

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, May 4, 2006**

MINUTES

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

Board members absent: Sam Brown, Patrick Dugan, Dorothy Gass, Robert Harper 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 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

Approval of the minutes was deferred until the June meeting since those attending didn't represent a quorum.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

Mr. Rollins introduced Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, who was present to update the Board on the activities of the Recreation Division.

- Great Mills Swimming Pool – staff is working with the swimming community to establish a summer swim team. The pool will be closed from May 15 through May 26, 2006 in order that staff can remove the “bubble” structure and perform seasonal maintenance and training. The bathhouse area is undergoing a renovation to include an expanded lifeguard area and restroom facilities.
- Gymnastics Center – On April 23, 2006 at the Level 7 State meet Allison Slaughter became this year's Level 7 State Champion with an all around score of 36.8 in four events for the 14 year old category; Shelby Gardner took first place on floor exercise for the 12 year old category; and Alex Kohler took fifth place on the floor for the 11 year old category. The meet was held in Columbia, Maryland.
- Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports Initiative – Staff met with the presidents of the youth volunteer sports leagues last week to receive input from them regarding the implementation of the Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports Initiative. Staff plans to bring recommendations to the R&P Board on June 1, 2006.
- Easter Festival and Egg Hunt - The annual Easter Festival and Egg Hunt was held on April 15th was a tremendous success. Nearly 900 participated in the egg hunt; the estimated total attendance was 2,500.

Introduction of New Child Care Coordinator

Mr. Shepherd introduced BJ Waldron as the new Child Care Coordinator for the Recreation Division. Ms. Waldron filled the position previously held by Jean Valentine who retired last winter. Ms. Waldron is busy planning for summer camps and the 2006-2007 before and after school program. She spent her last twelve years working with the Child Care Administration. Ms. Waldron stated that so far, the job has been a great opportunity and a great challenge. Staff is adjusting to new assignments and some new procedures. Staff is working on marketing and promotion of camps and before and after programs. Currently, there are about 265 children enrolled in the before and after school programs. She enjoyed attending Child Welfare Day which was an excellent opportunity to work with other County agencies on issues affecting youth. Both Mr. Rollins and Mr. Shepherd congratulated Ms. Waldron on her accomplishments over the past six months.

PARKS DIVISION REPORT

Mr. Rollins introduced David Guyther, Parks Division Manager, who was present to highlight Parks Division news.

- New playgrounds – Mr. Guyther stated that new playgrounds at Chaptico Park, St. Clement's Shores and Seventh District Park are now complete; he invited Board members to visit the new playgrounds.
- ADA walkways – ADA walkways to the new playgrounds are being installed this week.
- Wicomico Shores Tennis Courts – A contractor will begin the replacement of the Wicomico Shores tennis courts in the near future.
- St. Clement's Shores Pavilion – the pavilion at St. Clement's Shores Park will be renovated this month.
- Staffing – The Parks Division is now fully staffed; three seasonal positions will be filled by Monday, May 8th.
- Special Events – Mr. Guyther stated that the increasing number of special events that the Division has to set up for and clean up after is becoming a challenge for Parks staff.

Introduction of Tyrone Harris, Park Operations Coordinator

Mr. Guyther introduced Tyrone Harris, Park Operations Coordinator to the Board. Prior to the Department's recent internal reorganization, Tyrone worked in the Recreation Division. In the past, park facility operations were handled by staff in the Parks Division and by staff in the Recreation Division. The Department feels that having one point of contact will make the operation more efficient. Mr. Harris is now overseeing and permitting athletic fields with the volunteer Youth Sports Leagues in addition to managing the skatepark and sprayground. His previous duties with programming at Carver Recreation Center have been shifted to Kenny Sothoron, Sports Coordinator. Mr. Harris provided the Board with several handouts regarding the number of leagues and teams, field usage, issues, park pavilion attendants, communication, inspections, records and scheduling. Bob Richardson stated that the Babe Ruth Baseball league is very happy with the attention that Tyrone is giving to park operations.

Park Use Request

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that staff has received a request to use Elms Beach Park for commercial photography; the requestor would like to film swim suit models at the waterfront park. If this request is approved, a rental fee would need to be charged and a park attendant would be on duty to monitor the use. Staff has "mixed feelings" about allowing this commercial activity at the Park. Bob Richardson stated that this activity may impact families and children using the park. Mr. Rollins stated that other Counties rent parks for filming movies etc. Coleman Hillman recommended they use the park during the weekdays when children are in school. Staff's recommendation would be to try and schedule this during a time when the general public wouldn't be there in great numbers and to charge an appropriate fee for this use. The Board will work on a policy to address these types of requests in the future.

Mr. Hillman asked if staff could place a cover on horse shoe pits to address cats using the sand pits as a litter box; Mr. Rollins stated that he did not know if that would work, but staff would check into it. Mr. Hillman also asked if staff could post a sign on seasonal restrooms letting the public know when restrooms will open; Mr. Rollins stated that would be done. He also asked staff to look at the location of the horse shoe pit at John Baggett Park.

PROJECT UPDATES

- Three Notch Trail – The one-mile, phase I section of the trail from MD 236 to the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home is finished. The Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for phase I of the trail will be held on Saturday, June 3, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. near the entrance of the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. Phase II, from the Veterans Home to Deborah Drive, just beyond the County line, should be under construction later this summer or fall.
- Seventh District Park - The Seventh District Park Improvement Project was funded in the FY06 Capital Budget. Improvements include a new playground, restroom building, basketball court and additional parking. The playground portion of the project is complete. A Ribbon Cutting ceremony for the playground will be held later this spring or in early summer, possibly combined with the Chaptico Park playground ceremony. Construction on the remainder of the project will be underway later this year and completed by spring 2007.
- New Park Playgrounds – In addition to the new playground at Seventh District Park, new playgrounds were also recently installed at Chaptico Park and St. Clement's Shores Park. The BOCC will be hosting a Ribbon Cutting ceremony for the new playground at St. Clement's Shores on Tuesday, June 13 at 3:30 p.m.; the

ceremony for the new Chaptico Park playground will be held later this summer.

- Charlotte Hall Property Master Plan – Staff from RP&CS, Department of Aging and the Housing Authority continues to meet with representatives from Whitney, Bailey, Cox and Magnani on developing a master plan for the Charlotte Hall property. The senior housing portion of the plan and related sewer requirements have been a significant challenge. Discussions are continuing with the Veteran's Home about the possibility of tying the sewer into the Veteran's Home system. A preliminary plan is expected to be publicly presented later this summer at a joint meeting of the R&P Board and Commission on Aging. The meeting will be held at the Northern Senior Center.
- MVFD Request for Land at Chaptico Park – The R&P Board letter on the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department request for land at Chaptico Park was forwarded to the BOCC on April 7, 2006. A public hearing on the request was held on April 11th at the Northern Senior Center. It is anticipated that the BOCC will address the request in the near future.
- Forest Landing Ribbon Cutting Ceremony – The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the improvements at Forest Landing in Hollywood is scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. The project involved construction of a new boat ramp, a new pier with a cat walk and deck and a floating dock. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements were also addressed as part of the project.
- Fox Harbor Public Landing – State grant funds were appropriated in FY06 for design, engineering and replacement of the public pier at Fox Harbor Public Landing. RP&CS staff, the County's Property Manager and the County Attorney have had discussions with an adjacent landowner to try and resolve a boundary issue with the parking area before proceeding with this project. A gate will be installed and keys given to local waterman and those with a need for public boating purposes. An easement agreement has been proposed to the landowner to address the problem.
- Paul Ellis Public Landing – This public landing will receive a new pier and ADA enhancements in FY06 with State Waterway Improvement funds in the amount of \$99,000 each. On May 2nd, the BOCC approved the purchase of a small parcel of land adjacent to the Paul Ellis Landing for parking.
- Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch – The project was approved for funding in FY06 in the amount of \$25,000 to provide a walkway to the stream and a step-down platform to the water for canoe and kayak launching. Permit applications have been submitted and staff met at the site with Maryland Department of the Environment representatives on April 20th to discuss the project.
- Wicomico Shores Tennis Courts – The contractor will begin replacing the two tennis courts at Wicomico Shores within the next few days. Mr. Hillman asked if there was any thought given to providing a basketball court at the site. Mr. Rollins stated that, generally, the Department's policy has been not to place basketball courts in close proximity to playgrounds and tennis courts. Different age groups of users of these facilities often conflict with one another. The plan is to add a basketball court at Chaptico Park during a future phase of development.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Hillman asked if there are any plans to add additional parking or an overflow parking area at Chaptico Park. Mr. Rollins stated that there is no plan in the current CIP to add parking at Chaptico Park. Mr. Rollins indicated that modifying game schedules may help with parking at the park. Tyrone Harris, Park Operations Coordinator, is reviewing parking issues at various parks and will make recommendations as needed to help alleviate the problem.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board of St. Mary's County will be held on Thursday, June 1, 2006, at 5:30 p.m., in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

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