

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD  
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY  
Meeting of Thursday, May 5, 2005**

**MINUTES**

**Board members present:** Dr. Andrew Roper, Chairperson, Coleman Hillman, Vice-Chairperson, Jody Payne and Dorothy Gass.

**Board members absent:** Chris Brugman, Robert Harper, Sam Brown, Robert Richardson and Greg Hambright.

**Recreation, Parks and Community Services staff and others present:** Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation, Parks & Community Services, Sue Veith, Environmental Planner, Land Use & Growth Management, and Kathy Bailey, Recorder. About 25 citizens attended the meeting for the Myrtle Point Park draft master plan discussion.

**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**

Approval of the April 7, 2005 meeting minutes was deferred until next month since there was not a quorum present.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION REGARDING PIGSKIN FOOTBALL REQUEST FOR FEE WAIVER**

During the April 7, 2005 Recreation and Parks (R&P) Board meeting, the Pigskin Football League provided a presentation to the Board on the League's operations, plans for the future and challenges. The League requested a waiver for the usage fee for Leonard Hall Recreation Center, which the League hopes to use again this year for their annual Pigskin Football weigh in. The normal cost for reserving the facility for corporate/private events is \$300 for the entire day, plus \$10 per hour for supervision. Staff is proposing a reduction in the fee for youth sports leagues and non-profit groups to \$50 per day, plus \$10 per hour for supervision, to cover direct departmental costs. The general consensus of those present was to support staff's recommendation.

**FY06 CAPITAL PROJECTS – PROPOSED REVISIONS**

Mr. Rollins asked members to refer to the FY06 Capital Budget detail sheets that were previously provided to Board members. The changes outlined were:

- Leonardtown Tennis Court - Previously, Parks Division plans called for the replacement of two courts at Leonardtown Elementary School/Park in FY07 and Dorsey Park in FY08. Those plans have changed since St. Mary's County Public Schools has indicated that the courts at Leonardtown Elementary School/Park must be demolished to enable a renovation/expansion project at the school to proceed. As a result, Dorsey Park tennis court replacement has been moved forward to replace the Leonardtown courts. This keeps the court replacement project in the Leonardtown area.
- Patuxent River Public Landing – Staff received notification in mid-April from DNR that Program Open Space (POS) funding was significantly increased in FY06. The Department had projected a total of \$204,622 in POS funding in FY06 (with 50% having

- to be used for land acquisition). Due to the increase, State funding in FY06 for this project has been increased to \$300,000.
- Lancaster Park Improvements – RP&CS recently learned from DNR that the Community Parks and Playgrounds funding program will not be accepting funding requests for new projects in FY06. That is because there were more eligible projects than the program could fund in FY05 (St. Mary's received a \$75,000 grant from the program in FY05). As a result of this, and RP&CS also learning that the County will receive additional POS funding, staff is recommending that \$75,000 be funded by POS. A 25% local match is required so staff is recommending that \$25,000 in Impact Fees be used for that. To offset the \$25,000 in additional Impact Fees, staff is recommending a \$25,000 reduction in Impact Fees for the Seventh District Park Improvements project (which is off-set by additional POS funds).
  - Seventh District Park – Staff has recommended using additional POS funds for this project. Original CIP submission only included a total of \$100,000 in POS funds for park development. Since then, RP&CS was notified by DNR that the local allocation for POS will be about \$609,000; 50% of that can be used for park development. Staff has recommended that \$75,000 of that be used for John G. Lancaster Park Improvements and \$125,000 for this project.

The BOCC will review this information and make decisions on these requests in the near future. The County budget is scheduled for adoption on Tuesday, May 31, 2005. *Note: Subsequent action by the BOCC on May 24, 2005 resulted in the Lancaster Park project failing to gain support (i.e. hard surface walkway and off leash dog park). The Board also added the \$75,000 in additional POS funds to the Three Notch Trail project.*

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Mr. Rollins announced several upcoming events for Board members present and the Channel 12 viewing public. The events included:

- Joint Board meeting between the Planning Commission, R&P Board and the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board on the draft 2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan to be held on Monday, May 9, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. at the Higher Education Center.
- Nicolet Park Phase II Ribbon Cutting and Flag Dedication Ceremony Honoring Chief Joe Shepherd on Tuesday, May 10, 2005 at 4:00 p.m.
- Piney Point Lighthouse Waterfront Festival and new Museum Building Ribbon Cutting Ceremony to be held on Saturday, May 14 & 15, 2005.
- Great Mills Swimming Pool will close for routine, seasonal maintenance from May 21 through May 27, 2005; the pool will reopen on Saturday, May 28, 2005.
- R&P Board will host the Charlotte Hall property master plan meeting on Thursday, June 2, 2005 at 5:30 p.m. at the Northern Senior Center in Charlotte Hall.

#### **MYRTLE POINT PARK MASTER PLAN**

Mr. Rollins and Sue Veith, Environmental Planner from the Department of Land Use and Growth Management, presented the draft master plan for Myrtle Point Park as prepared by Rhodeside and Harwell, Inc. Mr. Rollins provided a PowerPoint presentation which outlined background information on the park, site conditions, constraints, the concept master plan, considerations, opportunities and issues. Ms. Veith provided an overview of the site conditions for the property. She stated that under Maryland's land use classification, the majority of the park is considered to be forest cover and is located in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. She outlined areas designated as forest interior dwelling species (FIDS) habitat, types of forested areas and native and non-native invasive plant species. Shore erosion rates were noted in specified areas; even though there is erosion on the property, it's not as significant as other areas of the County. Tidal and non-tidal wetlands were indicated on one of the slides. There are several archeological

easements protecting significant historical resources and a Washington Gas easement on the property.

Mr. Rollins provided a synthesis from the public master planning workshop held on February 26, 2005. The workshop included presentations from Dr. Julia King, Maryland State Archeologist; Carolyn Laray, Tourism Manager for St. Mary's County; and Dwight Williams, Division Chief, Calvert County Natural Resources Division. Attendees of the workshop gathered in small workgroups and developed visions and recommendations they would like to see at the park. A full list of the workshop outcomes and recommendations was provided to the Board and others present. The proposed park program includes a park entrance area, handicapped access road, proposed stabilized grass areas for overflow parking, additional gravel parking areas, a canoe/kayak boat launching area, future restoration of the livestock and tobacco barns for interpretation, shaded picnic areas, an informal amphitheatre, handicap accessible trails and boardwalk, open air pavilion and biodegradable restroom facility, off-shore transient boat mooring area, network of trails, beach access and an education/demonstration project area (in area where water tower is proposed to be removed). Copies of the draft master plan were also provided to members and others present; this document was also recently posted on the County website.

The Department is proposing to apply for Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network site designation for Myrtle Point Park to enhance opportunities for grant funding and technical assistance available. The FY06 Capital Improvement Program has earmarked funding in FY10 and FY11 to begin to implement the master plan developed for this park. Also, staff would like to have the park included in the State water trails system. Work will need to be done to deal with issues of non-native invasive species. Forest management and wildlife management plans will need to be implemented. Structural evaluations of the barns will need to be done for restoration and reuse opportunities. Also, natural resource staffing expertise to manage and program the park will be needed at some time in the future.

Chairman Roper asked what type of surface is proposed for the accessible trails; Mr. Rollins stated the surface will be determined during the design stage, but would most likely not be asphalt. Mr. Hillman asked how often the gas pipeline is inspected; Mr. Rollins stated that it is inspected, but he's not sure how often. Dorothy Gass asked how the overlooks would be constructed; Mr. Rollins stated that those details would be determined during the design stage, but would probably be cleared areas or wooden platform type structures.

Mary Piatrowski – Ms. Piatrowski, a member of the Friends of Myrtle Point, stated that she feels that the County needs a Natural Resources Department and that need will grow in the future. She volunteered the services of the Friends of Myrtle Point Park to assist in grant writing and other efforts to promote the park.

Frank Fox – Thanked the Board and staff for moving forward with the planning effort for the park. He encouraged the Board to look carefully at the idea of placing an amphitheatre at the park and questioned whether it is actually necessary. He stated that the location of the amphitheatre on the proposed master plan would require a good deal of clearing. He was appreciative of the idea of using the existing trails and parking areas and stressed the importance of limiting new impervious surfaces at the park. He stressed the need to monitor the path to the canoe/kayak launch so it doesn't become heavily used. Also, he recommended additional study for the location of the pavilion.

John Pugh - Lives on the western side of Mill Creek, has been involved in previous planning park efforts and has hiked the park many times. He would like the County to think about the shoreline and the water with relation to submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). He would like the park to be designated as a County arboretum and identify all the trees, plants and grasses on the property. He does not support licensed duck hunting areas offshore of the park.

Bob Boxwell – Mr. Boxwell, President of the Friends of Myrtle Point Park, extended an invitation to those present to attend the Mother's Day Walk at Myrtle Point Park on Sunday, May 8, 2005. He thinks the park can be marketed as a tourist destination and Chesapeake Bay Gateways designation can help with this effort. He thinks when the master plan is implemented that staff will need to be hired to oversee the park.

Nancy Rogers – Thanked the BOCC and RP&CS for doing a great job on the master plan.

Mr. Rollins stated that the plan will be presented to the Planning Commission within the next few weeks. The R&P Board will make a recommendation on the plan during the next Board meeting. The plan will be presented to the BOCC during the summer.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Rollins provided information on events planned in St. Mary's County to celebrate National Trails Day on Saturday, June 4, 2005. Events include: John V. Baggett Park nature walk, Myrtle Point Park hike, Summerseat Sanctuary and Farm walk, Three Notch Trail walk or bike and Historic St. Mary's City 5K run/walk.

Mr. Rollins also thanked Barry Lewis and the Northern Soccer League, for their assistance with the Chaptico Park Ribbon Cutting Ceremony held on Saturday, April 29, 2005. He also noted that Southern Maryland BMX, Inc. hopes to open the BMX track at the park within the next few weeks.

#### **SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board of St. Mary's County will be held on June 2, 2005 at 5:30 p.m. at the Northern Senior Center in Charlotte Hall.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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Kathy Bailey, Recorder

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