

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY**

Meeting of Thursday, December 4, 2003

Minutes

Board members present: Robert Harper, Chairperson; Andrew Roper; Vice-Chairperson; Sam Brown, Coleman Hillman, Jody Payne and Robert Richardson.

Board members absent: Cheryl Blazer and Kaki Burruss.

Recreation and Parks staff present: Phil Rollins, Director of 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 Robert Harper, Chairperson, at 5:30 P.M. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Coleman Hillman motioned, seconded by Robert Richardson, to approve the minutes of November 6, 2003. Motion carried 6-0.

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION ON RAISING COMMUNITY STANDARDS IN YOUTH SPORTS

Director Phil Rollins introduced Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, who provided additional information related to last month's discussion on a new National Association of Youth Sports program titled, "Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports." Mr. Shepherd stated that while the County has a network of wonderful volunteers that manage affiliated sports leagues in the County, work needs to be done to raise the standards in youth sports. St. Mary's County has experienced minimal negative behavior compared to the violence and unsportsmanlike conduct associated with youth sports on the national level. St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks (R&P) wants to be proactive in promoting positive athletic experiences for youth.

Mr. Shepherd provided the following outline regarding the draft plan.

- I. Recommendations
 - A. Adopt a community philosophy
 - B. Appoint a professional youth sports administrator
 - C. Hold everyone accountable for their behavior

- II. Major areas of accountability
 - A. Training for league administrators and coaches
 - B. Parent orientation
 - C. Coaches screening policy and background checks
 - D. Appoint a professional administrator

- III. Plan for implementing recommendations
 - A. Meet with youth sports leaders to obtain feedback from leagues (Jan-Feb)
 - B. Develop guidelines for sports leagues that use County athletic fields
 - C. Prepare a draft resolution for adoption by BOCC
 - D. Present to R&P Board (March/April)
 - E. BOCC to adopt resolution
 - F. Three year phase-in plan for leagues to comply with guidelines

- IV. Tentative costs for implementation
 - A. Approximately \$13 per participant (cost could be reduced depending on the cost for the background checks and coaches' training).

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that R&P has had a Youth Sports Agreement Memorandum of Understanding in place since 1999. The new program will take the current MOU a step further to clarify responsibilities and expand and improve on the current relationship with the leagues. The new program would provide the framework to improve on what's already being done. He noted that R&P sometimes gets phone calls from parents who look to R&P for advice and to solve their problems since sports programs are held in County parks.

Robert Richardson expressed concern that some leagues will have to return to fundraising to pay the \$13 cost. Mr. Shepherd noted the cost is a "high end" estimate and R&P staff is dedicated to working with leagues to keep the cost at a minimum. Some leagues are already paying for coaches training, which is included in the estimate.

Chairman Harper asked if there would be a cost associated with the appointment of the professional Youth Sports Administrator. Mr. Shepherd stated there would not be at this time. Kenny Sothoron, Sports Coordinator, would fill this role; at a later date, he may require some assistance with the administrative duties added by the program and it's possible that could be built into the program and paid for by the Enterprise Fund.

Andrew Roper asked if there would be consequences for those who sign a code of ethics and do not behave appropriately. Mr. Shepherd stated there would be consequences on some level to promote positive behaviors.

Andy Roper motioned, seconded by Robert Richardson, to support the draft plan presented by staff to move forward with the Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports program. Motion carried 6-0.

RECREATION DIVISION UPDATE

Skatepark - Effective December 1, 2003 the skatepark began operating on weekends only. The outdoor temperature must also be 40 degrees or above to open on those days. Depending on weather conditions, staff plans to reopen the skatepark on weekdays beginning in March 2004.

Carver Recreation Center – A Letter of Agreement between R&P and the Boys and Girls Club was recently drafted to enable the Club to operate after school and Saturday programming at the Carver Recreation Center (CRC) for youth in the community. Also, the St. Mary's Soccer League will begin a new indoor soccer program at the CRC. Adult basketball leagues are using the Center and teen dances are being held one or two

times per month at the site. A community meeting is planned for January 20, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. at the Center.

Great Mills Swimming Pool - Two swim clubs began utilizing the pool on a regular practice schedule in November. Patuxent High School continues to rent lanes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Office on Aging has proposed to offer programs for seniors in the near future. During the holiday school break, December 20th through January 4th, an admission discount of \$2.00 will be given to market and promote the pool. A tri-fold brochure has been developed for the pool; holiday gift certificates are also available.

THREE NOTCH TRAIL

Mr. Rollins informed the Board that DPW&T has completed design and engineering for phase one of the Three Notch Trail. The plans are currently being reviewed for minor site plan approval. Staff anticipates that the project will be bid over the winter; construction will begin in spring of 2004 and should be completed by summer 2004. In the near future, staff will begin the process of meeting with contiguous property owners along phase one of the trail and explain the plan and how it will impact their properties. Discussion on the potential impact of the possible FDR Boulevard on the trail will be deferred until Board member Kaki Burruss returns, since she raised that question. Mr. Rollins also informed the Board that the County Attorney's Office has had communication with the State Highway Administration (SHA) regarding minimizing the effect of construction of the Hughesville bypass on the railroad right-of-way.

ROAD SIGNS FOR PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDINGS

Mr. Rollins provided a handout to Board members that consisted of 1999 correspondence from the BOCC to SHA regarding a request for additional directional signage to better identify parks and public landings. SHA placed a few additional signs, though staff thought more were needed. Mr. Rollins has talked to Ms. Burruss who has expressed an interest in this matter and she has agreed to follow-up on this matter with SHA. Chairman Harper suggested that the Dept. of Economic & Community Development's Tourism Division be contacted to solicit additional support for the signage.

PROGRAM OPEN SPACE FUNDING

Mr. Rollins informed the Board about concerns with continued decreases in Program Open Space (POS) funding. Over the past few years, the program has been seriously impacted by the State's budget crisis. Last year, the fund was cut by about 60%. Another concern is that the Governor has mandated that all POS funds be used to acquire lands to protect the Chesapeake Bay watershed area. While most property purchased for parkland in St. Mary's could be considered to protect the Chesapeake Bay, it could affect the POS funding for the Lexington Manor property.

SELECTION OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The recommendations from the Nominating Committee were deferred until next month.

OTHER BUSINESS

Piney Point Lighthouse Museum - Mr. Rollins informed the Board about the plan to move the Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship antique boat collection to the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park. A formal agreement for the permanent loan of the four vessels will be brought forward to the BOCC for consideration and approval within the near future. The plan calls for the boats to be moved to the existing metal building located on the former Stuart property purchased by the County a few years ago. Also, Lydia Wood, Acting Museum Director, has been contacted by the Smithsonian Institute with a request to use one of the vessels for the annual Folk Life Festival to be held on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. this summer. The theme of this year's festival will be "Waterways - Past, Present and Future."

Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board - Mr. Rollins reported that the Wicomico Shores Golf Course (WSGC) Advisory Board draft bylaws were presented to the BOCC on December 2, 2003. The BOCC gave direction to staff to redraft the bylaws to reflect that the BOCC will appoint seven members, one of which will be an R&P Board member, and to clarify financial disclosure requirements. The BOCC did not agree to make the WSGC Advisory Board a subcommittee of the R&P Board. Staff also recommended that the R&P Director and Wicomico Shores Golf Course Manager not serve as voting members. The redrafted bylaws will be presented to the BOCC on January 6, 2004 for consideration and possible adoption.

Wicomico Shores Golf Course Clubhouse - The bid deadline for the Clubhouse proposals is December 11th. Value engineering and additional design work will be evaluated in the process. Presuming a successful proposal is negotiated, construction should begin by early spring and the project is expected to be completed during summer 2005.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board of St. Mary's County will be held at 5:30 P.M. on Thursday, January 15, 2004 in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on January 15, 2004.
A tape recording of the meeting is kept on file in the Recreation and Parks' office for one year.

cc: Board of County Commissioners
County Administrator
St. Mary's County Department Heads
Recreation and Parks Department Division Head