

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

MICHAEL WEBER, CHAIRMAN

Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2013

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, November 13, 2013 at 6:08 p.m. at the Halethorpe Community Center, located at 1900 Northeast Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland. In attendance were Mike Weber, chairman; Eric van den Beemt, vice chairman; board members Leslie Monfred, Mike Milani, Chuck Munzert, Wayne Definbaugh, Brian Weir and Charles Gilman. Recreation and Parks department staff included Barry F. Williams, director; Beahta Davis, chief, Recreation Services and Kara Burman, regional coordinator, Region 1.

Director Barry F. Williams welcomed everyone to the Halethorpe Community Center. Mr. Williams stated that he used to play on these grounds 50 years ago and commented that the building looks better now than it did back then. He then introduced Kara Burman who provided background information on this historical site.

Approval of Minutes:

Wayne Definbaugh motioned to approve the October board meeting minutes, Vice Chairman Eric van den Beemt seconded, and all were in favor.

Old Business:

Regarding financial review and re-certification, Chairman Mike Weber stated that Brian Weir and Chuck Munzert would head this sub-committee. He will get together with them in a few weeks.

Mr. Weber asked Mr. Williams if he heard back from Mike Field regarding the questions submitted by the Perry Hall Recreation Council. Mr. Williams stated that Mr. Field has not had a chance to review the questions, but hopes to do so by the next meeting.

Mr. Definbaugh stated that he has no additional information regarding background checks. He stated that this should be dealt with/handled by the county council. Discussion ensued. Mr. Weber stated that board members need as much information as possible to have a discussion next month, and possibly come up with suggested proposals on how to proceed. Mr. Weir announced that all of the recreation councils he spoke to were for background checks, but financially it was a problem. Leslie Monfred stated that if the council were dealing with this it would hold more weight and would be financially less of a burden. Mr. Definbaugh made the recommendation to poll all of the recreation councils to see who is already doing background checks so this information could be incorporated in the letter to the county council. Lengthy discussion ensued. Mr. Weber tabled this discussion until next month and asked board members to come prepared for best practices.

Mr. Weber spoke to Mike Milani about the 1099 issue. He stated that Mr. Milani still needs more time to speak to Mr. van den Beemt about this.

The board sent a letter to the county executive and the county council regarding a smoking ban. Mr. Weber informed board members that Lisa Liupaeter sent Mike Pierce a copy of this letter.

Mr. Weber thanked the many board members who attended the tour of the North Point Government Center (NPGC). Mr. Williams reported that a few weeks ago the county executive had a discussion with a few invited community members to talk about the plans for Randallstown, Towson and NPGC. Mr. Williams brought the concept plans with him today for board members to see. Board members were shown the plans for the NPGC, which were proposed by Vanguard. Mr. Williams further stated that the department came up with a plan that is more of a reflection of what the community wants. He discussed this plan with the board. Behta Davis attended a meeting with Vanguard and Property Management. They are gathering all of the items we want and talking with the department and the council. Plans will be drawn up and presented to the community.

Discussion ensued regarding wants/don't wants in addition to board members' opinions. Mr. Weir strongly voiced his concern with the ultimate issue – the sale of parkland. Mr. Munzert responded stating that the council wants to keep what they have. Mr. Williams stated that the majority of what goes on at this site is not recreation programs. Further discussion ensued. Mr. Weber stated that the plan has to be approved by the county council and then by PUD. He stated that he is unsure at what point in time things can be stopped; he is concerned about the drop dead date. Board members discussed needing to know where the local council stands and supporting them. Mr. Weber stated that there are many different ways to look at this; board members need to decide where they stand and how to handle this issue. Mrs. Monfred motioned to call for a meeting as quick as possible and invite the recreation council, developers and Dundalk United to hear all sides; board members can help mediate. Ms. Davis replied stating that she does not think it is appropriate for the board to meet with the developers at this point. Mr. Williams commented that he would be surprised if the administration would allow developers to meet with the board before the vote on December 2. Mr. Munzert stated that he and Mr. Weir could meet with members of the recreation council (tomorrow night at the presidents meeting) and ask them how they feel. They can email board members with their findings. Mr. Weber stated that the board sent a letter to the county executive and the county council and thus far has had no response. The crux of the letter stated that the board was not asked to weigh in, which is part of their responsibilities. Mr. Munzert stated that the board should insist on not selling the property. Mr. Williams stated that the response from the board's letter was having the chairman be invited to attend the unveil and allowing him to share the plans with the board. Discussion ensued. Mr. Weber stated that the board has not taken any action on this matter.

Charles Gilman reviewed Ed Pinder's opinion on libel and slander and stated that he does not think this particular opinion is instructive. In addition, Mr. Gilman commented that anyone could file a lawsuit. He stated that the board need not do anything with this.

New Business:

Mr. Definbaugh announced that he notified the Parkville Recreation Council that they are certified and their proposed constitution and by-laws were approved.

Mr. Weber talked about sub-committees and stated that he would converse with each board member indicating what it is they need to be doing.

Action:

Mrs. Monfred motioned to poll the recreation councils to see which are already conducting background checks, Mr. Definbaugh seconded and all were in favor. Ms. Davis will send an email to the regional coordinators to find out this information.

Comments by Individual Citizens:

Saundra Owens, Shirley Myers, Debbie Dobrovolny, Maggie Schoor from the Catonsville Recreation Council and Barry Lloyd from Lansdowne Recreation Council were all in attendance. Ms. Dobrovolny addressed the board and stated that she strongly disagrees with the county opinion that councils discontinue the use of independent contractors. She cited the memo from Mr. Williams dated February 2013, which was then read aloud to board members. Mr. Williams stated that this was a county Law Office decision. Ms. Davis stated that independent contractors could be used only if they are incorporated and provide their own liability insurance. In addition, Ms. Davis stated that if Ms. Dobrovolny would like to use independent contractors that do not meet county standards she could, but she could not use county facilities. Lengthy discussion ensued. Mr. Williams offered Ms. Dobrovolny an opportunity to meet with Ms. Davis and the county attorney to receive clarification and a fuller explanation on this matter.

Ms. Owens announced that the keys to Bloomsbury Community Center were removed from the council's possession. She requested that this directive be revisited. Ms. Owens spoke with Ms. Burman prior to the start of the board meeting. Ms. Davis replied stating that the next step would be for her to meet with Ms. Owens. Ms. Owens said okay.

Mr. Lloyd stated that Lansdowne is not on the list of certified recreation councils and he does not believe they were told the reason for this. Mr. Weber responded stating that he thinks they are fine and will get them added to the list.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Gilman moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Definbaugh seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Liupaeter