

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD  
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY  
Meeting of Thursday, January 15, 2009**

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Patrick Dugan, Chairperson (left at 6:30 p.m.); Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson (chaired the meeting after 6:30 p.m.); Richard Buckler, Al Harrison, Sabrina Hecht, Robert Hicks, Thomas Nelson, David Phalen and Lisa Wainger-Rush.

**RECREATION AND PARKS STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT:** Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation and Parks (R&P); Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder. Mr. Pop Rothwell and Ms. Doris McCaskill were present for the discussion on the Carver Heights Community Park. Chris Bologna, CSBI, Inc., and Jonathan Blasko, Mehaffey and Associates, were present for the Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields concept plan presentation.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Board meeting was called to order by Patrick Dugan, Chairperson, 5:35 p.m. in the Chesapeake Building in Leonardtown.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER**

Patrick Dugan, Chairperson, introduced new Board member, Sabrina Hecht. Ms. Hecht has been a resident of St. Mary's County since 2001 and worked for the County for two years in the Department of Land Use and Growth Management (LU&GM) and as the Chief of Staff for the County Administrator. She currently works at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station and is a Reservist in the US Marine Corps. She has three children who have been actively involved in various R&P programs.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Robert Hicks motioned, seconded by Richard Buckler, to approve the minutes of December 4, 2008; motion carried. Thomas Nelson motioned, seconded by David Phalen, to approve the Executive Session minutes of December 4, 2008; motion carried.**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

David Phalen, Lisa Wainger-Rush and Richard Buckler served on the Nominating Committee. **On behalf of the Committee, David Phalen motioned to nominate Patrick Dugan to serve again as Chairperson and Robert Richardson to serve again as Vice-Chairperson. The motion carried with all in favor.**

**CARVER HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PARK**

Mr. Rollins provided an overview presentation on the Carver Heights Community Park proposal. He displayed a map that showed the locations of Lancaster Park, Lexington Manor north and south parcels and the Carver Heights property.

Mr. Rollins introduced Mr. Pop Rothwell and Ms. Doris McCaskill who serve on the Board of Directors for Save the Village, Inc., a group that has undertaken the goal of preserving the African-American history and contributions to the Lexington Park/Carver Heights community. This project is an outgrowth of efforts of the Save the Village group to save the former USO building. After much discussion and consideration, it was agreed that the former USO building would be demolished as it would be cost prohibitive to renovate the aging building; to establish a memorial and community park on nearby County-owned property to commemorate the contributions of the African American community during the WWII era; to incorporate playing fields, picnic areas and a playground on the park site; and continue to discuss ways to enhance facilities and services for citizens in the Lexington Park/Carver Heights community. The County has included a capital project in the draft FY2010 budget to begin development of this park.

Mr. Rothwell stated that the group looks forward to working with R&P to provide facilities and services to the Carver

Heights community at the new Carver Heights Community Park and at Carver Recreation Center. He expressed disappointment that the old USO building was torn down so quickly.

The R&P Board will be involved with this project with regard to community input and with master planning for the site. There will be a community meeting on Thursday, January 22, 2009 at the Carver Recreation Center to discuss programming at the Center and to solicit input from the community on the Carver Heights Community Park. Mr. Rollins stated that it is hoped the March meeting of the R&P Board can be held at the Carver Recreation Center to obtain community input for the park.

## **RECREATION DIVISION REPORT**

Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, provided an update on Recreation Division programs and activities.

### Program Updates

- Mr. Shepherd noted that the Youth Basketball program is off to a great start. There are 90 teams with approximately 900 young people participating.
- He reminded the Board about the new William Smith leadership award for Youth Basketball. This award will recognize seventh and eighth graders in the program who demonstrate leadership, good sportsmanship and athletic skills. The award's program will be held on February 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Shepherd presented a short PowerPoint presentation on the new Middle School Cheerleading program. There are four teams with 63 participants. Challenges include fundraising, costs associated with the program and keeping long-term coaches.
- Mr. Shepherd reported that the Great Mills Pool is in full compliance with the Virginia Graham Baker Act. The pool now has the required covers on all the drains to prevent entrapment accidents. Staff plans to construct the shelter over the pool blower and mechanical systems in the near future.
- Gymnastics Center recreational class pre-registration is up over this time last year. Open registration will be held next week.
- The Judy Hoyer Center at Green Holly Elementary recently received accreditation from the Maryland State Department of Education.
- Open skate night at Leonard Hall Recreation Center has been well received by the public.
- Registration in adult leisure classes is down from this time last year. Mr. Shepherd stated this is probably attributed to the overall state of the economy.

### Community Standards Report

- Mr. Shepherd provided a Winter 2008/09 Raising Community Standards report. Criminal background checks were done for 100% percent of coaches with only 3 disqualified. 99% of coaches received the required coaches training; this is up from 93% last season.
- Coaches that have passed the background checks and received the required training are now listed by name on the Department's website. Other information on the program is also available on the web.
- Mr. Shepherd also displayed the Department's webpage which includes information on parks, facilities, directions, announcements, programs and activities.

### Recreation Enterprise Fund

Mr. Shepherd provided a revenue/expense comparison handout to the Board; this included FY08 actuals, the FY09 budget and the FY10 draft request.

- He noted net losses at the Carver Recreation Center and the challenges with paying expenses, such as a \$27,000 utility bill, and need to provide programs to those who can't afford to pay full price for programs. This will be discussed during the upcoming January 22<sup>nd</sup> community meeting.
- The FY08 Enterprise Fund deficit was approximately \$76,600; some of this is due to losses at Carver, the Great Mills Pool, the Skatepark, and administrative costs. The BOCC provided \$50,000 in FY09 to help offset costs associated with operating the pool. Generally, programs need to pay for themselves, plus 10% to cover administrative costs (program guide printing, staffing, supplies, etc.). He noted the challenges faced when major repairs are needed at facilities. For example, a new cover for the pool is needed and the cost is about \$12,000.
- Staff plans to meet in the near future and discuss the FY10 budget request. Programming, fees and charges and hours of operation will all be looked at. Mr. Rollins noted that it's always a struggle to continue to make

programs affordable while having the programs break even.

- Mr. Buckler asked if a monthly comparison could be provided to the Board at the same time as the monthly status report is provided. Mr. Shepherd stated that can be done.

#### **CHARLOTTE HALL ATHLETIC FIELDS DRAFT CONCEPT PLAN**

Mr. Rollins introduced Chris Bologna, CSBI, Inc. and Jonathan Blasko, of Mehaffey and Associates, who developed the Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields Concept Plan. Mr. Rollins displayed the concept plan and reported that staff hopes to be able to get at least three full-sized soccer/football/lacrosse fields on Board of Education property adjacent to the Lettie M. Dent Elementary School and Fifth District Park. The topography may allow another full-sized field. These fields are being planned because there is a need in the northern area of the County for additional athletic fields for youth sports. Staff is working closely with St. Mary's County Public Schools staff to examine the impact this plan would have on future school expansion and parking needs. The new parking areas shown on the plan are proposed to be constructed in a later phase, at the time of school expansion. Parking could be an issue; there is enough parking in the park, but it's a good distance away from the planned new fields. The new fields should benefit both the school's needs for open space areas and R&P's needs for additional athletic fields.

Mr. Harrison asked if the new field number four as shown on the concept could be used for gravel or grass parking. Mr. Rollins stated that is possible, but it would still require storm water management and it would need to be paved for ADA accessibility. He also asked who would maintain paved walkways that cross school property; Mr. Rollins stated that R&P would maintain the walkways for the fields.

Jonathan Blasko, from Mehaffey and Associates, gave a brief report on the proposed storm water management plan for the new fields. He thinks there will be very little environmental impact associated with the grass fields and storm water management will be addressed without structures through sheet flow to buffer credits. If the project moves forward, it would likely be under construction in the fall. Also, two growing seasons would be needed before the fields could be used.

**Richard Buckler motioned, seconded by Robert Hicks, that the R&P Board endorse the draft concept plan for the Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields as presented by staff and consultants and recommended the draft be forwarded to the BOCC approval for funding in the FY10 capital budget. Motion carried with all in favor.**

The concept will be presented to the Superintendent of Schools and School Board in February to obtain input on the project; it will then be presented to the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

#### **PROJECT UPDATES**

Mr. Rollins provided the Board with a status report on several park projects.

- **Chancellor's Run Regional Park 90' Baseball Field** - Improvements to the 90' baseball field are essentially complete. Improvements include: new fencing, walkways, correction of a drainage problem, installation of a bullpen and a batter's box, sod for the grass infield and an irrigation system. These improvements will be ready for use this spring.
- **Three Notch Trail** – The BOCC, Mr. Rollins and several staff members will tour the Three Notch Trail on Tuesday, January 20, 2009. Jim Swift, Chairperson of the Friends of the Three Notch Trail will attend; board members were also invited to attend. Mr. Hicks asked if the County was still considering kiosks or interpretive panels with maps along the trail; Mr. Rollins stated that will be done when a longer stretch is done. Perhaps this would be done when the eleven mile section from John Baggett Park up to Deborah Drive in Charles County is completed.
- **Lancaster Park Pathway and Disc Golf** – Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the State recently approved using surplus grant funds to install a disc golf fitness course at Lancaster Park. Mr. Rollins will be presenting this to the BOCC in the near future for concurrence. Mr. Harrison asked how the Department determines how much use such a facility would receive; Mr. Rollins stated that's based on community feedback. The Department feels the disc golf course would be a good fit at this park and the equipment for the course will be paid for from grant funds that cannot be used at another park.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Maryland Association of Counties Conference (MACO)** – Mr. Rollins thanked Robert Richardson for representing St. Mary's County at the MACO Winter Conference on January 8<sup>th</sup>. He provided a Power Point presentation on the impacts of possible reductions in the State's Program Open Space land acquisition funding program.

**Alcohol Consumption Permits** – Mr. Rollins presented three requests for Alcohol Consumption Permits from the Friends of the St. Clement's Island and Piney Point Museums for events to be held at Museum Division facilities to the Board for consideration. Events include:

- Annual meeting of the Friends of the St. Clement's Island and Piney Point Museums to be held on February 8, 2009 at the St. Clement's Island Museum (SCIM).
- Jazz and Seafood Festival to be held on July 11, 2009 at SCIM.
- Chamber of Commerce After Hours event to be held on July 22, 2009 at either SCIM or the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum.

**Robert Hicks motioned, seconded by Lisa Wainger-Rush, to approve the three Alcohol Consumption Permits for the Friends of St. Clement's Island and Piney Point Museums. Motion carried with all in favor.**

**Alcohol Consumption at Elms Beach Park Pavilion** Mr. Rollins informed the Board of staff's proposal to discontinue alcohol consumption permits at the Elms Beach Park pavilion for the upcoming 2009 picnic pavilion rental season. This is being recommended because of the overwhelming increase in park usage and all the challenges that brings, especially with alcohol usage. Additional park attendants, including off duty deputies, were hired last year to monitor the activities at this park on weekends due to heavy park usage. It's often hard for staff to distinguish between those in the party with the alcohol permit and park patrons on the beach with alcohol. Groups that want to have alcohol at picnics or functions could still reserve the pavilions at Fifth District Park, Dorsey Park, Cecil Park and John V. Baggett Park.

**Al Harrison motioned, seconded by Sabrina Hecht, to support staff's recommendation to make the Elms Beach Park pavilion an alcohol free pavilion. Motion carried with all in favor.**

## **SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, February 5, 2009, in the public meeting room of the Chesapeake Building, at the Governmental Center.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

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Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on February 5, 2009.