

**Baltimore County
Board of Recreation and Parks
October 10, 2007 Meeting Minutes**

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, October 10, 2007, at 5:12pm at the Department of Recreation and Parks administrative offices, Towson, Maryland. In attendance were Chairman Jim Emerick, Vice Chairman Steve Verch; board members Althea Page, Jacob Smith, David Smylie, Steven Kroll, and Emmit Davitt. Bob Barrett, director; John Markley, deputy director; Bud Chrismer and Amy DiAngelo also attended as well as John Cox, president of Cockeysville Recreation Council.

John Cox, president of the Cockeysville Recreation Council, attended to answer any questions board members may have regarding by-law changes. Mr. Cox stated that the only real change made is to members of the board. There are no longer corresponding and responding secretaries. There is one position of secretary. Mr. Cox said it is hard to recruit volunteers for the board. Their constitution was also changed wherever corresponding and responding secretary were referenced to reflect the change to secretary. Althea Page asked if this change affects a quorum at board meetings. Mr. Cox responded that it does not. Mr. Cox also noted that there are only three directors at large, which is why there is a blank line for directors-at-large on signature page. The board will contact Mr. Cox by phone after voting to accept these changes.

Amy DiAngelo asked if a recreation council can require an application for scholarships or if the council has to give a scholarship anyway. Jim Emerich replied that councils can give scholarships per their own criteria. John Markley added that each council can set up their own rules.

Approval of Minutes:

Steve Verch stated that the first paragraph on page 2 of the September minutes should read "The Middle River Recreation Council is still interested in a wrestling/cheerleading facility, maybe at the Giant store on Stemmers Run Road," not The Renaissance Committee. With that change, Steve Kroll moved that the minutes from the September meeting be approved, and Emmit Davitt seconded the motion. All approved. The September minutes are hereby approved.

New Business:

Park pride was introduced at an event at Reisterstown Regional Park on September 18th. Park Pride is a collaborative effort between Recreation and Parks and the Police Department. It encourages park visitors and neighbors to report incidents of vandalism, plus provide any leads they may have, to help catch perpetrators. Citizens can make reports by calling the Park Pride phone number, 410-887-3808, or by visiting the Park Pride web page. The police will then follow up on all tips. Individuals will be able to remain anonymous.

To aid in capturing vandals and deterring vandalism, video surveillance is being installed in the county's five regional parks: Honeygo, Reisterstown, Northwest, Eastern, and Meadowood. The surveillance cameras record video 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are also equipped to capture video after dark. In addition to the surveillance, Park Pride signs will be posted in county parks. The cost for the surveillance equipment for all five regional parks is \$13,500 (\$2,700 per park).

Baltimore County has 192 developed parks on 6,626 acres of land. In 2006, there were 160 incidents of destruction to park property, including arson to playgrounds and theft of maintenance equipment.

This is the Park Pride logo:



On October 11, Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks held a ribbon cutting to mark the completion of safety and recreational renovations at Belmont Park in Parkville.

Joining County Executive Smith were Councilman Joe Bartenfelder, State's Attorney Scott Shellenberger, Senator Kathy Klausmeier, Delegate Joe Boteler, Recreation and Parks Director Bob Barrett and Recreation and Parks board and council members.

The renovation project included the addition of 75 parking spaces, two new park pavilions and park benches in the playground area. Prior to the renovation, the shortage of on-site parking resulted in unsafe parking along Walther Boulevard.

The parking conditions also limited the number of athletic fields that could be in use at the same time, which restricted the number of soccer, baseball, softball and lacrosse games that could be scheduled for play.

"Many people enjoy Belmont Park. From the athletic leagues who play their games on the park's athletic fields, to people of all ages who come here to walk, now there is something for everyone, including adequate parking," said Smith.

In his remarks before the ribbon cutting, Councilman Bartenfelder spoke of his desire to have the parking addressed. "Because of the safety concerns that the parking conditions created, I invited the County Executive to join me for a personal tour of the park. He did, and with state support, we now have a better Belmont Park."

The parking lot expansion allows for more recreational opportunities for the 150,000-plus park visitors each year and also supports the athletic programs of the Parkville Recreation and Park Council.

There was discussion regarding how many board members constitutes a quorum. A quorum is present when six members of the board are in attendance.

Dundalk Eastfield by-laws changes were all made and accepted. Emmitt Davitt moved to accept the changes. Althea Page seconded the motion. All were in favor; changes to the Dundalk-Eastfield Recreation Council by-laws were approved.

Baltimore County Sailing Center has conflict to resolve with Back River Recreation Council. The sailing center is the biggest component of BRRC. Bill Fannon said they are continuing to work on 501(c)(3) status and by-laws. The sailing center is in their off-season and will have more time to work on them.

Community members want to Rename Gough Park, which is at the intersection of Joppa Road and Honeygo Boulevard. The park is split by Honeygo Boulevard. If you are driving on Honeygo Boulevard toward Joppa Road, Gough Park, which has athletic fields are on the right, and the left side is more passive. The community wants to name the passive part of the park for a historical person in the area who helped establish a Methodist church in area. The park hasn't been developed yet, so re-naming will only have a marginal effect, and it will make community happy. Althea Page moved to approve the re-naming of a portion of Gough Park to Asbury Park, and Steve Verch seconded. All are in favor. The north side of Gough Park may be re-named Asbury Park.

The Essex Middle River Civic Council is requesting to place a tree in memory of Jackie Nichol, former editor of The Avenue, at Renaissance Park. Steve Verch said Keith Roberts, who works in the mailroom, wants to name a park after her. Typically, parks are only named after people who are historic or who contribute a lot of money. Althea Page questioned is this enough. If more than one person or group requests a memoriam, how should it be handled? Jim Emerich stated that such requests will be handled on a case by case basis. Emmitt Davitt motioned to approve the planting of a tree in Jackie Nichol's memory, and Steve Kroll seconded the motion. All are in favor, so moved.

Bob Barrett gave an update on the potential for Baltimore County to take control of Robert E. Lee Park. A memorandum of understanding went to the county and city law offices, and the county is designing the bridge replacement. There is money in the capital budget to fix the bridge. There will be a dog park on site. One of the challenges will be enforcing leash laws. We are looking into hiring rangers who would have power to cite people for infractions, i.e. dogs off leash, etc. The light rail line runs through the park, and there is a stop on a park border. The park would be closed during the time the bridge is being re-built. The only access is (to the park) is over the bridge. The remainder of the park is wooded. We are looking at the possibility of building parking on co-owned property on Falls Road. Steve Kroll asked if there is a realistic opening date. John Markley stated that re-building the bridge is a 12-18 month project, which is a good time to build the dog park, work on a master plan, form a recreation council, and open the park under better management.

Director's Comments:

Baltimore County Executive Jim Smith, along with County Councilman Joe Bartenfelder, dedicated the new Wilson Point Park, located on the Wilson Point Peninsula, on September 26th. Wilson Point Park features a number of waterfront enhancements, including a shoreline boardwalk promenade, double-lane boat ramp, floating dock and handicap accessible fishing piers. These amenities will allow boaters convenient access to Middle River and the Chesapeake Bay.

In addition to the parks waterfront features, Wilson Point Park has an athletic field, paths, picnic pavilions, community plaza with trellis, playground, restroom facilities and parking.

The department's administrative offices moved into the Jefferson Building on September 20th. The environment is more collegial. With all staff on one floor, there is more opportunity for conversation and interaction, which is good for the department.

Seminary Field artificial turf field is being built right now. It is very nice. Steve Kroll asked when will the field will be done? John Markley responded that they are close to completion; it should only two months until they are done.

There will be a community meeting on October 22nd regarding Towson Park. Building of Concrete Homes 9,000 square foot building will start in May. The Dundalk YMCA is being renovated. Recreation and Parks will have 12,000 square feet for programming as well as a pool. The county will probably subcontract running of pool.

There was considerable discussion regarding Pikesville Recreation Council's constitution and by-laws that precipitated a memo from Aaron Max requesting that the board review their by-laws. There is specific concern that there are twelve violations of the by-laws, which is impeding the council's ability to serve the community. The memo was very well written and prepared. The board needs to determine if Pikesville Recreation Council amended their by-laws without approval by board. Althea Page asked who is to report to the Board of Recreation and Parks when a recreation council amends their by-laws/constitution. It is the responsibility of the council president and area coordinator. The area coordinator should be guiding their recreation councils in the correct direction. Steve Kroll stated that the group protesting is part of the baseball program and don't want to worry about retribution before their program starts again. The board will review the memo and current by-laws and communicate via email to Jim Emerich with ideas of what to do. Jim Emerich stated that he is concerned for the community and programs, not previous history.

Certification – The process for certification is a three-year process. Jim Emerich asked if recreation councils have to recertify every three years. John Markley responded that that is correct, and we should get more serious about monitoring recreation councils and letting them know that they have to run everything through board. David Smylie stated that the duties of community supervisors are sort of gray. Clinton Jennifer, community supervisor for Owings Mills Recreation Council & Chet Jones, community supervisor for Liberty Road Recreation Council would observe all meetings and let them know what their role is when asked. The community supervisor is to handle facility issues

and act in more of a counseling role, not run the council. Althea Page questioned whether every major change is supposed to come before the board, and it is. Althea Page also questioned if the board is going to follow through with the plan to educate recreation council treasurers. Bud Chrismer as if there is a way to make things, such as treasurer's reports and voting rights, consistent. Jacob Smith stated that some councils may have everything automated, while others don't have money and do things manually. David Smylie suggested making them present an audit every two years, regardless of how they prepare it. Jim Emerich stated that new councils have to be certified and need to re-certify every three years. All of this information needs to be in writing. The board needs to become more knowledgeable about it. Bob Barrett suggested that recreation councils come in for a workshop so they can buy in to the idea and share what they think about the process. We could take a two- prong approach, providing information and firming up what's there

Steve Kroll stated the Pikesville community does not want recreation council games on religious holidays. Community members feel it is disrespectful of community. The community would like the board to propose that games are not held.

Steve Kroll also asked about artificial turf projects. Bob Barrett reported that Dundalk, Franklin, Lansdowne, Woodlawn and Meadowood are on list for artificial turf fields. There is almost \$80 million in the budget for recreation projects.

Steve Kroll reported that there is vandalism on fields (painting) every time Pikesville plays at Catonsville and asked if the board has any suggestions. Jacob Smith suggested fields be built at community parks, not at schools. Bob Barrett stated that the department takes as many security measures as possible, i.e. security fences, locking gates, lights, etc. Steve Kroll said dogs are another problem. Bob Barrett also stated that fields are built at schools because the Board of Education gets bond money.

The department has signed the Joint Use Agreement. We're not sure if it's signed by the Board of Education yet. John Markley stated that all staff have approved the agreement and that written approval is perfunctory. Jacob Smith asked how cooperation was prior to agreement. Franklin High School doesn't share with their recreation council. Their feeling is in season only. John Markley stated that the Joint Use Agreement will cover all high schools. Althea Page would like to see more money spent on female sports per Title 9 and less on football fields. John Markley said the fields are used for female sports, i.e. lacrosse and soccer, as well.

There being no further business, Steve Kroll moved to adjourn the meeting, and Emmit Davitt seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:24pm.