consistent message that organizations and their players, coaches and spectators will be held accountable to a code of conduct that promotes sportsmanship and keeps recreational, competitive and non-competitive sporting activities in proper perspective. The Alliance, in keeping its mission to promote good sportsmanship, has decided to present Sportsmanship Awards to individuals who exemplify good sportsmanship in recreational level athletics. Each jurisdiction that is a member of the Alliance selected one recipient. Maryland's Speaker of the House of Delegates presented the awards at the Maryland State House on January 31, 2005.

Mr. Bruce Helmbrecht was nominated by Mr. Sothoron and received the Mid Atlantic Recreation and Parks Youth Sports Alliance Sportsmanship Award on behalf of St. Mary's County. Mr. Helmbrecht has been a volunteer RP&CS Youth Basketball Program coach for the past five years and previously served as a St. Mary's Youth Soccer League coach. Mr. Helmbrecht stated that it was a great privilege and an honor to receive the award on behalf of St. Mary's County. He outlined his experience as a young man with cerebral palsy who served as a student assistant for high school and college basketball teams. He was a consultant at Mount Vernon Nazarene University and was a student assistant for their girl's basketball program and various men's athletic programs. He was a consultant for local high schools in Pennsylvania and Ohio before moving to Maryland. He now volunteers with basketball on a year-round basis with the Department's program and summer camps. He tells parents of children with disabilities not to discourage them from trying to play sports.

Chairman Andrew Roper thanked Mr. Helmbrecht for his volunteer service and presented him with a certificate of appreciation for the Board and the Department.

SPORTS LEAGUE PRESENTATION

Pigskin Football League and Cheerleading – Mr. Rollins introduced Ms. Trude Kemp who provided an overview of the Pigskin Football League and Cheerleading programs. Ms. Kemp thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the league. She provided the following information on the league.

- Registration was up this year by 14%; the league has between 1,500 and 1,600 registrants and added three teams this year.
- Last fall was the first time in ten years that registration rates were increased.
- This is the 18th consecutive year the league has had an increase in registration numbers.
- They have implemented an unlimited middle school league for those who had previously been too heavy to play.
- Injuries this year were minimal: two broken ankles and other minor injuries.
- The league is a strong advocate of National Alliance for Youth Sports; had parents sign a code of ethics this year.
- Liability insurance recently increased by 10.5% and the medical insurance increased by 15%.
- Expenses have increased dramatically; lime has increased 60% over the last few years; electricity increased; equipment costs increased due to the need for new helmets and other equipment.
- Income comes from registration fees, sponsorships and the pizza sale fundraiser.
- She stated the league experienced one "low point" last year when a parent sent an accusatory letter regarding

the Pigskin League to Social Services, RP&CS, the Enterprise and the BOCC.

- The league is exploring the possibility of offering summer football camps in the future.
- The league really needs additional practice fields and game fields. Currently, the league is playing six games on each field they use on Saturdays.
- Lancaster Park needs some additional barriers and ropes to keep the spectators off the fields.
- Need to have park patrons pick up after their dogs, especially at Lancaster Park. They plan to ask parents to stop bringing dogs to games.
- Dorsey Park – the ropes need to be replaced around the perimeter of the field.
- Dorsey Park – the league can no longer seed and fertilize the fields since these are multi-user fields. The league also requests that the County use the same consistency in asking other leagues not to use the fields when they are wet.
- Fifth District Park – the league spent \$1,300 in fertilizing and over seeding the lighted football field at Fifth District Park; it is currently in great condition.
- Leonard Hall Recreation Center – Ms. Kemp requested a waiver of the facility use fee for the league annual program weigh in; staff will report back to the Board on this.
- The league ended up about “\$4,000 in the whole last year” which the Kemps paid for out of their own pockets; the league will eventually reimburse them for this.

Robert Harper asked how the league management is organized. Ms. Kemp stated they have an Executive Board that is elected by coaches on an annual basis. The Board consists of a President, three Executive Vice Presidents, two Area Vice Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, several Field Coordinators, Weight Masters, and a Communications/Media Specialist. Mr. Harper asked for a roster of Board members; Ms. Kemp will provide that to him. He also asked about the availability of an audited financial report; she stated that they do have financial reports, but they are not audited. She is the Treasurer and prepares these for the Board twice per year.

GYMNASTICS PROGRAM

As a continuation of the Youth Sports reports, Mr. Shepherd stated that the St. Mary's Gymnastics Center is operating in 12,450 s.f. of space leased from Patuxent Development Corporation. The lease will expire in 2001 and costs \$60,000 per year for the first five years and will cost \$66,000 for the second five years (2006-2011). The program has a \$300,000 annual budget; the program and is paid for exclusively from user fees; staffing makes up about 2/3 of the budget.

Gary Reed, Gymnastics Program Coordinator, explained that the Center has both recreational and competitive programs. The recreational program includes parents and tots classes, a boys program and a progressive curriculum for gymnasts to progress to the competitive level, if desired. Birthday party rentals are also very popular. Fees for recreational programs range from \$60 - \$75 every eight weeks.

The competitive program averages about 72 registrants per year. The cost for the program averages \$130 – \$245 per month, depending of the level of instruction. Numerous team members have won awards in state, regional and national gymnastics competitions. The Gymnastics Booster Club provides needed support with hosting meets and fundraising projects which helps with travel expenses for meets. The Booster Club members are great advocates for the competitive program.

The main management challenge has been to retain good, quailed staff and coaches. Gymnastics experience is required to be able to teach the sport and it has been a challenge to recruit qualified staff. Despite this fact, he stated the program has a great coaching staff and many have moved up to coaching from being participants in the program themselves.

Ms. Kelly Imhoff, President of the Booster Club, stated that her family has truly enjoyed the recreation program and is now involved with the competitive team. One of the Booster Club's main concerns is the future location for the Center after the current lease expires. They would like locate the program a little farther north, maybe in California, Hollywood or Leonardtown. They have lost gymnasts to programs in Waldorf. Mr. Rollins stated that there is a future project in the County's Capital Program to build a Gymnastics Center, but a firm location has not been identified at this time. The

Department does recognize the existing facility has limitations and will examine this in the next few years.

Coleman Hillman asked if a gymnastics demonstration could be included at the Nicolet Park Phase II Ribbon Cutting event or during another event or Board meeting. Mr. Rollins stated that staff will explore that possibility.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Rollins informed Board members of several upcoming events and calendar dates.

- Chaptico Park Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting Ceremony - Saturday, April 30, 2005, 10:30 A.M.
- Draft Myrtle Point Park Master Plan - Presentation to R&P Board – May 5, 2005, 5:30 P.M.
- Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan - Date for Joint Meeting – May 9, 2005, 6:30 P.M.
- Nicolet Park Phase II Ribbon Cutting - Tuesday, May 10, 2005, 4:00 P.M.
- Charlotte Hall Property Master Planning - Public Input Meeting – June 2, 2005 R&P Board Meeting

Other Items - Mr. Hillman asked if additional trash cans can be installed at the Charlotte Hall Library/Farmers Market site. He also asked about summer employment opportunities for young people with RP&CS. Mr. Rollins noted that there are summer jobs available and they are posted on the Department's website.

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, May 5, 2005 in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on June 2, 2005.