

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

**Meeting of Thursday, September 4, 2003
Minutes**

Board members present: Robert Harper, Chairperson; Andrew Roper; Vice-Chairperson; Cheryl Blazer, Samuel Brown, Kaki Burruss, Coleman Hillman, Jody Payne and Robert Richardson.

Board members absent: Richard Smith.

Recreation and Parks staff present: Phil Rollins, Director of Recreation and Parks (R&P); Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manger; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Robert Harper, Chairperson, at 5:30 P.M. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jody Payne motioned, seconded by Andrew Roper, to approve the minutes of July 10, 2003. Motion carried 8-0.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

Skatepark - Director Phil Rollins reported that the Grand Opening Ceremony for Nicolet Park and Ribbon Cutting for the skatepark was held on Saturday, August 30, 2003; Jody Payne, Kaki Burruss, Andy Roper, and Coleman Hillman attended on behalf of the Board. The official opening ceremony for the park went very well as did the Mid-Atlantic Skateboard Championship Series event which was held at the skatepark later that day. Approximately 75 skateboarders competed in eight different age divisions and, in addition to local area youth, came from the mid-Atlantic region and as far away as Florida, Maine and North Carolina.

Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, reported that the skatepark opened to the public on July 12; to date, waiver forms have been signed by 594 different users. Weekday participation averages about 20 skaters per day; weekends average 35 skaters per day. Equipment rental is going smoothly; about one third of the cost for the equipment has been made up to date in rental fees. So far, fees charged at the skatepark are paying for the operation and direct supervision. The skatepark has had only one documented accident. Lessons and party rental will begin soon; staff plans to open the skatepark for full days during the fall on school holidays. Mr. Shepherd also informed the Board that he is working with the Public Information Office on a video/commercial advertising the skatepark which will be aired on Channel 12.

Jody Payne noted that she was pleased to see John and Kathy Sprenger attend the skatepark ribbon cutting. Along with other residents, the Sprengers spearheaded the initial concept to build a skatepark in St. Mary's County.

Great Mills Swimming Pool - Mr. Rollins stated that rain and wet conditions have continued to hinder the progress on completing the pool, concrete decking around the pool and additional site work needs to be completed to open the pool. Staff anticipates the pool will open in early to mid October. The pool will be filled

with water sometime next week and final site work should be completed within two weeks. The bubble will be installed over the pool shortly after that.

Mr. Shepherd stated that Gary Reed, Leisure Programs Coordinator will be coordinating operations at the pool. Chuck Burghardt was recently hired as the Pool Manager and Brooke Countiss was hired as the Pool Assistant Manager; lifeguards and instructors will be hired within the next few weeks. The tentative pool hours of operation are weekdays and Saturdays 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. and Sunday noon until 8:00 p.m. Mr. Shepherd provided a handout which detailed proposed fees and included fees from other nearby pool operations for comparison. Staff proposed a youth daily fee of \$4; an adult daily fee of \$5; a youth/senior annual pass fee of \$200; an adult annual pass of \$300; and a family annual pass of \$450. The baseline fee schedule will be expanded as programs are added and feedback is received from the public.

Andrew Roper asked if there would be an equitable reservation procedure for swim lane rental; Mr. Shepherd stated there will be a reservation procedure similar to athletic field reservations. Mr. Rollins states that the Pool Manager may contact swim teams now to determine what their needs are and to balance different uses.

Kaki Burruss asked if the youth daily fee could be reduced and the adult daily fee raised? Mr. Rollins reminded the Board that staff's original proposal was \$3 for youth, but the fee was raised to try and make the pool self supporting. Cheryl Blazer indicated support for staff's recommendation for the proposed fees and recommended re-evaluating fees in six months. Mr. Shepherd noted that daily use fee for the skatepark is \$3 and noted it costs much more to run the pool than the skatepark.

Kaki Burruss motioned, seconded by Cheryl Blazer, to adopt the swimming pool fees as recommended by staff. Motion carried 8-0.

School Age Centers - Mr. Shepherd reported that R&P opened two new Licensed Extended Day School Age Centers. The new Centers officially opened for business at the start of the school year on Monday, August 25, 2003, at Banneker Elementary in Loveville and Town Creek Elementary in Lexington Park. The programs will provide before and after school care for students enrolled in those schools for grades one through five.

Punt, Pass and Kick - R&P and the Pigskin Football League will sponsor the Punt, Pass and Kick competition on Saturday, September 6th from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Fifth District Park. There is no fee associated with this event and girls and boys ages 5 to 15 are eligible to compete.

Carver Elementary School Recreation Center - Mr. Rollins informed the Board that R&P is planning to expand its partnership with St. Mary's County Public Schools by making the former Carver Elementary School gym available for recreation programs. Sports programs are set to begin the week of September 22nd; other programs such as community events and open gym nights, will be made available in the future. All utility costs for operating programs at the site will be covered for this fiscal year by the school department; next year, program costs will be incorporated into the FY2005 Activity Fund budget.

PROJECT UPDATES

Chaptico Park - Mr. Rollins reported that construction is continuing at Chaptico Park but excavation and site work have been hampered by rain; because of the delays caused by the weather, it is now anticipated that seeding for the soccer fields will be pushed back to late fall or even spring. Staff still hopes to be able to open the park in fall 2004, but that depends on weather conditions this fall and next spring.

Dorsey Park - The parking lot construction at Dorsey Park is now complete. Both lots have been expanded and paved to increase parking capacity by approximately 25%, which was needed to accommodate additional park usage.

Communication Tower at Dorsey Park - Mr. Rollins updated the Board on the plans to install a communication tower at Dorsey Park. A few years ago, Sprint Communications made application to the County to obtain approval to install a "stealth" communication tower at the park (replace a light pole on the football field with a taller, stealth pole); for business reasons, the company decided not to pursue the approval. AT&T is now moving forward with the application for approval to place a tower at the park. The R&P Board sent a letter to the BOCC in December 2002 indicating support for the application with the condition that the revenue generated from the lease agreement for the tower would go toward recreational programs and facilities. **Chairman Harper suggested that the December 19, 2002 letter from the R&P Board be resent to the BOCC for consideration; Mr. Rollins will forward the letter to the BOCC with a short transmittal.**

Three Notch Trail - DPW&T has assumed responsibility for trail design and engineering and R&P will handle project management. The design firm previously contracted to do the project, Ben Dyer & Associates, turned the project over to DPW&T at the 30% design phase. The firm recently completed the topographical survey and has forwarded it to DPW&T (the contractor has also completed the topographical survey of the parking lot expansion area adjacent to the right-of-way and the Charlotte Hall Library). This change will result in a savings of approximately \$30,000, which will be redirected to trail construction. It is expected that DPW&T will complete the phase one trail and parking lot design and engineering by late fall. Staff anticipates that the project will be bid over the winter; construction will begin in spring of 2004 and be completed by summer 2004.

Re-authorization of Transportation Equity Act - R&P received a grant in 2002 from the State Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program, and applied for another grant under this program in 2003, for phase one of the trail. Mr. Rollins reported that, due to budgetary concerns, the re-authorization of the Transportation Equity Act is in jeopardy; the funding for this grant program comes from TEA funds. He will keep the Board informed on the TEA re-authorization status.

Wicomico Shores Golf Course - Staff anticipates that the revised Wicomico Shores Golf Course Clubhouse plans will be out to bid by the end of September and construction will begin by late fall. Some redesign will be required as part of the "design/build" and "value engineering" process that staff was directed to explore. Mr. Rollins reminded the Board that the BOCC previously gave direction to increase the seating in the banquet room/grill area and maximize the view from the eighteenth green by extending those areas out onto what was previously proposed as a covered deck. The Board also directed staff to incorporate brick into the exterior finish. Ideas from contractors will be considered on how to incorporate these items into the plans for the new facility.

FY2005 CAPITAL BUDGET OVERVIEW

Mr. Rollins provided a one page handout summarizing the R&P Department's current approved FY2004-2009 Capital Budget. The BOCC has begun the budget process for FY2005 and has held several budget work sessions with department and agency directors.

Lexington Manor Project - One project the BOCC has indicated will be a priority is the Lexington Manor acquisition project; there's an interest for the County to acquire the property and relocate the residents to suitable, affordable housing. The Navy, State and County are committed to this project to solve problems with encroachments in the AICUZ. The project would involve using Program Open Space Funds to purchase a portion of the property. That portion of the property would be used for open space or recreation; the property is adjacent to Lancaster Park on Willows Road.

Chairman Harper expressed concern that the R&P Board didn't here about the project or the plan to use POS funding for the acquisition until the project was discussed in public meetings. Ms. Burruss added that the contractor eventually selected to handle the demolition should have specific guidelines to follow to preserve and not to damage the existing trees on the property.

Cecil Park Improvements, Elms Beach Park Expansion, Myrtle Point Park and Seventh District Park Improvements - These four projects are in the CIP for FY2005 to conduct master planning to expand and or enhance the infrastructure at these parks (with the exception of Myrtle Point, which does not have an adopted master plan for development). Mr. Rollins stated that Elms Beach and Seventh District are viewed as higher priorities by staff. Seventh District has no restroom building and needs a new playground (according to the ADA Transition Plan) and a basketball court.

Ms. Blazer asked for a comparison of what amenities are needed at Cecil Park and Seventh District Park; she stated that improvements have not been made to Cecil Park in many years and are needed (such as correction of a serious drainage problem).

Ms. Blazer stated she received two phone calls from citizens regarding the new buffer zone for hunting on the Elms property. Mr. Rollins will provide her with a copy of the new map of the property which shows boundaries for the park, Environmental Center and DNR hunting area. The approved plan was previously mailed to board members; the plan will be mailed to new Board members next week.

Tennis Court Replacement Project - Staff plans to recommend in FY2005 to replace the old tennis courts at Wicomico Shores; the BOCC is concerned about taking those courts away from that area since new tennis courts at Chaptico Park many not be constructed for several years. Coleman Hillman recommended constructing basketball courts in Wicomico Shores also.

Central County Park/Second District Community Park - Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the 2000 Land Preservation Recreation Plan (LPRP) identified the need for additional parkland in these areas. Due to fiscal constraints, staff may recommend combining these two projects into one acquisition project somewhere between Leonardtown and Callaway to serve citizens in both these communities.

Patuxent River Public Landing - This previously identified FY2009 acquisition project will probably be moved forward, since the current BOCC views this project as a priority.

Land Preservation and Recreation Program - The 2000 LPRP will be updated as soon as the State issues the guidelines for the plan update; staff anticipates the process will begin later this fiscal year.

Mobile Entertainment Stage - Ms. Burruss asked if this project was included in the CIP due to the fact that it takes many man hours for Parks' staff to set-up the old stage that R&P, BOCC and other County agencies use for events. Mr. Rollins indicated that that is the reason the item is included. **Ms. Burruss suggested sending a letter of support to the BOCC for the purchase of the mobile stage and to include the number of times the old stage is being used what it costs in man hours to set-up.**

Parks ADA Transition Project - Staff will recommend funding the parks ADA project in FY2005. Chairman Harper stated that parks (to include Cecil, Elms Beach, Myrtle Point, and Seventh District parks) not designated for master planning in FY2005 should receive ADA upgrades as specified in the ADA Transition Plan.

Fees and Charges - Mr. Rollins reported that Department Directors are meeting with the Finance Department on a comprehensive study of fees and charges for services provided by County Government. He

will provide updates to the Board on the status of these meetings.

ANNUAL REPORT

Chairperson Harper asked Kathy Bailey to make a request for appointment on the BOCC agenda for the Board's presentation of the 2002 Annual Report.

WICOMICO SHORES GOLF COURSE ADVISORY BOARD

Chairperson Harper provided the Board with a letter for review regarding the Wicomico Shores Golf Course. During the July meeting, the Board agreed to send a letter to the BOCC recommending that they do not establish an Advisory Board solely for the Golf Course; the Board recommended the new group be appointed as a subcommittee of the R&P Board.

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, October 2, 2003 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 October 2, 2003.

A tape recording of the meeting is kept on file in the Recreation and Parks' office for one year.

cc: Board of County Commissioners
County Administrator
St. Mary's County Department Heads
Recreation and Parks Department
Division Heads