

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Wednesday, April 7, 2010
MINUTES**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Rush, Chairperson; Richard Buckler, Vice-Chairperson; Patrick Dugan, Sabrina Hecht, Julie Lemmon, Tom Nelson and David Phalen.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Al Harrison and Robert Hicks.

RECREATION AND PARKS STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Phil Rollins, Director; Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager; Tyrone Harris, Park Operations Coordinator; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder. Steve Ramey, Slow Pitch Assistant UIC/Masters/Area Director for USSSA, also attended.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Lisa Rush, Chairperson, at 5:35 p.m., in the Chesapeake Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Patrick Dugan moved, seconded by Richard Buckler, to approve the minutes of March 4, 2010; motion carried 5-0.

UNITED STATES SPECIALTY SPORTS ASSOCIATION AWARD

Phil Rollins, Director, introduced Steve Ramey, Slow Pitch Assistant UIC/Masters/Area Director for USSSA. He announced that Chancellor's Run Regional Park was recently selected by the United States Specialty Sports Association as the Maryland Complex of the Year. The award was presented to the facility because of its dedication to keeping the fields in excellent condition, the helpful staff, and it's commitment to the sports of softball and baseball. Tyrone Harris, Park Operations Coordinator, and staff at Chancellor's Run, were thanked for their dedication and hard work in making the park a premier tournament location in the region.

RECREATION DIVISION REPORT

Arthur Shepherd provided an update on Recreation Division programs and events.

- Great Mills Pool attendance for March 2010 was 3,192, which was up about 500 from last March.
- Registration was up for session IV by about 100 participants over this time last year. This registration was the largest session enrollment in about four years.
- A new Director was hired for the upcoming summer stock production. Show dates are: July 23-25th and July 29-Aug 1st. There will also be a new matinee for summer camp participants.
- The Annual Disability Awareness Day was held March 27th. Attendance was approximately 250.
- The annual Easter Festival was held on April 3rd and was a huge success.

- The youth basketball season is wrapping up with the County Tournament and Good Will games.
- The Summer Programming Fair was held at the Hollywood Recreation Center on March 11th.

FOOTBALL UPDATE

Mr. Rollins briefed the Board on recent communication with the Pigskin Football League. The Kemps have said that “Providing the principals, who are interested in having St. Mary’s Pigskin return maintain their dedication and commitment to the organization,” Pigskin will be fielding teams for the 2010 football season.

As stated previously, for the 2010 season the St. Mary’s R&P Youth Football League will be comprised of the four clubs that were in existence last year. Three of those were, and still are, under the umbrella of the Southern Maryland Youth Football League (Mechanicsville Braves; Hollywood Raiders – now the Leonardtown Wildcats; and, the Lexington Park Hornets). The fourth club is the Pax River Raiders. The three SMYFL clubs are expected to be separate, independent organizations beginning in 2011.

The Department’s position is that all youth have the opportunity to participate in the League in 2010 through one of these clubs. R&P and the League Board of Directors (Club Presidents) will consider requests for establishing new community based clubs beginning with the 2011 season. Staff feels it’s too late in the year to accept new clubs as some registrations have begun, an MOU has been developed and plans are now underway for this season. New clubs will be required to meet criteria established by the League similar to what’s in place in Calvert County. R&P is happy to work with any groups that are interested in starting a new club.

Richard Buckler motioned, seconded by Julie Lemmon, to support staff’s position on club football and reinforce the Board’s recommendation on the club football model made at the November 5, 2009 R&P Board meeting; the motion carried with all in favor.

BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Rollins provided an FY2011 budget update to the Board. The good news is that the 7% reductions previously identified by County departments were not taken at this time. The County will take the recommended budget to public hearing on Tuesday, April 27, 2010, at 6:00 p.m., at Chopticon High School.

Mr. Buckler asked if the funding was restored in the Tennis Court Replacement project; Mr. Rollins stated that funding was pushed back to FY14 due to budget constraints and that status has not changed.

MECHANICSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT REQUEST

Mr. Rollins introduced Mr. John Montgomery, President of the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department (MVFD), to the Board. The MVFD remains interested in land at Chaptico Park for a future substation. Mr. Rollins provided some background and status of the MVFD request for the Board.

- In 2000 the MVFD first requested land at Chaptico Park for a substation.
- Staff and the R&P Board did not support that request because of the impact on the park and precedent it would set for parkland being used for other purposes.
- A Program Open Space conversion would need to be done as the land was purchased with POS funds. By state law, the conversion requires federal and state approvals and the converted land would need to be replaced with other parkland of equal size, monetary and recreational value. The MVFD would need to cover any costs associated with the conversion. That would include appraisals of both the desired park site and replacement site.
- In 2006 the BOCC decided the County would support the request for applying for conversion; if approved, the County would convey 2-3 acres to the MVFD. They agreed the site should not impact existing and future programs planned for the park and would have a separate access off MD Route 234.
- The MVFD would also need to acquire an entrance easement from an adjacent property owner.

The MVFD is now requesting reconsideration of the requirement for a separate entrance to allow them to utilize the park entrance. Staff's position is that a separate entrance is still the better scenario.

Mr. Montgomery indicated the thought it has been good to evaluate this project with the experience with the Golden Beach station over the past few years. He said that satellite stations and substations are two different things; a substation is staffed more like a fire station and the satellite station is not always staffed. The concern is that if the Chaptico area and Wicomico Shores continue to expand, the substation will be needed.

Board members expressed concern over rescue volunteers trying to get to the station and park patrons not knowing they are on the way to the station for an emergency. This could cause safety concerns if the entrance is shared with MVFD. There was concern noted over park patrons parking along the entrance road instead of parking in the lots in the park and the risk this could cause when rescue workers are trying to get to the station. He noted a recent accident in front of Chaptico Park and the need for a flashing light for safety reasons, whether there is a separate entrance or not. This is something the State Highway Administration would need to weigh in on and may require a traffic study.

Tom Nelson said he would be hard pressed to say that using the same entrance would be safer than the substation having a separate entrance. Sabrina Hecht thought an engineered traffic study would help solve the question of whether a separate entrance is needed. Mr. Rollins stated that the BOCC approved moving forward with the conversion and subsequent donation of 2-3 acres with a separate entrance. The request will need to go back before the BOCC if a shared entrance is desired.

Staff will send an outline to Mr. Montgomery on the potential costs that may be associated with the conversion and site plan approval for the project. There is a draft concept of the entrance road crossing the adjacent property; Mr. Rollins will forward that to Mr. Montgomery also.

DRAFT R&P BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Rollins provided a draft Annual Report document to the Board for review. Chairperson Rush suggested adding that R&P staff and the Board will study the impact of the College of Southern Maryland indoor pool on the Great Mills Pool under the Problems and Challenges section. The Board agreed to forward any other input and changes to staff by April 16, 2010. The report is to be submitted to the BOCC by April 30, 2010.

PARK POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Draft Lightning Policy - Mr. Rollins stated this is still being researched and the draft policy will be provided to the Board in the near future.

PROJECT UPDATES

Program Open Space – There was some concern that POS funding encumbered for projects but not spent to date could be swept to balance the state budget. However, it looks as though the budget that will be passed will preserve those funds.

Three Notch Trail Phase V – Mr. Rollins reported that the County anticipates receiving approval to advertise the project in the near future. The project is expected to be bid this spring and be under construction this summer. This phase runs from John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove to MD Route 5 in Mechanicsville.

Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields – Staff anticipates receiving preliminary project approval in the next few weeks for this project. The project should be out to bid this summer and be under construction this fall.

OTHER BUSINESS

Vandalism – It was noted that there was some recent vandalism on the Three Notch Trail in Charlotte Hall and at the Piney Point Lighthouse. Vandals spray painted signs, benches and the lighthouse; staff is working to clean this up.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, May 6, 2010, at 5:30 p.m., in Chesapeake Building in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on May 6, 2010.