

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD  
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY  
Meeting of Monday, April 6, 2009**

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Patrick Dugan, Chairperson; Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson; Richard Buckler, Al Harrison, Sabrina Hecht, Thomas Nelson, David Phalen and Lisa Wainger-Rush.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Robert Hicks.

**RECREATION AND PARKS STAFF:** Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation and Parks (R&P); Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Board meeting was called to order by Patrick Dugan, Chairperson, 5:33 p.m., in the Chesapeake Building in Leonardtown.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Richard Buckler moved, seconded by Sabrina Hecht, to approve the minutes of March 5, 2009; motion carried 7-0.**

**RECREATION DIVISION REPORT**

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

- The Great Mills Pool hours were temporarily revised due to problems with the pool's water heating system; that should be fixed in the near future. The project to construct a shelter over the pool generator was recently completed.
- Over 460 participants signed up for the next Gymnastics session; this is up by about 100 from this time last year. The competitive program enrollment has remained about the same over the past few years.
- Electrical upgrades were done this month at the Gymnastics Center; electrical and safety upgrades will be done at other facilities in the near future. Recommendations from the County's Division of Building Services, Risk Management and the Safety Committee have been incorporated in the plan for the upgrades.
- On March 18<sup>th</sup> an open house celebration was held at the Carver Recreation Center to highlight new programs offered at the Center. The afterschool program is running 3 days per week; staff hopes to expand to 4 days next year. The facility includes room for classes, a boxing program room and a computer lab available for youth and adults.
- On March 26<sup>th</sup> a Summer Program Fair was held at Hollywood Recreation Center to showcase the summer programs being offered this year.
- County basketball championships were held March 30<sup>th</sup> through April 2<sup>nd</sup> at

Chopticon High School.

- The first year of the Cheerleading program has proven to be successful with four teams in place.

## **R&P FY2010 BUDGET UPDATES**

Mr. Rollins provided a summary of the FY2010 R&P Recommended Operating Budget that will be taken to public hearing on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:30 p.m. at Chopticon High School. He explained the following changes made since the last report to the Board. This represents a 1% decrease.

### Administration Division

- Decrease of \$46,735 in pension, health and worker's compensation due to rate changes.

### Parks Division

- Decrease of \$45,272 in pension, health and worker's compensation due to rate changes.
- Increase of \$24,305 for lease payments for two replacement dump trucks.
- Defer purchasing replacement infield machine and paint striping machine resulting in a decrease of \$21,000.
- Maintain hourly employees at the current FY09 approved level resulting in a decrease of \$11,770 for a seasonal groundskeeper.

### Museum Division

- Decrease of \$16,770 in pension, health and worker's compensation due to rate changes.

### Recreation Activity Fund

- No changes.

### Wicomico Shores Golf Course

- Decrease of \$29,602 in pension, health and worker's compensation due to rate changes.

Mr. Rollins will e-mail Board members with information on any further cuts or changes that may be made. The Department may offer up other items to be cut in exchange for what's been recommended. Richard Buckler asked if it would be appropriate to send a letter to the BOCC regarding the reductions in the Parks Division budget; that may be done after the public hearing. There have been no changes to the requested Capital Budget since the last Board meeting.

Mr. Buckler asked about the status of Program Open Space funding. No vote has been made since the last meeting. The House has made no cuts to what's currently appropriated or included in the Governor's budget; the Senate has proposed to cut both the FY10 acquisition funding and previously unencumbered funds. POS is the dedicated funding source that counties use to purchase and develop parks and facilities. Mr.

Rollins urged members who may not have contacted legislators that there is still time to do so.

## **PROJECT UPDATES**

**Carver Heights Community Park Concept Planning** - The Board of County Commissioners allocated funding in FY09 to develop two concept plans - one for the Carver Heights Community Park and the other for Lancaster Park South Parcel (formerly part of Lexington Manor). The May 7, 2009 R&P Board meeting will be held at Carver Recreation Center to gather community input and view preliminary concept drawings. CSBI, Inc., along with Crozier and Associates, are developing the concept and will present the plan. The R&P Board will hold a short meeting after the community meeting.

The Carver Heights Park project is an outgrowth of efforts to preserve a former African American USO building that was located on the site. The County determined that the USO building would be demolished as it was cost prohibitive to renovate the badly deteriorated building. The County decided that a community park would be established on the property and a memorial constructed to commemorate the significance of the USO building and the contributions of the African American community during the WWII era. Also, through the efforts of another group, the Unified Committee on African American Contributions (UCAC), Carver Heights Park is proposed as the home of a military memorial for African Americans from St. Mary's County, particularly for the contributions of two Medal of Honor recipients during the Civil War. Other amenities discussed include a children's playground; picnic areas; nature trails; a multi-purpose athletic field; pedestrian walkways; basketball court; parking; and restroom facilities. The BOCC has appropriated funding in FY09 to begin implementing the master plan.

### **Lancaster Park South Parcel Concept Planning**

The concept planning for the South Parcel will take into consideration the significance of the former Lexington Manor Navy housing area. One of the homes was preserved and the exterior restored. There is an easement with the Maryland Historic Trust that requires interpretation of the house and neighborhood. It will be used for park purposes such as storage and will be renovated to serve as a restroom facility. This is the site of the new disc golf course. Other amenities discussed for the former Lexington Manor property include: pedestrian and bicycle pathways that make use of the former streets on the property; a picnic pavilion and picnic areas; gardens and areas for relaxation; and other passive recreational uses.

Chairman Dugan asked how much funding is usually spent on the concept/master planning process for parks. Mr. Rollins stated that it varies; the County has budgeted \$20,000 for master planning for both park projects.

**Disc Golf** – Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the BOCC and grantor approved using some surplus grant funding to install a disc golf course on the Lancaster Park south parcel. Staff has been in contact with a disc golf course designer and anticipates the equipment will be bid in the spring and installed by summer 2009. The course designer was very impressed with the site when he visited recently. Parks staff and volunteers

will be installing the disc golf equipment.

**Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields** – Concept planning continues to move forward for the Charlotte Hall Athletic Fields. Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the fourth field originally shown closest to the transfer station has been taken off the plan and fields two and three were moved closer to the park property. Though ample parking will be available in the park, there are still some concerns about adequate parking near the new fields. The plan allows for the possible expansion of Lettie Dent School. The Superintendent and the Board of Education have reviewed and concurred with the concept plan for the practice fields. The plan will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for concurrence in the near future. If all goes as planned, staff feels the project could be under construction next summer.

**Elms Property Hunting Issue** – The Elms Advisory Committee (EAC) presented the EAC annual report for the 1020 acre State-owned site to the BOCC on March 31<sup>st</sup>. The report outlined educational, recreation and wildlife management activities on the site, but primarily focused on the hunting issue. The basic issue has been that the County entered into a new lease agreement with the state that changed the County lease line and essentially decreased the area available for hunting and increased the area available for environmental education. There is a difference of opinion on how much land is needed for hunting and environmental education. The County Commissioners have taken this issue under advisement and they are interested in exploring a compromise on the issue. At a later date, Mr. Rollins will brief the BOCC on the Elms Beach Park management changes and park entrance fee proposal.

**Elms Beach Park Vandalism** – Mr. Rollins provided some photos of the recent vandalism at Elms Beach Park; two suspects have been apprehended by the Sheriff's Department. Damage was done to the park entrance and gate, the portable restrooms, bathhouse, picnic pavilion and playground. Chairman Dugan asked if Board members could be notified a littler earlier when these types of things happen; Mr. Rollins stated that will be done.

## **NAMING OF PARK FIELDS AND AMENITIES IN PARKS**

Sabrina Hecht asked if the pavilion at Elms Beach Park that was damaged is the same pavilion that was suggested to be named after Denis Canavan, former Director of Land Use and Growth Management. Mr. Rollins stated that it is; however, this has been deferred since it was determined that a policy should be developed before amenities are named in parks. R&P has a policy for naming County parks, but it doesn't speak to naming amenities within parks. Robert Richardson noted that Calvert, Charles, Frederick and several other counties have no fields that are named.

**Robert Richardson moved, seconded by Richard Buckler, to recommend not allowing naming the 90' field at Chancellor's Run Regional Park.**

**The motion was amended by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Thomas Nelson, not to allow naming of the 90' field at Chancellor's Run Regional Park, or any other County park fields or facilities, at this time, unless/until a policy on this is**

**developed. Motion carried 7-0.**

David Phalen suggested that public input should be solicited in the future for the naming policy. Mr. Rollins stated that this is the first time he can recall that this type of naming request has been received by the Department.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- **Annual Report - Lisa Wainger-Rush moved, seconded by David Phalen, to endorse the 2008 R&P Board annual report as drafted by staff. The motion carried 7-0.**
- **Cecil Park Tennis Courts** – Mr. Buckler reported a buckling problem with the newly resurfaced courts at Cecil Park. Mr. Rollins stated that staff checked this out and has been in contact with the company that installed the new surfacing.
- **Private Racetrack Project** – Mr. Phalen asked about the status of the private racetrack project proposed off MD 235 and what impact it would have on the Three Notch Trail. Mr. Rollins stated that if the project moves forward, the owners would be expected to contribute to the project as other developers have done in the past and will work to minimize impact on the trail and its users.

## **SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2009 at the Carver Recreation Center at 6:00 p.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on May 7, 2009.