

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Thursday, May 1, 2014
MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Richard Buckler, Chairperson; Sabrina Hecht, Patrick Murphy, Tom Nelson, David Phalen, and Lisa Wainger-Rush.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Phil Cranford and Ashley Varner.

RECREATION AND PARKS STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Brian Loewe, Director; Jessica Hale, Recreation Division Manager; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder. Carolyn Laray, Tourism Manager, Department of Economic and Community Development, attended to provide an overview on County tourism efforts. Don Behrens, St. Mary's Youth Lacrosse Club, attended the meeting to provide an overview on boy's lacrosse.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Richard Buckler, Chairperson, at 5:30 p.m., in the Chesapeake Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

David Phalen moved, seconded by Tom Nelson, to approve the minutes of April 5, 2014; motion carried 6-0.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

Director Brian Loewe introduced Jessica Hale, Recreation Division Manager, who provided a report on programs, activities and events of the Recreation Division. Highlights included:

- The summer program guide is now available.
- Summer camp registration is underway; 30 different camps are running this season.
- Hershey Track and Field day will be held on May 18th; this is the second year for this program; 70 are currently signed up for the program.
- Amusement park ticket sales are being offered again this year at the main office.
- The Easter Festival was a huge success this year; the event was moved to the St. Mary's County Fairgrounds and was able to accommodate more participants.
- Family skate night at Leonard Hall Recreation Center is going strong; held on Saturday nights from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.; also on Friday afternoons from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
- Staff received a \$5,000 grant from the Autism Speaks organization.
- The summerstock musical show this year is "Grease."
- This is the 19th year of the Scott Verbic Memorial Golf Tournament; to be held June 6th.
- Staff recently received two marketing awards at the MRPA conference; best Program Guide publication and best social media.

TOURISM REPORT

Director Brian Loewe introduced Carolyn Laray, Tourism Manager, who provided a presentation on tourism initiatives in the County. Highlights included:

- Importance of tourism to the local economy
- 2012 saw over 646,000 visitors; 52% day trips; 48% overnight stays
- Two fold mission – develop assets and market those assets
- Relationship to quality of life and business retention
- Where we market; how we market (examples: website, local sites)
- Initiatives and upcoming events (Raiders and Invaders weekend; Newtown Neck State Park; Three Notch Trail; and other local sites and events)
- The future: Tourism’s strategic planning

LACROSSE REPORT

Director Loewe introduced Don Behrens, President, SMYLC, who provided an overview of the local boy’s lacrosse club. Highlights included:

- SMYLC was founded in 1995 and serves youth from ages 5 through 14
- Spring 2014 – Seven teams with 136 players
- Original focus was to provide practice and game opportunities for spring lacrosse
- Focus now to expand offerings; operate various programs year-round
- Mainly utilize Lancaster Park fields for practice and games
- Compete in the Southern Maryland Youth Lacrosse Association
- Issues and concerns: turf field; limited by current number of fields; concerned about condition of field #1; cost to play; marketing and “getting the word out”
- Equivalent program for girls is St. Mary’s Girls Lacrosse League

Patrick Murphy asked if R&P might look into converting some other fields for lacrosse use; he referenced the decline in baseball numbers. Mr. Loewe stated that some outfield areas might be used for practices; the Department would not recommend permanently converting fields as participation numbers fluctuate over the years.

PROJECT UPDATES

Director Brian Loewe provided an update on the status of several park and facility improvement projects.

Three Notch Trail Phase VI

All local approvals have been received for the project. Staff continues to work with the Maryland SHA on the final approval needed to advertise the project. That is anticipated to be received in the next two weeks.

Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields

Final seeding will be done in the spring; wet weather has delayed the permanent

seeding until the next growing season. Over seeding of the fields will take place in fall 2014; the fields are anticipated to be ready for use in spring 2015. Work on the asphalt walkway will be done this summer.

Lancaster Park

Design and engineering is now complete for the project to construct two additional multi-purpose fields, parking and an entrance road at this park off Willows Road. The required permits for the project have been received. The project is anticipated to be out to bid this summer.

Civil War Interpretive Center at Lancaster Park

Work is now underway on the interior renovation of the former "Flat Tops" house at Lancaster Park. The project is anticipated to be complete by late summer or early fall.

Leonardtwn Park Design and Engineering Project

The engineering firm continues to work with county staff on the concept planning for this new county park. The park's draft concept plan includes multi-purpose fields, baseball/softball fields, a playground, dog park, restroom building, and parking. Additional information on the Phase I archeological study and the evaluation of the barns and other buildings on the site has been approved by MHT. A Phase II study is now required on specific areas of the site. It is anticipated that will be accomplished this summer.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Loewe presented a request for an Alcohol Consumption Permit for a private party at the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park to be held on June 14, 2014.

Lisa Wainger-Rush moved, seconded by David Phalen, to approve the Alcohol Consumption Permit as requested. Motion carried with all in favor.

R&P BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, June 19, 2014. The Board will not hold July or August meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on June 19, 2014.