

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, June 2, 2005**

MINUTES

Board members present: Dr. Andrew Roper, Chairperson, Coleman Hillman, Vice-Chairperson, Sam Brown, Robert Harper and Dorothy Gass.

Board members absent: Chris Brugman, Robert Richardson, Greg Hambright and Jody Payne. Chris Brugman and Greg Hambright have since resigned from the Board.

Recreation, Parks and Community Services staff and others present: Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation, Parks & Community Services and Kathy Bailey, Recorder. John Knight, of Whitney, Bailey, Cox and Magnani and Sam Crozier of Crozier and Associates, attended to present information on site conditions and opportunities for the Charlotte Hall Property. About 75 citizens attended the meeting for the discussion on the Charlotte Hall Property Master Plan.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Coleman Hillman, Vice-Chairperson, at 5:40 p.m. in the Great Room of the Northern Senior Center, in Charlotte Hall. Andrew Roper joined the meeting at 5:45 p.m. and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Sam Brown motioned, seconded by Dorothy Gass, to approve the minutes of April 7, 2005 and May 5, 2005. Motion carried 5-0.

PROGRAM & PROJECT UPDATES

Director Phil Rollins provided the R&P Board with the following update on RP&CS Department programs and projects.

- Three Notch Trail – Mr. Rollins informed the Board that the construction contract for Phase I of the Three Notch Trail was recently awarded to Great Mills Construction and that work on the trail should begin in the near future. The design and engineering for Phase II, which will run from the Senior Center to the County line, is underway and should be completed in the fall.
- Lancaster Park Improvements – Due to budgetary constraints, the Lancaster Park Improvement project was not funded in the FY06 approved budget. The proposed project was for a hard surface walkway around the perimeter of the park and an off-leash dog park.
- Great Mills Pool & Nicolet Park Sprayground Open for Summer Operation – The “bubble” was removed from the Great Mills Swimming Pool last week and the pool is currently operating on the summertime schedule. The sprayground opened for summer operation on May 23, 2005 and is open daily from noon until 6:00 p.m.
- Summer Camps and Program Registration – Space is still available for summer camps and leisure programs; citizens are encouraged to register early as space is limited.
- Public Landing Improvement Projects – The Wicomico Shores pier construction is 50% complete and the boat ramp portion of the project has recently begun; the project should be finished by August 1, 2005. The Forest Landing improvement project to replace the boat ramp and install a new pier with ADA enhancements at Forest Landing is nearly complete. Ribbon cutting ceremonies for both of these projects will be held later this summer.
- National Trails Day Activities – Mr. Rollins provided information on events planned in St. Mary's County to celebrate National Trails Day on Saturday, June 4, 2005. Events

include: John V. Baggett Park nature walk, Myrtle Point Park hike, Summerseat Sanctuary and Farm walk, Three Notch Trail walk or bike and Historic St. Mary's City 5K run/walk.

- Bill Ball's Retirement – Mr. Rollins informed the Board that Bill Ball, Parks Division Manager, will retire on June 17, 2005 after 32 years of service with the Department. A catered retirement picnic is planned for that day at Dorsey Park. Board members are welcome to attend; the fee for the luncheon is \$15; an optional \$10 donation for the gift is appreciated.

MYRTLE POINT PARK MASTER PLAN

During the May 5, 2005 R&P Board meeting, Mr. Rollins and Sue Veith, Environmental Planner from the Department of Land Use and Growth Management, presented the draft master plan for Myrtle Point Park as prepared by Rhodeside and Harwell, Inc. Mr. Rollins provided a PowerPoint presentation which outlined background information on the park, site conditions, constraints, the concept master plan, considerations, opportunities and issues. Ms. Veith provided an overview of the site conditions for the property. A synthesis from the public master planning workshop held on February 26, 2005 was also provided and a complete list of the workshop outcomes and recommendations was provided to the Board and others present.

The proposed park program includes a park entrance area, handicapped access road, proposed stabilized grass areas for overflow parking, additional gravel parking areas, a canoe/kayak boat launching area, future restoration of the livestock and tobacco barns for interpretation, shaded picnic areas, an informal amphitheatre, handicap accessible trails and boardwalk, open air pavilion and biodegradable restroom facility, off-shore transient boat mooring area, network of trails, beach access and an education/demonstration project area (in area where water tower is proposed to be removed). Copies of the draft master plan were also provided to members and others present; this document was also posted on the County website.

Sam Brown motioned, seconded by Dorothy Gass, to endorse the draft Myrtle Point Park Concept Plan as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The concept plan will be presented to the Planning Commission on June 13, 2005; the plan will be presented to the BOCC in July for consideration.

CHARLOTTE HALL PROPERTY MASTER PLANNING

Mr. Rollins informed those present that the County appropriated funding in FY2005 for site analysis and master planning for the 40-acre Northern Senior Center site as well as funding for architect and engineering services to design a Community Recreation Center on the property. However, during FY06 budget work sessions, the Recreation Center project was deferred due to funding constraints. A contract for master planning services was awarded on April 7th to Whitney, Bailey, Cox and Magnani. Mr. Rollins informed those present that there are no pre-conceived plans for the property and no recommendations at this point for what types of amenities should be developed.

John Knight, of Whitney, Bailey, Cox and Magnani and Sam Crozier of Crozier and Associates, presented information on site conditions and opportunities for the property. The consultants provided a large exhibit board with a map of the site and pictures of existing conditions. They previously walked the site and spent a considerable amount of time documenting the existing conditions of the site. Much of the 40-acre property is wooded and consists mostly of hardwoods and pines. The topography of the site is mostly flat. Mr. Crozier indicated it might be advisable to look for a way to balance development of amenities with the existing natural setting. There is an

existing forest conservation easement on the property that would need to be relocated if the area is developed for uses other than passive recreation.

Mr. Rollins stated that the initial list of potential ideas for amenities for the site included: a recreation center, athletic fields/practice areas, a swimming pool, senior housing to compliment the Senior Center and other recreational amenities typically found in parks. He stressed that the property has not been designated as parkland; it's County-owned land that may become parkland or may be used for other needs.

Mr. Harper reiterated that the project is in the initial stages of the master planning process and that none of the amenities mentioned in the list of potential ideas has been decided upon at this point in the process.

Commissioner Lawrence Jarboe – Commissioner Jarboe thanked those in attendance for coming out to the meeting and he gave credit to the past BOCC, especially Commissioner Shelby Guazzo, for support of the Northern Senior Center Project. He stressed the need to share uses of the property with seniors, veterans and the residents of the Charlotte Hall community. He promised to get a copy of the video tape of the meeting to the other Commissioners.

Pat Meyers – Ms. Meyers is the President of the Northern Senior Center Council, President of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees – St. Mary's Chapter, a member of the St. Mary's County Commission on Aging and a member of the St. Mary's Senior Coalition. She stated that all these groups have indicated that there is a critical need for senior housing and would like to request that senior housing be considered for this location. Also, she wanted to make sure that space is factored into the master plan for future expansion of the Senior Center. Mr. Crozier asked if Ms. Meyers could provide some information on what type of senior housing the seniors are looking for.

Mary Ruth Horton – Ms. Horton is the Chairperson on the Commission on Aging. The Commission recently conducted a senior needs survey and affordable senior housing was one of the major needs identified by seniors. She supports independent and assisted living senior housing and multi-generational recreational opportunities on this site.

Kathleen Fean – Ms. Fean expressed support for senior housing in the northern end of the County; she suggested condos and villas.

Molly Baker – Ms. Baker lives in Wicomico Shores; wants to see senior housing at the Northern Senior Center site; she finds it very difficult to care for her single family home.

Thomas Seyfried – Mr. Seyfried has been involved with Northern Soccer League (NSL) for fifteen years and has had difficulty finding fields for soccer practice; he sees a need for additional recreation and practice areas in the northern part of the County.

Wayne Abernathy – Mr. Abernathy lives in Golden Beach and expressed support for senior housing and an Olympic sized swimming pool to accommodate all ages. He visits the Great Mills Pool but feels that the northern end of the County needs a public pool also.

Alice Allen – Ms. Allen works with the St. Mary's County Department of Aging and expressed support of the development of the forested area of the property for hiking and equestrian trails.

Linda Kerns – Ms. Kerns stated that she could appreciate the need for senior housing; the people moving into the county are families with young children. This increases the need for recreational

activities for youth. She expressed support for the NSL which provides positive recreational, community service and employment opportunities for youth.

Louise Clark – Ms. Clark is the referee coordinator for the NSL; she stated they are in desperate need for additional soccer fields. She expressed support for the new fields at Chaptico, but indicated there is still a need for additional practice areas. A shared space with young people and seniors would be a positive experience.

Daniel Miller – Mr. Miller expressed support for recreational activities and senior housing on the site. He stated that all there is in the northern end of the County for youth is the NSL or to go to the mall in Waldorf.

Debbie Dulka – Ms. Dulka would like to see a skatepark on the property; kids are skating on the streets in the area.

Ann Gregory – Ms. Gregory expressed support for all the comments made tonight.

Kelly Chick – Ms. Chick would like to see a multi-sport, multi-generational center for everyone on the site; she's a single parent with two teenagers and can't afford to transport them to Waldorf or Lexington Park for recreational activities. She also expressed support for a swimming pool. She stated there's nothing for kids to do in this area but to "hang out."

Frankie Gebhardt – Ms. Gebhardt lives in Golden Beach and expressed support for a skatepark; kids are skating in the streets. She also expressed support for space for multi-generational activities.

Ben Burroughs - Mr. Burroughs stated that he has lived in this community for 72 years and stated that the Commissioners will need to be practical and recognize the limitations for infrastructure on the property. He supports athletic fields and senior housing, but this property can't support everything that everybody wants. He thinks that some of the recreational items need to be directed down on Route 234 where more people have access to the facilities; he doesn't think the Charlotte Hall community can support increased traffic and additional nighttime noise levels.

Mike Whittington – Mr. Whittington is an eighth grader and lives in Golden Beach; supports a skatepark in northern St. Mary's.

Mike Thayer – Mr. Thayer is a ninth grader at Chopticon High School; expressed support for a place for youth to "hang out" and keep busy.

Ryan Huffman – Mr. Huffman is a student at Chopticon High School; expressed support for a place for youth to "hang out" to help stay out of trouble and stay on the right path.

Ed Emery – Mr. Emery is the Vice-President of the NSL. Stated the population has outgrown the amenities in the area. The league has had an increase of 21 teams in the past two years. He stated there is really no practice space at Chaptico Park. Expressed support for additional recreational facilities for youth in the northern area of the County. Thinks there is a way to accommodate seniors and youth on the 40-acre site.

Sharon Denato – Ms. Denato lives in Laurel Ridge and would like to see additional recreational amenities for youth in the northern area of the county; would like to see swimming pool.

Pat Meyers – Ms. Meyers stated that during the planning for the Northern Senior Center, one of the major concerns expressed by the community was issue of increased traffic on Charlotte Hall

Road. She strongly suggested that if the property is developed that another entrance and exit be provided.

John Kilroy – Mr. Kilroy asked about the fields at Fifth District Park; Chairman Roper stated that the league feels there is a need for additional fields with the increased demand. League representatives stated they have had to hold games at night to fit them all in. Mr. Kilroy stated that new fields were built on Route 234; Chairman Roper stated the Board is hearing there is still an additional need.

Pat Duncan – Ms. Duncan is a foster parent with Alternatives for Youth and Families and stated that there is nothing in the northern area for youth.

Mr. Rollins stated that written comments may also be submitted to the RP&CS Department, P.O. Box 653, Leonardtown, MD 20650 or via e-mail or the website. Staff plans to request time on the BOCC agenda in the near future to brief the Board on this public information discussion and to obtain direction from the Board before beginning to work with planning consultants on the site concept plans and possible amenities for the site.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board of St. Mary's County will be held on Thursday, July 7, 2005 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on July 7, 2005.