

**Baltimore County
Board of Recreation and Parks
February 13, 2008 Meeting Minutes**

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, at 5:17pm at the Department of Recreation and Parks administrative offices, Towson, Maryland. In attendance were Chairman Jim Emerick, Vice Chairman Steve Verch; board members Steven Kroll, Althea Page, Jacob Smith and Dunbar Brooks. Also in attendance: Jeff Dier, president of Lutherville Community Association, and Dennis and Julie Szymaszek, active members of the community association. Staff included Bob Barrett, director and Bud Chrismer, deputy director.

Approval of Minutes:

Jacob Smith motioned to approve the January board meeting minutes, Dunbar Brooks seconded, and all were in favor.

Announcements:

All board members should have received the MRPA brochure. This is an interesting conference to attend.

Popsicle Plunge is scheduled for March 1st. Althea Page and Wayne Definbaugh are both going to participate. Don't forget to sponsor them!

If members haven't done so already, read the Council Connection Newsletter this month, it is fantastic!

New Business:

Jeff Dier and Dennis and Julie Szymaszek came before the board to voice their concerns over the Lutherville Flea Market program. Jim Emerick recuse himself from the discussion regarding the flea market and turned the meeting over to Stephen Verch.

Mr. Dier stated that neighbors have come to the community association meetings, expressing their concerns about the flea market. The flea market began when the school was a surplus school and the flea market was a small neighborhood flea market, not anywhere near what it is today. Neighbors believe it is no longer a fit for the neighborhood, with upwards of 100 vendors outside and 44 vendors inside, drawing in approximately 1800 people at one time. The lawn area out front of the school is worn out, what doesn't sell is left behind, there are cigarette butts left on the grounds despite the no smoking signs posted, and given the fact that this school is a "green school," Mr. Dier stated that this doesn't send the right message to students. The flea market has taken quite a toll on the school, thus resulting in meetings with members of the PTA and the principle, resulting in expression of concern. Additionally, traffic, parking and security are all issues brought about from this flea market. Mr. Szymaszek informed the board that his neighbor does not let their children outside on Sundays because of the flea market and all that it brings into the neighborhood. Furthermore, these neighbors are unable to have visitors over on Sundays because of the noise and lack of parking.

This activity no longer serves the neighborhood, when vendors are coming in from out of state. It is not a community activity it is an activity unlike any other offered by the recreation council. It is more of a commercial activity that is not even very beneficial to the elementary school, giving only about \$20,000 over the last 14 years, and there is no real control over the money and how it is spent/dispersed. And, despite the damage done to the grounds outside the school, the damage to the inside is just as bad. The floors are a mess, bathrooms are left atrocious, furniture is moved and not put back, displays are destroyed and when teachers come to the school to get work done on Sunday, vendors are complaining that they are present. Additionally, there is only one custodian, who is paid \$100, to clean up after this event. The Lutherville Community Association has received letters from teachers attesting to these remarks. Mr. Szymaszek has met with Steve Bittner and Brian Williams (principle and assistant principle) and they are all in favor of getting rid of the flea market.

Mr. Szymaszek stated that there has been business there every Sunday, with many, many vendors, when it used to be the third Sunday of each month with only a few tables. He has been treated with great distain by the vendors and feels like their neighborhood is invaded every Sunday and they are treated like visitors. There are no other schools in the County that have a flea market like this every week. Mr. Szymaszek inquired as to why this program is considered an activity through the recreation council...not to mention that the reason for continuing with the program is not financial. Mr. Szymaszek believes this program needs to be moved to another location that can better suite all that it entails. Mr. Szymaszek suggested Timonium Fairgrounds as the new venue. Bob Barrett responded that the fairgrounds are not willing to contract with them each week because of all the events they have going on at this facility and even if they were able to do so, it would be too much money.

Mr. Szymaszek stated that if all schools benefit from this program then have the flea market moved to one of the other 5 schools in the district. Kris Mervine had said that the revenue from this program is not part of the recreation council's budget. Mr. Szymaszek said that he does not know where the money generated from this program goes, nor does he really care...he wants this program gone from his neighborhood. Mr. Szymaszek urged the board to call Mr. Bittner as well as Nancy Pepper (president of the PTA). These individuals want the flea market gone, too.

Mrs. Szymaszek worked in Baltimore County for over 30 years. She was a principle, had a great relationship with the recreation council and understands the aspect of the Joint Use Agreement but feels that this Joint Use is not working in harmony, as the by-laws state nor does she feel she and her husband have a great relationship with the LTRC. She herself has offered numerous suggestions and none suffice. Mrs. Szymaszek believes that recreation is part of a community but this flea market is an intrusion. She has tried to go about this issue the right way but has hit a stone wall. Mrs. Szymaszek stated that they have received an overwhelming response from the Lutherville Community Association, opposing the flea market, and said she has also spoken to Councilman T. Bryan McIntire and Delegate Susan Aumann. She as well as her husband and Mr. Dier, have come before the board in hopes that the board will see that this is not a working relationship.

Althea Page responded that in listening to their side, she hears the willingness to compromise and then the unwillingness to compromise...which is it? Mrs. Szymaszek responded that her first choice is to be rid of the flea market all together. She said since meeting with Larry Shackelford, there have been some improvements made for example: there is now an officer attempting traffic control, no parking signs posted throughout the neighborhood and an attempt to keep the noise level down; but Mrs. Szymaszek stated that this is not a fix to the problem, it is simply putting a band aid on things.

There is still vendors fighting, damage to cars and the sound of the whistle that the traffic officer blows. The police will only come out three times and have stated that they cannot police this activity.

Steven Kroll asked Mr. & Mrs. Szymaszek what their top 5 compromises would be if the flea market did not move and their response was as follows:

- Size (30 tables)
- Frequency (3rd Sunday of the month)
- No activity inside the school
- Nothing to be set up on the grass but instead, on concrete and parking lot
- Keep flea market to the front of school, nothing permitted on the side or back areas

however, Mr. & Mrs. Szymaszek stated that their 5 compromises have already been proposed and rejected. Dunbar Brooks mentioned that reducing the flea market down to 30 tables just might be unrealistic.

Mr. Kroll suggested arbitration and asked whether Mr. & Mrs. Szymaszek and Mr. Dier would be interested in working with a member of the board who would arbitrate, and would be strictly fact finding. Mr. Dier responded stating he would have to speak to the other members of the community association but that the Board of Recreation and Parks is not a neutral party, with no involvement to either side. Mr. Verch asked Mr. Dier if this was an idea he would be willing to look into and take back to the community association and Mr. Dier replied, “yes”.

Rational is that it benefits the community, neighbors come and shop, but this is not the case. Mr. Dier stated that he does not understand what the justification is for this event, from the other side. Mr. Szymaszek stated that according to the Lutherville Timonium Constitution and By-Laws, Section I, Article B, it is Mr. Shackelford’s responsibility to advocate for the community, not the vendors coming to participate in the flea market from Delaware.

Mr. Verch thanked Mr. & Mrs. Szymaszek and Mr. Dier for coming before the board to voice their concerns. Jacob Smith stated that he would review the packet of information handed out to the board. Mr. Smith also stated that someone is benefiting from the flea market and maybe it was children within the recreation council, getting things that the fee for their program was unable to cover. Mr. Smith said that he has never been to the flea market but will go and check things out. Mr. Barrett thanked Mr. & Mrs. Szymaszek and Mr. Dier for the manner in which they have handled themselves, regarding this issue and for the way they have been towards he and his staff.

Board members had a lengthy discussion about what they had heard from both sides and Mr. Emerick reiterated that the ending point of this conversation was that Mr. Dier would talk to the community association about the option of arbitration.

Mr. Smith inquired into the Joint Use for Artificial Turf Fields. Mr. Barrett informed him that this was still in the works. The Board of Education would like an agenda submitted before the April meeting and one item that must be on this agenda is the Joint Use Agreement.

Old Business:

Mr. Emerick informed the board that the letter discussed at the last board meeting was sent to Mike Snitzer. Mr. Emerick read the letter aloud. Mr. Emerick stated that he has received a request to schedule an appointment for Wayne Definbaugh and Mike Weber to review the books. John Eubank informed Mr. Emerick that the council meeting in January was nice and orderly.

Mr. Emerick stated that certification must take place this year, for all councils. Two community supervisors approached Mr. Emerick and voiced how happy they were that this was going to happen. Mr. Barrett said that we can't pick on one organization, there are more out there that we don't know of. Mr. Barrett mentioned in-service training for officers, treasurers and so on and stated that the board has the responsibility to help them, making sure they are doing things, as they should. Mr. Brooks stated that the in-service training should be mandatory. Mr. Smith replied stating that would be a lot to ask from volunteers who are already giving up their time. Mr. Brooks stated that the volunteers don't all know what they are doing and that you cannot sanction if training is not mandatory. The new certification form will be emailed out to board members.

Board Member Activities:

Jim Emerick referenced the symposium held at Oregon Ridge on January 17th with Recreation and Parks and the Board of Education, stating it went very well.

The Grand Opening of the Sportsplex in Reisterstown took place on February 8th. Jim Emerick and his wife attended, as did Jacob Smith and many others from the community. Mr. Emerick mentioned what a wonderful facility the Sportsplex is and how great the event turned out to be.

Steven Kroll attended a Lacrosse Seminar at the Raven's Facility on February 10th and reported that the event was wonderful, with a great turnout, plenty of parking and goodie bags for all. Mr. Barrett responded that from time to time the Department will get criticized about the Raven's Facility but this is the seventh time this year that the Department has had use of the facility.

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

The Nominating Committee Report is as follows: As stated in January, the committee had nominated Stephen Verch as chairman and Wayne Definbaugh as vice chairman, all were in favor. Jim Emerick has served on the board since 1998 and considered his role to serve as Chairman, an honor. He is pleased to have filled all appointments and it is his pleasure to install these new officers.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:06pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Liupaeter