

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD  
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY  
Meeting of Thursday, November 1, 2007**

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Patrick Dugan, Chairperson, Robert Richardson, Vice Chairperson, Robert Hicks, Coleman Hillman, Patrick Murphy and David Phalen.

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Richard Buckler, Andrew Roper 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, RP&CS; and Kathy Bailey, RP&CS, Recorder. Jerry Phelps, Stephen Whetstone, Jim Swift and Hans Welch of the Patuxent Velo cycling club also attended along with Valerie Deptula, Amish 100 sponsor.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**David Phalen motioned, seconded by Patrick Murphy, to approve the minutes of October 4, 2007 as amended. Motion carried 6-0.**

Patrick Murphy clarified his comments on page two and three with regard to the Raising Community Standards discussion; he also wanted the minutes to reflect his question about a new volunteer basketball league which is forming in the County. Coleman Hillman clarified his request on page five; he asked if a map of the County could be placed in the Program Guide showing locations of parks.

**Coleman Hillman motioned, seconded by Robert Hicks, to approve the Executive Session minutes of October 4, 2007 as written. Motion carried 6-0.**

**RECOGNITION OF PATUXENT VELO/AMISH 100 DONATION**

Director Phil Rollins introduced Jerry Phelps, Stephen Whetstone, Jim Swift and Hans Welch of the Patuxent Velo cycling club. Mr. Rollins reported that Patuxent Velo purchased an attractive park bench for the Three Notch Trail from proceeds from the Amish 100 event held in September. The Department and the Recreation and Parks Board formally recognized and thanked the group with a certificate of appreciation for the donation.

**FY09 CAPITAL BUDGET OVERVIEW**

Mr. Rollins provided a summary sheet of the current FY2008-FY2013 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget a copy of the 2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) Land Acquisition, Facility Development and Rehabilitation Recommendations to Board members. Mr. Rollins reported that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) held the first budget work session last week that focused on a review of Capital Projects and Enterprise Funds. He thought it would be helpful for the Board to have the LPPRP document that details recommendations for parks and facilities for the next several years. The current CIP handout shows what projects have actually moved forward.

Mr. Rollins briefed the Board on the following four projects that were discussed during the budget work session with the BOCC.

Three Notch Trail – Mr. Rollins recognized Jim Swift, President of the Friends of the Three Notch Trail, who has been involved with the trail project since its inception. The trail project has been ongoing for several years and will continue

into the future, contingent upon funding. One of the Commissioners asked if the phasing plan for the project could be re-examined. Current phases are:

- Phase one: MD 236 in New Market to the Northern Senior Center in Charlotte Hall – this phase is complete.
- Phase two: Northern Senior Center north to Deborah Drive, just beyond the County line - is expected to be under construction later this year.
- Phase three: Wildewood to Wal-Mart - is being constructed by private developers.
- Phase four A & B: Design and engineering for Phase four A from Wal-Mart to Chancellor's Run Road is underway; construction is expected to begin in summer 2008. Design and engineering for Phase four B from Chancellor's Run Road to Pegg Road (Gate 1 Pax River NAS) will be coordinated with the design and engineering for FDR Boulevard in FY09.
- Phase five: Laurel Grove to MD 5 in Mechanicsville - is being designed in FY08 with construction anticipated to begin in FY09, depending upon funding availability.
- Phase six: Mechanicsville to New Market - is planned for design in FY09 and construction in FY10 and FY11.
- Phase seven: Wildewood to Hollywood - is planned for design in FY11 and construction in FY12.
- Phase eight: Hollywood Road to Friendship School Road - is planned for design in FY12 and construction in FY13 and FY14.
- Phase nine: Friendship School Road to John Baggett Park is planned for design in FY14 and construction in FY15.

Commissioner Jarboe suggested looking at changing the approved phasing plan to begin Phase seven from Wildewood to Hollywood before Phase six from MD 5 in Mechanicsville to MD 236 in New Market. Commissioner Jarboe proposed this due to the concerns of residents in the Mechanicsville area. The current plan is mapped this way to provide a continuous, scenic stretch of trail from Laurel Grove to just beyond the County line in Charles County. Staff's concern with changing the phasing plan involves issues with easements needed to construct the trail in the section from Wildewood to Hollywood due to the fact the sections of the right of way were lost when MD 235 was widened. These issues will take a considerable amount of time to address.

Robert Hicks expressed support for establishing John Baggett Park as a trail head with an informational kiosk, bike racks, restrooms, etc. Mr. Murphy liked the idea of changing the phasing plan to benefit the many residents in the Wildewood area. Mr. Hicks asked if staff anticipates that issues will have to be worked out with adjacent property owners in the Mechanicsville to New Market section of the trail. Mr. Rollins stated that yes, there probably will be issues, but not as significant as the issues in the section from Wildewood to Hollywood. Mr. Rollins also pointed out the trail may need to be routed within the Wildewood development as the right of way is located in front of the Wildewood shopping center in the storm water management area. Chairman Dugan asked if changing the phasing would significantly delay the project. Mr. Rollins stated yes, issues with funding and easements would delay the project. Chairman Dugan asked if the design and engineering could be underway on a phase while another is under construction. Mr. Rollins stated that could be done, depending upon funding availability. The County wouldn't want to begin design until all the easement issues have been worked out. The trail will serve recreational, transportation and tourism purposes; he thinks the northern section is the best to focus on for recreational benefits.

Jim Swift, on behalf of the Friends of the Three Notch Trail, stated that he has walked the entire right of way. He stated that he has biked to Pax River NAS in the past when the shoulders were wider; it is still possible with the new bike lanes, but is more of a challenge. He views the northern sections of the trail as more recreational and the southern sections more for commuting. He noted that the Wildewood section includes some wetlands and issues with the relocated power line area. He stated the section from Baggett Park north is beautiful and is his favorite section for recreational use. Mr. Hicks stated that he has visited many trails and stated the longer, uninterrupted trails and more heavily used. Mr. Whetstone, of Pax Velo, stated that when you look at serious riders and recreational users and families, there are many more recreational users. Serious riders probably ride more miles than recreational users. Serious riders will ride in high traffic areas, where recreational riders should not. Chairman Dugan asked if Pax Velo would agree that more people would use the trail in the Wildewood area or in the northern area; the Pax Velo representative agreed that the recreational section would get more use. Mr. Hicks stated that he would bring his family to Baggett Park as a starting point and walk the northern section, but would probably not walk the southern section near Target, Best Buy, etc. He thought people from Wildewood might do this also.

**Robert Richardson motioned, seconded by Coleman Hillman, to recommend to keep the current phasing plan for the Three Notch Trail. Motion carried 6-0.**

Automatic Door Opener Project at Great Mills Pool – Mr. Rollins stated that the doors at the Great Mills Pool are ADA compliant, but the Department would like to provide a push button automatic door opener to enhance accessibility.

Facility Rehabilitation Needs – Staff is pulling together some information on facility rehabilitation needs such as interior and exterior painting at various recreation centers for a Facility Rehabilitation project.

Additional 90' Baseball Field – Staff has received a request from American Legion Baseball for the construction of a 90' field at Chancellor's Run Regional Park for teens and adults. Staff will take a look at the available land at Chancellor's Run to see if there's room for other athletic fields. The Department has a Capital Project in the CIP to address this.

Mr. Murphy inquired about the Great Mills Swimming Pool property as a possible site for a baseball field. Mr. Rollins stated that the entire site has not been designated as parkland and the County would probably want to keep options open for that site. A master plan was developed for the property but never adopted. Mr. Shepherd added that constructing one field by itself at a location poses challenges. Mr. Hicks asked about the possibility of putting a field at the former Flattops property. Mr. Rollins will bring these two ideas up at the next CIP budget work session.

Mr. Murphy stated that there is one major County park in St. Mary's that does not have a playground – Fifth District Park. Patrons are currently using the Lettie Marshal Dent School playground after school hours. He suggested the County partner with St. Mary's County Public Schools to enhance the playground at the school to accommodate school and public recreational use. Mr. Rollins will add this to the list of CIP projects to bring to the BOCC. Mr. Rollins reminded the Board that a few years ago the County planned to install a playground at the park on a small practice field. The Northern Soccer League was opposed to that due to the loss of the practice area; therefore, the new playground was installed at Chaptico Park.

#### **RECREATION ACTIVITY FUND REVIEW AND DISCUSSION**

Due to time constraints, the Recreation Activity Fund review and discussion was deferred until the next Board meeting.

#### **RAISING COMMUNITY STANDARDS FALL REPORT REVIEW & DISCUSSION**

Mr. Murphy expressed support for the revised Community Standards in Youth Sports document. Mr. Shepherd stated that the report included minimal revisions; all the previous individual files were combined to form one manual and it's still a work in progress. Mr. Murphy questioned an item under League Responsibilities, page eight, item five with regard to acceptance of any eligible participant, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, or physical ability. He asked if that statement referred to playing ability/capability level; he wanted to make sure the Department does not plan to do away with select or all star leagues. Mr. Shepherd stated that this refers to making reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities and having programs in place for all.

Mr. Murphy asked if item six on the same page referred to minimum play rules. Mr. Shepherd stated yes it does. This was made clear in the Department sponsored Youth Basketball guidelines this year; if a person does not attend practice regularly or has an attitude problem they could be suspended from play. In the event of such a suspension, it should be reported to the referee, opposing coach and gym supervisor before the game. Volunteer youth leagues are responsible for the interpretation of this item for their respective leagues.

Mr. Murphy stated that page six, item four, should refer to Parents Code of Ethics not Parents Code of Conduct.

Mr. Murphy stated that he liked the deadlines added to the Background Consent Form Deadlines page for each season. Chairman Dugan asked what are we going to do about trying to get leagues to comply, which was discussed last month. Mr. Murphy stated that is spelled out now on page nine, item thirteen. Chairman Dugan asked if the wording answers questions from last month; Mr. Rollins stated that it puts the foundation in place, but needs further discussion. Mr. Murphy questioned the way the Department bases the percentage of compliance with regard to the potential number of coaches and the actual coaches (example: if there are nine teams, eighteen potential coaches and ten actual coaches, everything is based on the ten actual coaches). Mr. Shepherd stated that is correct; some teams could have two per

team (or more) but some have less. That is why the Department bases compliance percentages on the actual number of coaches reported for background check purposes. The potential number of coaches is based on the County paying for two background checks per team.

Chairman Dugan stated that he has a concern with posting the names of all the coaches that have passed the background checks because rumors could start about someone who was not disqualified, just didn't send in the paperwork for some reason and therefore does not show on the list of approved coaches. Mr. Shepherd stated the web and program guide page heading could be worded to say completed background checks and a note could be added to say if you don't see your coach on the list, this does not mean he/she has been disqualified but may have not completed the process. This would raise awareness that the paperwork needs to be completed and submitted. Mr. Murphy asked if coaches could go directly to RP&CS to become certified. Mr. Shepherd stated that is being done now with Todd French, Sports Coordinator, attending league meetings to collect the forms. Mr. Richardson stated that Babe Ruth submitted its entire coach roster to Mr. French, so he knows who all the coaches are. Mr. Shepherd stated that the goal for next season is to obtain accurate coaching rosters for the leagues. Mr. Murphy stated that last month staff proposed placing leagues on probation that aren't in compliance with the standards; right now there is no compliance percentage identified for compliance before sanctions are imposed.

Mr. Murphy stated that most leagues will do their own background checks required by the National organizations then send a list of pre-screened coaches to RP&CS for checks. Mr. Shepherd stated that some organizations indicated they will accept the County's background checks to satisfy their guidelines. Roughly the same percentage, less than two percent, of disqualifications have been received with sponsored and volunteer leagues.

Mr. Murphy stated that this program is intended to change the culture of youth sports and it's been in place for a year and, with the sports he's been involved in, nothing has changed. The biggest task is figuring out how to let the community know we're trying to change the culture of youth sports. Mr. Shepherd stated he agrees with that and it may take several years to see the change in using positive youth development through youth sports. Mr. Rollins stated that a significant part of this is getting the league administrators to buy into this; when preliminary meetings were held they all agreed with the concept of the program, but aspects of the implementation have been a challenge.

Mr. Murphy recommended that instead of putting the responsibility on the league, put it on the person/coach. Mr. Rollins stated that he disagrees with that; the Department relies on the leagues that are administered by volunteer boards to ensure all their coaches have the required training and background checks. RP&CS deals with individual coaches in the leagues the Department administers. Mr. Murphy stated now that the Department has one complete Community Standards document, it would be nice to come up with a plan on how it's going to be implemented so that people know what the intent is and how it's going to be integrated into everyday sports. Mr. Shepherd stated the Department is working on that. Mr. Murphy stated that you can't assume kids are going to be 100% safe because you're doing background checks. Mr. Hillman stressed that parents need to attend games and practices or designate someone to be there and be observant. He suggested placing the information about the program in libraries, churches, schools, etc.

Mr. Murphy referred to page ten, item two of the manual and asked if the Department plans to post the Parents Code of Ethics at each park and facility. Mr. Shepherd stated the Code is posted in indoor recreational facilities; staff will make sure it is posted in parks.

## **PROJECT UPDATES**

Mr. Rollins will provide an update on projects during the next Board meeting.

Mr. Hillman asked about the road being constructed adjacent to Chaptico Park. Mr. Rollins stated the road is being constructed for a private, residential development.

Mr. Murphy asked if it's possible for the Department to provide the leagues with forms to report field damage and repairs when needed. Mr. Rollins stated that can be done, but perhaps an e-mail message to the Parks Division would suffice. Mr. Murphy stated that field five at Lancaster Park is in bad shape and is unusable. Mr. Rollins stated he thinks it's still being used; part of the problem is that it would need to be taken out of commission for two growing seasons to completely rework and seed the field.

Chairman Dugan asked about the issue of the lights being left on at the parking area at Fifth District Park. Mr. Rollins stated that a sensor was broken and that has been fixed.

**OTHER**

Mr. Murphy asked if the Governor's Cost of Delay budget would affect any of the Department's projects. Mr. Rollins stated that there should not be a concern with Program Open Space funds earmarked for development or funds that have already been appropriated. The concern is with acquisition funds not earmarked for a specific project.

Chairman Dugan asked for a motion with regard to the draft letters of support for Maryland's Program Open Space that were previously e-mailed to Board members. **David Phalen motioned, seconded by Patrick Dugan, to approve the Program Open Space letters of support to the Governor and Southern Maryland Delegation. Motion carried 6-0.**

**SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, December 6, 2007, at 5:30 p.m., in Room 14, of the Governmental Center, in Leonardtown.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

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Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on December 6, 2007.