

**Baltimore County
Board of Recreation and Parks
October 14, 2009 Meeting Minutes**

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, October 14, 2009, at 6:43pm at the Department of Recreation and Parks administrative offices, Towson, Maryland. In attendance were Chairman Stephen Verch; board members Steven Kroll, David Smylie, Wayne Definbaugh, Dunbar Brooks and Jacob Smith. Staff included Bob Barrett, director and Bud Chrismer, deputy director.

Approval of Minutes:

Dunbar Brooks motioned to approve the September board meeting minutes, Wayne Definbaugh seconded and all were in favor.

Announcements:

The Robert E. Lee MOU signing has been delayed.

The Northeast Regional Recreation Center dedication is scheduled for October 27 at 11:30 am.

The dedication of the Benjamin Banneker Historical Cabin is scheduled for November 12 at 11:30 am.

Stephanie Murphy is the new Southwest area coordinator. Ms. Murphy has been with the County for several years.

Old Business:

Chairman Stephen Verch reported that communication was received from Vivian Jefferson regarding the Woodlawn Recreation Council. David Smylie discussed with the board the various issues Ms. Jefferson has with the recreation council. Mr. Smylie stated that he attended the last recreation council meeting and saw similar controversy. Mr. Smylie stated that it appears the council is not following their own by-laws; some members are permitted to vote when perhaps they should not be, and others who should be permitted to vote are not allowed to vote. Mr. Smylie reported that there is a new board in place, a regurgitation of people who were there a couple of years ago. Mr. Smylie stated that there were members of the football program in attendance who signed in as residents so they could all vote, but in the past, had registered as members of the football program. Mr. Smylie reported that Ms. Jefferson has given a thorough account of what is going on, including meetings not being run properly, no treasurer, no financial report presented and no audit. Mr. Smylie stated that he now believes there is a treasurer but for months before, there was no treasurer report and the president was writing checks. Mr. Smylie reported that Ms. Jefferson and some others want the board to do something regarding this issue and are amazed that it appears there is no interest in this matter, no due process, as if no one cares.

In addition, Mr. Smylie discussed the letter received from Ms. Berry, who was on the executive board but later removed. Ms. Berry had opened a separate bank account for her program but said this was done to have record/accountability for their funds, something not done before.

Mr. Verch did not invite the Woodlawn Recreation Council Executive Board to this month's meeting, as it was an oversight on his part. He will send a letter of invite. Steven Kroll stated that the board has received a formal complaint regarding the recreation council. Discussion regarding the Woodlawn Recreation Council ensued amongst board members.

In regards to the Report to the County Executive, Mr. Verch stated that board members are preparing drafts. Mike Weber is not in attendance so Mr. Verch requested that this remain under "Old Business" until next month.

Dunbar Brooks spoke with Debbie Fetchik regarding the tree at Heritage Park in memory of Bruce Mills. Mr. Brooks informed Ms. Fetchik that a tree could be planted but no plaque. Ms. Fetchik wanted to have Mr. Mills' name on a scoreboard but Mr. Brooks informed her that this was something that would have to be done by the recreation council, not the Department.

Mr. Brooks informed the board that he spoke to Patricia Paul regarding the letter she wrote a few months ago. Mr. Brooks stated that Ms. Paul was very nice and in addition, sent him a lot of information regarding programs and funding. Ms. Paul has a real passion for building up knowledge on environmental issues and she was very hurt by the way the recreation council treated her. Mr. Brooks also spoke to Harry Young, with the Dundalk Historical Society, who told him about the programs developed by Ms. Paul and her obvious passion for this matter but stated that she does things on her own, never really connecting with the recreation councils. Mr. Young stated that Ms. Paul is doing things with good intent, not knowing it would cause an issue. Mr. Brooks stated that everyone he spoke to said that Ms. Paul is a nice lady and they all like her programs and what she is trying to do but, they can not work with her; she does not follow rules and procedure. Mr. Kroll responded stating the board had tabled her request for an appeal stating it was an internal matter for the recreation council. Mr. Verch further stated that the board has an open forum and she is welcome to come before the board.

New Business:

Mr. Verch informed the board that Ballestone wants additional signage; Deputy Director Bud Chrismer is working on this.

There was discussion amongst those in attendance regarding flyers that are distributed by the schools. Currently the principals need to receive the flyers one month in advance, for their approval. Mr. Chrismer stated that the Department has asked for a change in this, even discussing the signing of an addendum stating once the Department signs off on a flyer, it is ready for distribution.

Mr. Verch reported that the County Council has approved the 13-acre Girls Life Property and the Department has applied for POS approval. In addition, Mr. Verch reported that we are looking to close on Keyser the second week of November. In regards to the Perry Hall Community Plan, the folks are eager for additional trails.

Jacob Smith mentioned Gough Park and the sign stating fields are coming soon. He suggested the Department take the sign down. Mr. Smith stated that this sign has been up for 3 ½ years and when people see a "coming soon" sign, they expect to see something soon. Mr. Chrismer responded stating that the Department is currently waiting on funds for this project.

Mr. Verch informed the board that he was told that members of a recreation council had visited the Department's website looking for contact information for the board and were unable to find a way to get in touch with board members. Discussion ensued regarding what type of contact information should be posted on the website. Board members agreed on the idea of having their email addresses on the website. Mr. Chrismer stated that he would talk with an IT person about getting a general board email address.

Wayne Definbaugh stated that the Parkville Recreation Council has asked for some assistance in conducting their audit. Mr. Weber and Mr. Definbaugh have agreed to assist with this matter but will not be conducting the audit.

Director's Comments:

Director Bob Barrett reported that the Northeast Regional Recreation Center looks great and encouraged all board members to stop in and see the facility. Mr. Barrett informed board members that the sign would be changed so that the Department name is more visible. A lot of money was spent at this facility; one field was fully glassed but the other was not. The Department ran out of money for racquetball courts; this area will be used mainly for storage. There has been discussion regarding converting a couple of tennis courts to basketball courts. Mr. Barrett is discussing this with the recreation council given the community is in dire need of basketball courts. The Department is still doing a lot during these tough economic times, fulfilling the commitments the County Executive has made.

Mr. Barrett also informed the board that the Department may try to find money to do work on trails at Marshy Point Nature Center, to support donations coming in.

For those who did not make it to the Department's 60th Anniversary Bull Roast, Mr. Barrett reported that the event was great, a sell out! Mr. Verch agreed.

In regards to Mt. Vista, Mr. Barrett stated that the golfers are still unhappy about the Department taking over the facility and not operating it as a golf course.

The first meeting of the Advisory Group for Randallstown is tomorrow night and Mr. Smylie is chair. Mr. Barrett stated that it was a rough road in the beginning but it has settled down.

In regards to the Dundalk Community Center, Mr. Brooks inquired as to what the Department's presence is there. Mr. Barrett responded stating that the first floor, including the pool, office area and lockers, has been turned over to the Y. The Department has the second floor, including the gym and activity rooms, which are occupied by PAL except for evenings and weekends. The community office is still located at Dundalk Middle School but an activity coordinator is coming to the center and will have an office there.

Mr. Barrett reported that the partnership with the Y has worked out very well with both the Dundalk Community Center and the Randallstown Community Center. Mr. Barrett stated the Department is getting ready to close a deal with the Y for the 12-acre property in Towson.

Mr. Barrett reported that the Department still has many acquisitions on the table, a great inventory coming with additional acquisitions as back up in case some do not work out. In addition, Mr. Barrett spoke to Mr. Hendrix from Middle River Wrestling and is going to revisit the VFW site.

Mr. Chrismer reported on the Board of Education Quarterly Meeting held today with folks from the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Board of Education. Plans for Milford Mill Academy and Parkville High School were discussed. Mr. Barrett stated that there has been discussion on expanding the meeting to include recreation council presidents and principals, to include those directly involved.

Mr. Smith stated that there are still issues where the recreation councils do not know where to go. Mr. Barrett responded stating the recreation councils need to first go to their community supervisor, and then if the situation is not resolved, the area coordinator, then to Marty Stoelting and then to Mr. Barrett himself. Mr. Smith stated that all permits go to those in charge of facilities at Board of Education and that the permit goes to the school first. Mr. Chrismer responded stating that the permits do go to the school first and the only one that we had a problem with was supposedly submitted in June but didn't get back until September. This didn't end up impacting the program. Permits are dated when it has made it to the central office.

Mr. Verch stated that the real problem is with the local principal who decides to pull a permit and allow another group in. Up to this point, the permit process worked. Mr. Smith also stated that the school denies permits, sending them back never to reach the central office. Mr. Chrismer responded that our staff should get involved then. Mr. Smith stated that most of the schools do a nice job; the only one with any complaints is Franklin High School. Mr. Chrismer responded stating that staff is compiling a short notice list. Mr. Verch inquired about whether Gunpowder field access was on the list. Mr. Chrismer responded stating that the principal was on the list but no mention of field access. Mr. Chrismer further stated that groups should be getting two weeks notice but Mr. Smith stated that groups are showing up and finding out that they have been bumped. During the board meeting, Mr. Smith received a text stating that a group was just notified that the gym at Franklin High would not be available until 8:30 pm. Mr. Smith responded stating this is unacceptable! Mr. Barrett responded stating that the Department would work on this and get back to him tomorrow.

Mr. Barrett informed the board that schools will be holding H1N1 inoculations and further stated that these are the same children who participate in recreation programs. Mr. Barrett stated that notice would be given to the Department on when this is to happen. Mr. Verch inquired about what the Department is planning to do. Mr. Barrett responded stating that the Department is working with the Health Department in making decisions on how to handle things and he informed board members that there would soon be a written policy with a partnership amongst all County agencies.

Action:

Wayne Definbaugh motioned to accept the revised Cromwell Valley Park Constitution and By-Laws, modified after coming before the board last month. Dunbar Brooks seconded and all were in favor.

Dunbar Brooks motioned to have Bud Chrismer talk to IT about having an email address for the board, Steven Kroll seconded and all were in favor.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Wayne Definbaugh moved to adjourn the meeting, Dunbar Brooks seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Liupaeter