

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, August 2, 2007**

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson, Richard Buckler, Robert Hicks, Coleman Hillman, David Phalen, Andrew Roper, and Lisa Wainger-Rush.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Patrick Dugan and Patrick Murphy.

RECREATION, PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation, Parks & Community Services (RP&CS); Tyrone Harris, Park Operations Coordinator, RP&CS; Chris Reynolds, President, Board of Directors, USTA/Maryland; Jody Payne, previous R&P Board member; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson, at 5:35 p.m. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Richard Buckler motioned, seconded by David Phalen, to approve the minutes of July 12, 2007 as amended. Motion carried 6-0; Andrew Roper abstained from voting as he did not attend the July 12th meeting.

PRESENTATION OF USTA MID-ATLANTIC MARYLAND GRANT AWARD CHECK

Mr. Rollins introduced Mr. Chris Reynolds, President of the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Maryland branch. Mr. Reynolds attended the meeting to present a ceremonial check for \$5,000 for the Dorsey Park tennis courts. Funds from this "Fix a Court" grant were used to install a "Premier" soft surface court and windscreens at the park. The work on the courts is now complete. Mr. Rollins also thanked Brian Abell, Katie Keen, Liem Slade and Waymond Detwiler, of the St. Mary's County Tennis Association for attending.

PRESENTATION OF LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD

On behalf of the Recreation and Parks Board and Department, Robert Richardson presented Jody Payne with a plaque thanking her for over ten years of dedicated service to the Recreation and Parks Board. Ms. Payne was involved with many Departmental projects over the years such as the Myrtle Point Park acquisition, Chaptico Park development project, Great Mills Swimming Pool project; and many others.

REVIEW REVISIONS TO DRAFT PARK POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

The Board reviewed the draft Park Policies and Procedures manual. Updates from the last discussion were previously e-mailed to Board members. Mr. Rollins explained the Athletic Field Permits section was revised due to the concern over the public not having access to fields. The first paragraph was revised to say:

Organized leagues and groups with a field permit have first priority for field use. Multi-purpose game fields (football, soccer, lacrosse and field hockey) are reserved for league games and authorized practice only. Baseball/softball fields may be used by the general public when not permitted by leagues.

David Phalen suggested the last sentence be reworded to: Baseball/softball fields may be used by the general public when not in use by leagues with permits. There was also a page added to the end of the document with emergency contact information and phone numbers.

Andrew Roper motioned, seconded by Robert Hicks, to approve the Park Policies and Procedures Manual with

updates. Motion carried 7-0.

PARK OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Rollins introduced Tyrone Harris, Park Operations Coordinator, who was present to give a report on park operations. Mr. Harris provided a report that detailed special facilities, Nicolet Park Skatepark, Nicolet Park Sprayground, field maintenance, Chancellor's Run Regional Park, pavilions and park attendants.

- He reported that the total attendance for the Skatepark in FY07 was 3,645 youth; 927 adults; and 284 BMX bike riders. Total injuries at the Skatepark for FY07 was 14.
- The Sprayground at Nicolet Park total attendance for FY07 was 4,323 youth and 2,408 adults.
- There are 54 softball fields, 9 baseball fields, 26 soccer fields, 4 multi-purpose fields and 3 football fields. There are 3 lighted soccer fields, 3 lighted football fields and 6 lighted softball/baseball fields. There are about 30 leagues that utilize these fields.
- The Chancellor's Run Regional Park Activity Center hosts private rentals, sports leagues, government and agency meetings, Department of Aging programs and leisure programs.
- Six County parks have pavilions available for rental. In FY07, there were 269 rentals.

Vice-Chairman Richardson stated that a Babe Ruth Baseball tournament was held last weekend at Chancellor's Run Regional Park and attendees from five Maryland counties all commented on the great condition of the facilities.

Coleman Hillman asked if the Department had ever checked into using areas at the fairgrounds for additional athletic fields. Mr. Rollins stated that that has been discussed but there are constraints with the property. Mr. Hillman also suggested a roller skating dance at the Skatepark.

DISCUSSION REGARDING ELMS PROPERTY ISSUES

Mr. Rollins briefed the Board on some issues at the Elms property. The Director of Land Use and Growth Management (LU&GM) is the Chair of the Elms Advisory Committee. A presentation was recently made to the BOCC on these issues. The Elms property is about 1,020 acres located on the Chesapeake Bay. It was acquired by the State in 1975 as a future power plant site. The MD Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Power Plant Research Program manages the site. Uses of the property include an Environmental Education Center operated by SMC Public Schools; Elms Beach Park operated by RP&CS; hunting and natural resources managed by the DNR Wildlife and Heritage Division; and biology study for students at St. Mary's College. The Elms Management Plan was developed over several years and was adopted by the BOCC in 2003. The goals of the Management Plan are to protect the site's environmental and cultural resources; encourage and support the use of the Elms for environmental education and recreation; and maintain and manage the entire Elms tract as a single, integrated site. One of the things that came out of the management plan was a change in user boundary lines. The DNR area now comprises about 543 acres and the County lease area is about 476 acres. The plan recommended that hunting continue on the DNR managed area. Hunting is not considered appropriate on lands leased by the County due to the presence of schoolchildren at the site for environmental activities. The hunting community is concerned that the new boundaries have decreased the area designated for hunting and has suggested that additional hunting ground could be used for bow hunting only. The BOCC has asked the Director of LU&GM to review information and see if a compromise can be reached.

PROJECT UPDATES

Seventh District Park – Construction on the new restroom building at Seventh District Park is moving forward, although slower than anticipated. Funding was also approved in the FY08 Capital Budget to pave the entrance road and parking areas at this park. That will be done next spring after site plan design and approval to address storm water management. The Department hopes to hold a ribbon cutting ceremony for the entire park improvement project next spring.

Lancaster Park – Design and engineering is moving forward for the pedestrian pathway around the perimeter of John G. Lancaster Park. It is anticipated that the project will begin next spring.

Chancellor's Run Regional Park – Funding was approved in the FY08 Capital Budget to add lighting for two existing multi-purpose fields to enable additional playing time for soccer and lacrosse at Chancellor's Run Regional Park. The

lighting portion of the project will be bid in fall 2007 and completed in time for the spring 2008 season.

Three Notch Trail – The County is still waiting for the concurrence in award from State Highway Administration to award the contract for construction of Phase II of the Three Notch Trail. This is needed since SHA National Recreational Trails funding is being used for this project. Design and engineering is nearly complete for Phase IV-A from Wal-Mart to Chancellor's Run Road. That phase is expected to be under construction next spring. The County is also moving forward with the design and engineering of Phase V from Laurel Grove Park to MD 5 in Mechanicsville.

Chaptico Park Parking Lot Expansion - Funding was approved in the FY08 Capital Budget to construct additional parking for the existing soccer/lacrosse complex at Chaptico Park due to problems associated with inadequate parking for youth league games on weekends. Mr. Rollins provided Board members with a handout detailing two options for the locations of the additional parking. One option would add about 100 spaces near the BMX track and the other would add about 60 spaces near the BMX track and 40 spaces to serve fields 6, 7, 8 & 9. The consensus of the Board was to recommend the second, split option. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by fall 2008.

OTHER

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that Andy Roper volunteered to make a presentation at the upcoming Maryland Association of Counties summer conference planned for August 16, 2007. This year's theme is the Many Faces of Open Spaces.

Mr. Rollins reported that he plans to attend a meeting with the St. George's Island Homeowners Association tomorrow night. He will attend to address concerns with regard to the Piney Point Public Landing.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, September 6, 2007, 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 September 6, 2007.