

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

MICHAEL WEBER, CHAIRMAN

Meeting Minutes

July 10, 2013

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, July 10, 2013 at 6:19 p.m. at Robert E. Lee Park, located at 1000 Lakeside Drive, Baltimore, Maryland. In attendance were Mike Weber, chairman; Eric van den Beemt, vice chairman; board members Leslie Monfred, Mike Milani, Chuck Munzert and Charles Gilman. Recreation and Parks department staff included Barry F. Williams, director; Chris McCollum, executive director, Agriculture, Nature & Special Facilities; Kara Burman, regional coordinator, Region 1; Mike Schneider, community outreach liaison and Jeffrey Budnitz, board member, Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council.

Director Barry F. Williams welcomed everyone and provided brief background information on the park. He then introduced Chris McCollum who addressed those in attendance and provided additional information regarding the site. Mr. Williams stated that part of the success of this park is because of the volunteers. Jeffrey Budnitz discussed the success of the park and how great the council is doing. He stated that these successes are quite the contrary to what the park once was. Chairman Mike Weber thanked Mr. Budnitz and fellow volunteers for all they do.

Mr. Weber welcomed new board member Charles Gilman.

Approval of Minutes:

Vice Chairman Eric van den Beemt motioned to approve the June board meeting minutes, Mike Milani seconded, and all were in favor.

Director's Comments:

Mr. Williams welcomed Mr. Gilman to the board.

Mr. Williams reported that Honeygo Park is in the development stage and further stated that he was able to provide input and approval on the design for the park. On another note, St. Helena Dog Park is scheduled to open sometime within the next two weeks.

Mr. Williams discussed summer camps and stated that there is an excess of 70 camps throughout Baltimore County. He reported that they were recently able to resolve a matter at the Therapeutic Recreation Camps regarding administering EpiPens, if needed. Some camp participants have severe allergies and having an EpiPen on hand is essential. The department recently received permission to administer this in the event of an emergency.

On Sunday, July 7, Recreation and Parks hosted the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Gwynn Oak Park, with Mr. Williams as the emcee. Mr. Williams stated that it was a very nice day, but very hot!

Old Business:

Wayne Definbaugh was tasked with looking into the timeline of the Baltimore County Sailing Center (BCSC); however, he was not in attendance. Mr. Weber stated that he is aware that the BCSC had a change in administration. He will look into this to see where they are with things. Mr. McCollum informed the board that former president Brent Ostbye moved out west; the interim president is John Markley. Mr. McCollum spoke to Mr. Markley who reported on a recent successful regatta. Chuck Munzert discussed the \$3,900 in group leadership that the group owes. Mr. McCollum stated that he would look into the issue and get more information.

Mr. Weber reported that he has heard from some of the delinquent councils and now has additional certified councils to add to the website. They are as follows: Towson, Cockeysville, 7th District, Hereford and Carroll Manor. The board has reached out to most of the councils that are still not in compliance and Mr. Weber anticipates that we should hear from them soon. However, there are still some councils that have not responded. Board members discussed sending out a letter and an email indicating a time in which they need to respond (by September meeting). In addition, these councils should be notified that a group of board members will plan to attend their council meetings and ask them why they have not sent in a response. Mr. van den Beemt stated that there needs to be a deadline. Discussion ensued regarding non compliance. Mr. Williams stated that the board needs to get a commitment the night they attend the council meeting. In addition, Mr. Williams suggested the board talk with the other certified councils to see if they would agree to take over programs. The board made a motion.

In regards to coverage for volunteers, Mr. Weber stated that a response was received from the Office of Law. The questions and answers were largely untouched; however, a couple of minor changes were proposed. The board made a motion and Mr. Weber stated that he would write the cover letter.

Mr. Definbaugh was not in attendance to report on background checks so this agenda item is tabled until the next meeting.

Mr. Munzert discussed the Gray Charles Recreation Council and stated that they do not have their by-laws complete. The council claims they sent this to Mr. Definbaugh, but he said he never received this. Brian Weir is working with the council to complete this. Mr. Weber stated that he would talk to Mr. Weir.

West Inverness Recreation Council Constitution and By-Laws was tabled until the next meeting as a result of Mr. Definbaugh's absence.

Beatha Davis will provide information on Coaches Code of Conduct. Leslie Monfred stated that she might have information from another council; she will look into this.

New Business:

Mr. Weber wanted to discuss changes in recreation facilities. He stated that he doesn't believe the board has taken a stance in the past; however, he does have a concern of losing parkland in Baltimore County. Mr. Weber stated that he thinks it would be appropriate to comment as a board, providing this to the council, the county executive and anyone else who would listen. The discussion regarding the sale of North Point Government Center continued amongst board members. Mr. Williams suggested that board members talk to their county council representative to see where they stand on the issue. Mr. Munzert mentioned that there is a bill to amend local open space waiver fees. A large portion of those fees are to go to a local non-profit (and perhaps not to Recreation and Parks). The County Council sent this bill to the Planning Board for devising a formula for assessment of those fees. Mr. Munzert stated that the board has a chance to work with the planning board and provide input; he intends to come to the next meeting with a plan. Mr. Williams discussed NeighborSpace and suggested that the board reach out to them and see how they can work together. Mr. Milani expressed frustration when stating that the maintenance division was taken away from the department. He further stated that when you take this away and that away, you question what is left. Mr. Weber stated that he would reach out to Barbara Hopkins, executive director of NeighborSpace.

In regards to recertifying councils, Mr. Munzert stated that he thinks the board should look at how much money each council owes, before recertifying them.

Mike Schneider attended a Perry Hall Recreation Council meeting in June and was asked to take something back to the board. The council had questions regarding equipment, helmets and concussions. Mrs. Davis suggested finding out if these questions could be forwarded to the Office of Law. Brief discussion ensued. Mr. Weber asked someone to take the lead in writing the answers to these questions. Mr. Gilman stated that he would work with Mr. Milani on this. Mr. Weber asked them to copy all board members. Mr. Williams will then forward these questions and answers to Mike Field.

Action:

Mr. van den Beemt motioned to send a certified letter to those councils not yet recertified, and a letter to the County Council as well. In addition, a memo will also be sent informing the councils that board members plan to attend their September meeting (or the next most practical date) and ask when a response will be received. If the board does not receive a response by September 30 (or within 30 days) there will be no more permits issued to these councils nor will they have insurance coverage from the County. Mr. Weber plans to be very detailed in his letter, explaining what this loss entails. Mr. Gilman seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Mrs. Monfred motioned to adopt the changes to the questions and answers regarding liability coverage, forward this to Mr. Williams for final approval and distribute to the recreation councils. Mr. van den Beemt seconded and all were in favor.

Comments from Individual Citizens:

Mike Pierce came before the board regarding smoking at recreation centers and stated that he did so a year ago and no action has been taken. He discussed this issue with the deputy director and believed action would be taken, but no action was ever taken. Mr. Pierce stated that he plans to attend every board meeting to listen to the board's deliberation on this subject, until a recommendation is made. Mr. Pierce wants the butt stations moved away from the doors and placed somewhere else. As for the second step, Mr. Pierce stated that the board should discuss what the County regulation should be. Mr. Weber asked Mr. Pierce to send him an email outlining what it is he wants. Mr. Williams responded stating that the Health Department had received anti-smoking grant money and may be the agency to get behind him on this matter.

Patricia Paul is from the Dundalk community and is with Dundalk United. Her role with Dundalk United and her reason to come before the board today is to create awareness on the proposed sale of the North Point Government Center park. Ms. Paul stated that this is a well used park in the middle of Dundalk that has been part of this community for almost 60 years. The park is now up for sale by the County, with no notice to the community and no public input. Ms. Paul stated that this sale would be devastating to the community. There is no land comparable to this site.

Karen Cruz lives in the Dundalk community and stated that there are indoor and outdoor programs at the North Point Government Center, which is used by thousands of people. In addition, there is a theater in this building, which is the only community theater in Baltimore County. Ms. Cruz discussed the devastation the sale would cause to the community and stated that it is un-American to sell a park. Ms. Cruz discussed Dundalk United, which is a strong coalition that has received many letters of support from community associations.

Larry Thanner addressed the board and stated that the North Point Government Center accounts for 10% of the parkland in Dundalk. Mr. Thanner stated that things are different in this community. This park serves the public and to sell it is wrong. Mr. Thanner asked the board to support them and oppose the sale of the North Point Government Center.

Maggie Gregory lives across from the North Point Government Center park. Ms. Gregory stated that the County buys parks in other areas of Baltimore County, but sells a park in Dundalk. She stated that Dundalk doesn't have that many parks. Ms. Gregory posed many questions if the sale does happen. She stated that they wanted to provide great things for the kids, and the sale of this property would go against this.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Milani moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Gilman seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Liupaeter