

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

WAYNE DEFINBAUGH, CHAIRMAN

Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2011

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, September 14, 2011, at 6:18 p.m., at the Department of Recreation and Parks administrative offices, Towson, Maryland. In attendance were Wayne Definbaugh, chairman; David Smylie, vice chairman; board members Leslie Monfred, Eric Van den Beemt, and Dunbar Brooks. Recreation and Parks department staff included Barry F. Williams, director and Bud Chrismer, deputy director.

Chairman Wayne Definbaugh suspended the agenda due to lack of a quorum at the start of the meeting, and went on to welcome Greg Tracey and Brian Shane from the Maryland Waterfowlers Association. See "Comments from Individual Citizens" section.

At the conclusion of the address by the members of the Maryland Waterfowlers Association, the board had a quorum and proceeded according to the agenda.

Announcements:

Mr. Definbaugh welcomed new board member Eric Van den Beemt, representing the 3rd Councilmanic District. Mr. Van den Beemt introduced himself to the board and provided brief background information. Mr. Van den Beemt has coached and run travel soccer and has been involved in trying to find additional sites for recreational fields in the Northern Baltimore County area. Mr. Van den Beemt stated that this area basically only has use of school sites and is forced to spend a great deal of money on renting facilities for programming.

Mr. Definbaugh informed board members that he emailed Councilwoman Bevins about selecting a teen representative for the board. Councilwoman Bevins informed Mr. Definbaugh that she is working on this.

Mr. Definbaugh thanked Vice Chairman David Smylie for filling in for him over the last year while he attended school thus obtaining a Bachelor's Degree.

Director Barry F. Williams announced the Grand Re-Opening of Robert E. Lee Park is scheduled for Friday, October 14 at 11:30 am.

Approval of Minutes:

Dunbar Brooks motioned to approve the July board meeting minutes, Mr. Van den Beemt seconded, and all were in favor.

Director's Comments:

Mr. Williams welcomed Mr. Van den Beemt and provided background information on him and on issues that the board has encountered. Mr. Williams stated he believes the board has been good in defining their role and thinks folks are clear on this. Mr. Williams stated that over the last nine months he has learned there are a whole multitude of issues further than he imagined.

Mr. Williams informed the board that the draft regulation will no longer be referred to as a regulation but instead as a memo from Fred Homan to Mike Field instructing him on how he should conduct the office in regards to the recreation councils. Mr. Williams stated that this decision was made to avoid having to jump through a whole lot of hoops to evoke such a document. Once Mr. Williams has more information, he will share this with the board.

Mr. Williams informed the board that he toured the Sollers Point project yesterday and stated the project is about 75% complete. The facility is scheduled to open December/January, and all board members will be invited to attend. Mr. Williams further stated this would be a nice partnership with Jim Fish, director, Department of Library. Mr. Brooks replied stating that he attended a meeting last week and everyone was looking forward to this facility. Mr. Brooks stated that this facility would house the only certified commercial kitchen in the Southeast area. Mr. Brooks reported that county health officials have given recreation folks grief when trying to do fundraising events; they shut them down. Mr. Williams responded stating there is a law that must be followed in regards to this. Mr. Williams suggested the possibility of a meeting with Dr. Gregory Branch. Deputy Director Bud Chrismer stated that, for the last 10 years, the department obtains a permit that covers all recreation councils. This is very minimal but the councils have the option to obtain proper higher level certifications. Recreation councils are not the only groups with this issue; churches with their potluck lunches are in the same predicament. Mr. Williams told Mr. Brooks to let him know if he would like to hear from Dr. Branch on the other side of this issue. Mr. Definbaugh responded stating this would be interesting. The board could then educate the councils. Mr. Williams stated that before meeting with Dr. Branch it would be helpful to have a list of questions from board members.

Mr. Brooks reported that folks associated with the library at the new Sollers Point facility have contacted the Sesame Street Foundation in regards to decorating the library in an Elmo motif. The man responsible for creating Elmo is from the area, and Mr. Brooks added that it would be a nice touch if he could attend the opening. Mr. Chrismer stated that he would check on a completion date.

All board members are encouraged to attend the grand re-opening of Robert E. Lee Park. Mr. Williams stated that the city did not perform maintenance at this site for about 15 years before the county took over the park. Mr. Williams reported that the department plans to hire 6 park rangers, which he plans to deputize to afford them the ability to hand out citations at the park. The park is owned by the city, but the county has a lease for the property for 50 years with automatic renewals. This beautiful park features the lake and dam as well as a pavilion and will allow for hiking and biking among many other activities. In addition, Mr. Williams reported that the nature council has been very active.

Mr. Williams stated that things have been going well. It has been a very active summer with the earthquake and hurricane resulting in many downed trees. The maintenance division has done an amazing job in responding even though they are severely understaffed by about nine positions. Mr.

Williams stated that he doesn't see this getting any better given the financial situation but stated that we have very dedicated folks working in this department.

Old Business:

In regards to the proposed revisions to the Kingsville Recreation Council's Constitution and By-Laws, Mr. Definbaugh stated that Mike Weber is not in attendance to provide an update. Mr. Definbaugh stated that the council has not submitted their changes, and therefore, the board cannot approve the revisions at this time. Mr. Definbaugh mentioned sending a letter to the council stating the proposed revisions are not approved because we have not received their changes.

Mr. Smylie stated that he still has concerns with the proposed revisions to the Greater Pikesville Recreation Council's Constitution and By-Laws. Discussion ensued amongst board members. Mr. Williams suggested that Mr. Smylie craft something for the board to review. In addition, Mr. Williams asked the board to submit recommendations/comments/changes to Lisa Liupaeter, and once she is in receipt of this, she can then send everything out to all board members who can then decide by consensus. Once the board makes a decision, they can then get this out to the council prior to their next council meeting.

Mr. Brooks inquired about the councils that needed to become 501 (c)(3), stating a couple of them said they needed help with this. Mr. Williams responded stating that Nancy West from the Law Office is taking the lead on this.

New Business:

Mr. Definbaugh stated that the goal for this year is to work on standardization of by-laws for all recreation councils and standard financial guidelines. In Althea Page's absence, she was volunteered for the job, as was Mr. Weber.

Mr. Definbaugh informed board members about an email he received regarding a complaint with the West Inverness dance program. Mr. Definbaugh stated that he is waiting for them to take this to the local level first before coming to the board. Mr. Definbaugh briefly discussed the details of the complaint.

Comments by Individual Citizens:

Mr. Tracey started off by stating that this group has been hunting on an offshore portion of parkland in Baltimore County, in state owned waters, for the past 100 years. This is the first time the county has prevented them from licensing this area and the waterfowlers have lost 15 2/3 miles or 1/3 of their shoreline. Mr. Tracey stated that he and Mr. Shane have come before the board representing 40,000 waterfowlers in Maryland and are asking that we work with them on a park-by-park basis.

Mr. Shane discussed issues they have had at Cox's Point Park with the tenant making noise, throwing rocks and shining lights on them and ultimately calling the police. While at Rocky Point Park, they do not see anyone there this early in the morning. They are about 150 – 300 yards offshore and are not a disruption to anyone. Mr. Tracey mentioned the rumor that this decision was made based on safety and stated that in the past ten years no one was injured by waterfowlers in the state of Maryland; safety is the first thing they focus on. Mr. Shane stated that the county put blind

sites out to keep them from hunting on adjacent sites. Mr. Shane stated that most people license their land off to hunt themselves or to prevent the group from hunting. Mr. Shane further stated that they are not trying to disturb anyone. Mr. Shane stated that Bob Barrett told them there were no plans to close anything off. Proceeds go to conservation and the Maryland Waterfowlers Association is responsible for giving more money than any other group. The state allows them to hunt offshore from their parks, which is no different than the county. Mr. Tracey stated that there were about 450 people at the lottery. Their season is 2 weeks in November and December thru January and there is a lot of money involved in their sport to have this taken away by the county. Mr. Tracey and Mr. Shane stated they are here in an effort to prevent this from happening next year.

Mr. Williams responded stating when people don't have a lot of information they tend to act on their fears. Mr. Williams stated that as a department we have to be responsive to things. Mr. Williams stated that Mr. Tracey and Mr. Shane are level headed and present themselves well. Mr. Williams added that he needs to study more about this and at this point in time he does not have a lot of information. Mr. Williams stated that he can commit to learn and understand more about this and stated that he does try to be fair one way or the other. Mr. Williams stated he knows this year is out of the question, but he will hold to his commitment before next season.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Brooks moved to adjourn the meeting, Leslie Monfred seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Liupaeter