

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

Meeting of Thursday, October 7, 2004

MINUTES

Board members present: Robert Harper, Chairperson, Coleman Hillman, Vice-Chairperson, Kaki Burruss, Jody Payne, Dorothy Gass, Robert Richardson and Greg Hambright.

Board members absent: Samuel Brown and Andrew Roper.

Recreation, Parks and Community Services staff and others present: Phil Rollins, Director of Recreation, Parks & Community Services (RP&CS), and Kathy Bailey, Recorder. Also in attendance were Clive Graham and Reggie Baxter of Environmental Resources Management, Inc. (ERM).

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 Robert Richardson, to approve the minutes of September 2, 2004. Motion carried 7-0.

SUMMARY OF R&P BOARD ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTATION

Coleman Hillman, Vice-Chairperson, reported that he and Andrew Roper presented the Annual Report to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Mr. Hillman thanked Jody Payne and Greg Hambright for attending also. The BOCC expressed their appreciation for all the work the R&P Board does during the year. During the presentation, Commissioner Jarboe commented that he would eventually like to see the Three Notch Trail extended to Charles County to the proposed baseball stadium. Director Phil Rollins added that Commissioner Jarboe also asked the Board to take the Hughesville minor league baseball stadium project under advisement and provide input to the BOCC on the benefits or disadvantages of the project. Mr. Rollins made the Board and the public aware of the press conference to be held on Tuesday, October 12, 2004, at 11:00 A.M., at the Hampton Inn in Waldorf, hosted by the Charles County Economic Development Commission.

LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS & RECREATION PLAN

Mr. Rollins introduced Clive Graham and Reggie Baxter of ERM, Inc., the firm working to develop the County's 2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), who were present to provide a status report on the progress of the Plan. Staff worked with ERM over the last several weeks to update information provided to the Board last month and to work on compiling additional information required by the State to be included in the report. Handouts were provided and included the draft Summary Needs, Supply, and Demand Report; Recreation and Open Space Acreage Analysis; and Acquisition, Development and Rehabilitation Recommendations. Mr. Graham noted that the numbers in the plan should reflect a clear justification of future park and facility projects.

Mr. Graham explained the updated draft handouts. The State developed these forms that each Maryland county needs to complete for the current 2005 inventory and projections for the years of 2010, 2015 and 2020. The State will use the information provided in these forms to prepare a statewide LPPRP. Some of the key State agencies involved in the update process are the Maryland Department Planning, Department of Natural Resources, and the Maryland Department of Agriculture – all of whom are looking for money for their respective preservation programs. The 2005 LPRP is envisioned to provide a more integrated picture and awareness of funding needs for all land preservation – park and open space, natural resource protection and agriculture.

Multi-purpose fields now show a deficit due to additional factors such as actual season length, how many players a field can actually accommodate and the varied sports using the fields. Mr. Graham noted that the needs report does not reflect the addition of the new fields planned for Chaptico Park; when those come on line in 2005 they will help to satisfy the need for additional soccer fields. Trails show a deficit of -18 miles; the first draft showed -25, but did not include the trails around St. Mary's River State Park. The swimming pool number reflects the need for one pool; the swimming beach shows a deficit of three miles of beach. Beach needs are partially being met by ocean beaches. Playgrounds now show a surplus of eight; picnic pavilions show a surplus of three pavilions. The draft needs report shows a need for 1,118 additional acres for hunting (some of that need is being met on Patuxent River Naval Air Station property); the consultant listed those areas where hunting is available. Golf shows the demand for one additional golf course in the County. Fishing spots show a deficit for about 35 spots or 280 feet of fishable area. Boating shows a deficit of 33 launches or ramps; some of that need is being met by private facilities. Equestrian facilities show a need of four riding rings; dog parks shows a need for three acres.

Kaki Burruss commented that measuring the need for trails in miles is a very limiting way to look at the overall needs picture and not very useful in trying to plan for trails in the long term. St. Mary's River State Park trail is about 7.5 miles; that trail isn't really all that usable since the bridge is out and much of the trail is through marsh land. She also stated that we should look at the accessibility of trails for the county-wide walking, hiking and jogging public. A 1 ¼ mile trail would need about 12 acres; acreage needs are much bigger than the mileage needs since other factors need to be taken into consideration when laying out trails (wetlands, roads, park amenities, etc). Myrtle Point Park has 192 acres and has a 3 ½ mile perimeter trail; she thinks the maximum that could be constructed at Myrtle Point is 16 miles of trails. She supports the perimeter trail around John G. Lancaster Park. She stated that future parks should be designed to accommodate fitness walking. She also mentioned the need to look at canoe and kayak launches separately from power boat launches.

Mr. Graham noted that by lumping all trail needs into one category with one recommendation isn't the ideal way to present the true need. Mr. Rollins suggested that the Department could encourage the State to repair and upgrade the trail at St. Mary's River State Park. Mr. Graham will also look into the daily carrying capacity of trails.

Mr. Graham explained the Recreation and Open Space Goal Analysis. The County has made considerable progress since 2000 in meeting its State recreational acreage goal with the addition of Chaptico Park, Lancaster Park and the expanded Elms property lease. Currently, the analysis shows a deficit of 801 acres; County's that meet their goals are allowed to use all their Program Open Space allocation for park development; currently St. Mary's can only use 50% of its POS allocation for development. Mr. Rollins stated that perhaps one way to help the County meet its goal would be to have the County designate its closed landfills as recreational land or open space.

Ms. Burruss stated that in the future, acquisition of parkland will become harder as the population pressure grows.

The last handout discussed was the Acquisition, Development and Rehabilitation Recommendations sheet. The handout extends recreational capital projects out to 2020 for longer-range planning. He recognized that these numbers propose higher future capital expenditures than currently approved; staff and the consultant are still examining these numbers to determine if some of the projects should be moved farther out. New projects listed on the handout include the Upper Patuxent Public Landing, which has been identified as a need in the past and Neighborhood Parks, which are recommended in the Lexington Park Development District Plan. Other new projects for the long-range plan are the Indoor Ice Rink/Sports Facility, Recreation Center Renovations and several public landing upgrades for canoe and kayak launches. There are a few other longer-range projects that may either be entered in another column on the table or listed in a new table.

Greg Hambright recommended that perhaps we should map the reported needs with the Capital Plan and derive from that what needs have been met; while the ice rink sounds like a needed facility, that wasn't identified as a need. To expand on that, Chairman Harper stated that Neighborhood Parks and Gymnastics Center weren't identified as needs either. Mr. Hambright noted that perhaps the need for beaches could be partially satisfied with the Lower and Upper Patuxent River Public Landings.

Chairman Harper asked that a chart detailing population growth by Election District be included in the plan, similar to the table listed in the 2000 plan. He felt it was important to tie needs to the areas of greatest population growth.

The consultants will report back to the R&P Board in November with a draft of the first three chapters of the plan. The draft plan will be sent to R&P Board members at least one week before the November Board meeting. It is hoped the draft plan can be presented to the Planning Commission and the public on December 13th at a joint meeting with the R&P Board and Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board and then to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) later in December. The draft will then be sent to the State in January 2005.

HUNTING ON PUBLIC LANDS DISCUSSION

Mr. Rollins referred to handouts previously emailed to Board members that included the Department's policy on hunting on recreational lands, a listing of public hunting areas in St. Mary's County, a chart listing the locations and amenities of County parks and a sample DNR Cooperative Wildlife Management Agreement. Over the years, hunting hasn't been perceived as a County function; for the most part, it's been an activity provided at State parks.

Mr. Rollins referred to the copy of the letter the BOCC sent to Steve Riley regarding the reduction in hunting areas on the Elms property. The BOCC indicated that it was willing to initiate discussions with DNR to explore the possibility of using additional County leased acreage at the Elms property for hunting during certain times of the year. This issue is scheduled to be discussed during the Elms Committee meeting of October 28, 2004, at 10:00 A.M., at the Elms Environmental Center; Mr. Riley has been invited to the meeting and interested Board members are encouraged to attend. Mr. Rollins will provide the Board with an update on the discussion.

SELECTION OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Robert Richardson and Greg Hambright agreed to serve as the nominating committee for the Election of Officers which will be held during the November meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Jody Payne motioned, seconded by Robert Richardson, to meet in Executive Session to discuss matters of property acquisition as provided for in Article 24, Section 4-210 (a) 11. The motion carried 8-0.

Present: Robert Harper, Chairperson, Coleman Hillman Vice-Chairperson, Kaki Burruss, Jody Payne, Dorothy Gass, Robert Richardson and Greg Hambright. Also in attendance were Phil Rollins, Director; and Kathy Bailey, Recording Secretary.

Authority: Article 24, Sections 4-210(a)11; Time held: 6:55 P.M. until 7:20 P.M.

OTHER BUSINESS

St. Inigoes Public Landing Ribbon Cutting – Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the St. Inigoes Public Landing Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday, October 19, 2004 at 3:00 P.M. at the landing. Board members are encouraged to attend if possible.

Punt, Pass & Kick Competition – Mr. Richardson reported that 52 children competed in the NFL/Pepsi Punt, Pass & Kick competition held on Saturday, September 11th at Fifth District Park. The Sectional competition will be held on October 29, 2004. The Sectional first place winners will be invited to compete in the Washington Redskins Team Championship competition to be held during an upcoming Redskins game at FedEx Field.

High School Soccer Program – Ms. Burruss stated that she has received positive feedback on the new high school soccer program.

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, November 4, 2004 in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks board on November 4, 2004.

A tape recording of the meeting is kept on file in the Recreation, Parks & Community Services' office for one year.