

**Baltimore County
Board of Recreation and Parks
November 14, 2007 Meeting Minutes**

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, November 14, 2007, at 5:09pm at the Department of Recreation and Parks administrative offices, Towson, Maryland. In attendance were Chairman Jim Emerick, Vice Chairman Steve Verch; board members Mike Weber, Dunbar Brooks, Althea Page, David Smylie, Steven Kroll, and Wayne Definbaugh. Staff included Bob Barrett, director; Bud Chrismer, acting, deputy director; Marty Stoelting, acting, chief of recreation services and John Eubank, community supervisor for Pikesville. Aaron Max and Max Rozga from Pikesville recreation also attended.

Approval of Minutes:

Steven Kroll motioned to approve the October board meeting minutes, Mike Weber seconded, and all were in favor.

New Business:

There was a packet from Aaron Max, enclosed in board members folders, regarding issues going on with the Pikesville Recreation Council. Aaron Max and Max Rozga attended the meeting addressing their concerns in front of the board. Mr. Max (parent, coach, volunteer) began with background on the recreation council stating that the recreation council has been horrible for the last several years; members do not understand finances or terms of office. Amendments to the constitution & by-laws were distributed and questioned. The executive board had not posted the constitution and by-laws on the website until a few weeks ago and these contradict the last known approved constitution & by-laws from 1993. Mr. Max stated that these contradictions include, but are not limited to, terms of office and officer line up which he believes was done to protect the board and keep them in power. Requirements were changed in the constitution and by-laws regarding voting and officers. Things that are supposed to be done, like bringing in new leaders, for example, are not done. Mr. Max stated that issues result when having the same people in power for so long. There is now a list of officers and member programs on the website. At recreation council meetings there is no financial reporting, budget submitted or fiscal transparency in programs. The officers are not forthright with the financial situation of the recreation council. The conflicts of interest are so obvious it is offensive. The credibility of the recreation council has been diminished. There are conflicts of interest with fundraising, asking for sponsorship money with no ability to account for where the money is going. These are the main issues with many more issues available to discuss.

Chairman Jim Emerick inquired as to what precipitated the actual appeal. Mr. Max responded that it was the lack of participation in the Wellwood baseball program. Mr. Max formed a committee, a new president was voted in and this is now a successful program. Mr. Max started attending recreation council meetings now that he was involved with the Wellwood baseball program, and he saw how things were run. He gathered people together to make sure he was not alone and started the legal process to change this. The first step was to file an appeal with the recreation council, which resulted in a response that was inaccurate and flawed; the President summarily dismissed the appeal. Max Rozga is the president of Wellwood baseball and he stated that he is a member in good standing but says that Mike Snitzer, president of the Pikesville Recreation Council, would say that Mr. Rozga is in good standings sometimes but not other times. There were a total of 6 programs suspended, one of which was Mr. Rozga's but he was never notified. The others whose programs were suspended

still attend meetings in good standing. Mr. Max should be an individual member of Pikesville Recreation, he has paid dues and attended at least 4 meetings thus, a member in good standing. Althea Page mentioned she would like to review the minutes from the recreation council meetings. Mr. Max stated that Larry Plimick is the individual who would have these documents. Steven Kroll stated that the Board of Recreation and Parks has never been given changes to the Pikesville Recreation Council's Constitution and By-Laws, since 1993, for approval. John Eubank, community supervisor for the Pikesville Area, has been in position for 3 ½ years and stated that the recreation council states every year, that they are going to amend this document but Mr. Eubank has yet to see these amendments. Mr. Kroll stated this is failure to communicate, to not inform/present the board with proposed revisions to their constitution and by-laws, and he would like this addressed. Marty Stoelting, acting, chief of Recreation Services, stated that Mr. Snitzer has been president since 1992. Mr. Kroll would like this addressed as well. Mike Weber inquired as to whether Mr. Max has requested financial information. Mr. Max replied that he has in fact asked for this information but received no response. The board had agreed to send a member to review this information monthly but the board member had not done so. Mr. Eubank stated that sometimes communication is great and things run smooth and other times communication breaks down. To sum things up the main issues are: constitution and by-law approval, financial information, terms of office and conflict of interest with president of the recreation council also president of his own company, Mass Communications.

Mr. Emerick stated that the board needed to develop a plan to act as arbitrators. David Smylie, Wayne Definbaugh and Mike Weber are interested in heading up the committee. Mr. Kroll doesn't think mediation will work since it has not been successful in the past. Mr. Emerick instructed the committee to talk to the recreation council board members for the next two months and come back to the board with recommendations. Dunbar Brooks inquired as to whether Mr. Emerick really means arbitrator. Mr. Emerick responded that in fact this is what he means and that whatever resolution (recommendations) the board decides, would be binding. Mr. Rozga informed the board that the recreation council stated that the Board of Recreation and Parks has no power over them and that they do not have to answer to us. Director Bob Barrett stated that he would contact the Office of Law to see what the board can do. Mr. Emerick mentioned coming up with sanctions.

Mr. Definbaugh inquired as to whether or not there are by-laws and a budget for each member program and Mr. Rozga responded, yes. Mr. Definbaugh went on to inquire about each member program having their own checkbook and Mr. Rozga responded that they have always had their own checkbook but that the last couple of years the council has wanted to control everything so he is not positive but he does think they do. The checkbook runs through the council, branching off of their account. Mr. Definbaugh inquired as to whether other member programs feel the same as Mr. Rozga and Mr. Max and Mr. Rozga stated that some do and some don't. Mr. Snitzer has surrounded himself with people he knows, ½ the board working for his company, Mass Communications. Mr. Max stated that the recreation council is not going to have good people running programs because of the way things are run; they are going somewhere else. Mr. Definbaugh stated that members will all have to be in good standing. David Smylie stated that the committee would have to go and listen to both sides. Regarding certification, Pikesville is in good standings but has to certify that they have gone through an audit. Mr. Emerick responded that the board by-laws state that an audit can be requested. Mr. Rozga stated he is willing to step up and be on the board. Mr. Brooks referred to due process and stated that the president has been violating the term of office and this should be issue #1. The board can demand termination of office and new elections would then take place, following by-laws from 1993.

Mr. Rozga requested the constitution and by-laws and payment rules over a year ago from Mr. Snitzer and just recently received 3 pages. Mr. Rozga stated that the website currently states no term limit. There is concern from the board regarding finances once the investigating begins.

The next Pikesville Recreation Council meeting is November 27th at the Pikesville High School Library. The appointed committee is to attend this meeting and return to the December board meeting with recommendations.

Mr. Barrett stated he would like the board to act thoroughly, expeditiously, fair and practical. Mr. Barrett further stated that he would work on getting legal opinion ASAP. Mr. Barrett stated that programs are not going to be affected due to this current dispute.

Vice Chairman, Steve Verch, reported that while out at Honeygo Regional Park he noticed an oil tanker in the woods, among other debris. Mr. Verch stated that he thought the rule for removal was that if debris were in site, it would be removed. Mr. Barrett stated that Special Forces has been out to this site and cannot physically remove everything there. They do not have the equipment to do so. This is not impacting the park or the trail, for that matter. The department doesn't have the money to hire an outside company to come in and remove such items. Mr. Verch further stated that he thinks this is something that has been recently dumped. Mr. Barrett stated he would look into this.

Regarding certification, the board will need to look at all recreation council certification forms. Mr. Emerick is happy to do so with Bud Chrismer. The board may want to revise.

Old Business:

Regarding the Baltimore County Sailing Center, Mr. Chrismer stated that he has not heard from them in awhile but does know that they are still interested in forming a recreation council. Mr. Emerick replied stating that when it does get to this point, we will place them back on the agenda.

Director's Comments:

The dedication of the Dog Park at Hannah More was very successful with about 60 dogs and their handlers in attendance. Channel 13 had filmed a portion of the dedication and aired the segment later that evening. The park has been in frequent use since the dedication.

In December, the county executive is to announce plans for 10 additional turf fields around Baltimore County. Field locations are as follows: CCBC Essex and Dundalk, Franklin High, Woodlawn, Lansdowne, Belmont, Hannah More, Northwest Regional Park, Honeygo and Meadowood. The announcement will take place at Seminary Park. The dedication of the artificial turf field at Seminary is a couple of weeks away.

Mr. Barrett reported that the department is asking for legislative bond money to use for the cost of the fields, in combination with state bond money, which has been cut, but the county executive has funded the difference. Each new artificial turf field is estimated at \$1.2 million, with Seminary coming in at \$1.4 million including the retaining wall. Security fencing is included in this budget.

The department has placed security cameras at each regional park, already catching thieves at Reisterstown Regional Park; the same week cameras were installed. Mr. Barrett reported that the department is attempting to go digital vs. analogue.

Mr. Barrett informed the board that the county executive is not winding down in the next three years, continuing his commitment to recreation. Mr. Kroll added that the county executive has tripled his commitment to recreation.

Regarding the budget, Mr. Barrett stated that 5 years ago, the budget was \$11 million and last year it was \$17 million. Mr. Barrett reported that POS is always at the top of the list to be taken away. Ehrlich took POS money the last two years, diverting it, with the intention of eventually giving it to the department. Mr. Barrett stated that the department spends POS money fast and this is something that can't be taken away.

Mr. Barrett informed the board that the Department of Recreation and Parks will probably be getting the Highway Administration site, an 18 acre site that has been surplused and offered to the county.

President's Meetings have been taking place over the last couple of months and have been pretty successful since the start of these meetings. Board members will be notified of the remaining two meetings.

Action:

Mr. Emerick appointed Wayne Definbaugh, David Smylie and Mike Weber to serve as the committee to investigate issues surrounding the Pikesville Recreation Council.

Proposed Resolution:

- By-law approval/ by-law amendments
- Term of office has been exceeded
- Complete disclosure of all programs concerning Pikesville
- Conflict of interest between board members
- Actions of anyone on board or recreation council board minimize/de-minimize staff ability to program

Steven Kroll motioned to approve the proposed resolution, Wayne Definbaugh seconded, and all were in favor.

Wayne Definbaugh motioned to approve the proposed revisions to the Parkville Constitution and By-Laws, Steve Verch seconded, and all were in favor.

Board Member Activities:

Mr. Emerick enjoyed the Belmont Park dedication, which was held on October 11th at 11am.

Mr. Emerick met with Acting Deputy Director, Bud Chrismer and Acting Chief of Recreation Services, Marty Stoelting, on October 19th.

Mr. Emerick attended the Towson Park Community Meeting on October 22nd at the Ridge Ruxton School Recreation Center.

Reports:

- A. Information Technology – Dunbar Brooks, David Smylie and Jacob Smith – no report
- B. Budget and Enterprise – Jacob Smith, Jim Emerick and Emmet Davitt – no report
- C. Incorporation and Liability – Wayne Definbaugh, David Smylie and Dunbar Brooks –no report
- D. Land Acquisition and Capital Projects – Steven Verch, Emmet Davitt and Wayne Definbaugh – no report
- E. Programs – Althea Page and Dunbar Brooks– no report
- F. Legislation – Wayne Definbaugh, Steven Verch and Emmet Davitt –no report
- G. Policy –Jim Emerick and Jacob Smith – no report
- H. Facilities –David Smylie and Althea Page –no report

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Wayne Definbaugh moved to adjourn the meeting, Steven Kroll seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:33pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Liupaeter