

# BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

MICHAEL WEBER, CHAIRMAN

## Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2014

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 at 6:07 PM at the Department of Recreation and Parks administrative offices, Cockeysville, Maryland. In attendance were Mike Weber, chairman; Eric van den Beemt, vice chairman; board members Leslie Monfred, David Smylie, Greg Heitner, Chuck Munzert, Brian Weir, Charles Gilman and Robbie Palmisano. Recreation and Parks department staff included Barry F. Williams, director, Beahta Davis, chief, Recreation Services, and Mike Schneider, community outreach liaison.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Vice Chairman Eric van den Beemt motioned to approve the April board meeting minutes, Brian Weir seconded, and all were in favor.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Mike Weber stated that there are overriding concerns the board needs to look into. These concerns include having no information or minimal information on coaches. He suggested the board contemplate obtaining information for any coach on the field. In addition, Mr. Weber stated that the board is spending too much time dealing with things like the recent Perry Hall issue. He has received feedback from board members that this issue, and those like it, should be handled by paid department staff.

Mr. Weber stated that now is the time to jump on the social media outreach. He asked Greg Heitner for ideas on how to roll this out. Mr. Heitner stated that this would be a closed Facebook page where the board could share information and obtain information – somewhat like a bulletin board type of thing.

Mr. Weber would like to form a financial review subcommittee and is looking for recommendations regarding recertification this year. He would like to conduct the recertification process again this year with a deadline date of October. Mr. Weir replied stating that a reporter has claimed that things have happened because of lack of oversight by the board.

A review of the board's by-laws is needed, and Mr. Weber stated that he is looking for legal advice and clarity from the Office of Law.

In regards to the tasks at hand, Mr. Weber informed board members that he would reach out to them over the next several months.

## **Director's Comments**

In regards to background checks, Director Barry F. Williams stated that there has been much interest all the way around; however, this is a mammoth task. This will take time to work out all of the details. Mr. Williams reported that there is a group working on this and they will be traveling around to see firsthand how others conduct this task. Currently, we are gathering data and will bring the board in after this process is complete but before anything official is presented to the County Executive.

The Acorn Hill Playground ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for June 18 at 11 AM. Mr. Williams encouraged all board members to attend.

There was an article in the newspaper regarding Angel Park in Perry Hall, and Mr. Williams stated that he just received a call from a reporter today about this project. The goal is for volunteers to raise \$400,000. The project, once complete, is intended to resemble Annie's Playground. This is county property and will be maintained by the county; however, the volunteers are to raise a certain amount of funds to assist with the maintenance. Mr. Heitner provided additional information regarding the project and stated that as of last week, the volunteers are halfway to their fundraising goal.

Mr. Williams reported that we have had many folks contact us regarding school grounds. He stated that the weather has been an issue, but there are areas that do need to be improved upon. He stated that we have brought this to the attention of BCPS, with the hope they will tend to these matters.

Leslie Monfred asked Mr. Williams what the role of the board is. Mr. Williams stated that the board sets policies for the recreation councils; they are responsible for certification and audits of these councils and bringing them to task. In addition, the board is responsible for putting things together to help the recreation councils provide better programming for the community. They advise the department and are our eyes and ears. They are the face of Baltimore County with regard to volunteer efforts and are the connection to the county council and the county executive. Mrs. Monfred responded stating that she thinks there is blurring of the roles between the board and the staff. She stated that she would like to know what power the board has so they know what they can and cannot do and are not wasting time. Further discussion ensued. Mr. Weir discussed how his area is severely neglected. He and Chuck Munzert are out in the community dealing with president's concerns and issues. If the community comes to them and they react, he stated that they are not taking on too much, but rather doing what the people want them to do. Mr. Williams replied stating that this board is much different than what it was in the past; they are much more active. The board is shifting the culture, but this is not going to happen overnight. He suggested the board focus on the bigger things that they really want to go after.

## **Old Business:**

Mr. Williams spoke to Mike Field regarding the issues with the Perry Hall Q & A's. In addition, he forwarded the information from Mr. Field to board members. Charles Gilman plans to review this information prior to the next meeting and provide further analysis to the board. Brief discussion ensued regarding the highlights of the Pikesville Recreation Council case, which was part of the documentation provided by Mr. Field. Ultimately, the council was not incorporated and therefore, the officers were held liable/responsible. Mr. Weber stated that the board may need to revisit what they require from the councils to include incorporation rather than strongly recommending this. He

asked Mr. Williams to provide him with a list of councils that are not incorporated. Mr. Gilman suggested looking into the council's Certificates of Insurance and further stated that he does not know if incorporation is as important as their insurance policy; they may have a good policy but not be incorporated.

Mr. Weber congratulated board members with regard to background checks. He informed board members that he received a letter from Mike Pierce with the Cromwell Valley Park Nature Council suggesting limitations on background checks because their nature council is different than a recreation council. Mr. Williams stated that many of the nature councils do interact with children and the county would rather err on the side of caution.

All board members should have received the email thread between Mr. Weber and Paul Amirault regarding the Perry Hall Recreation Council football program and the action the council has taken. Mr. Weber informed the board that he and Mr. Amirault had a lengthy discussion regarding the issues presented to the board. Board members discussed the actions the council has taken with regard to this matter. The board voted at the last meeting to table this with the expectation that the council would come back to the board with a resolution to this matter. Discussion ensued regarding the board's next steps. Mr. Gilman discussed the situation and stated that he does not think it was handled properly. He does not think the board should get involved with "neighborhood disputes." Board members discussed their views/opinions regarding the situation and how they would like to respond. Mr. van den Beemt motioned to draft a letter to the Perry Hall Recreation Council – and send it to Mr. Weber – stating that though the board accepts the decision made by the Perry Hall Recreation Council, they have reservations and concerns. He would list the concerns in the letter and conclude by stating that the board is watching very closely, and they should, too. The board took a vote (see Action item).

### **New Business:**

Mr. Weir informed board members that he spoke at the PUD Meeting for the North Point Government Center; he is still trying to figure out what the various interests are proposing. He stated that the \$8 million property sold for \$2 million. Mr. Weir stated that this is going to be a long fight. Mr. Munzert replied stating that there were about 300 people in attendance and went on to recap the meeting. He stated that, during the meeting, it was said that the county executive was allocating \$4 million to recreation and parks for this property, a statement that made things that much worse. The meeting went back and forth for two hours and Mr. Munzert stated that he does not believe anything came of it.

Mr. Heitner reported on the Perry Hall/White Marsh soccer program. He stated that two coaches were removed from the travel soccer program for having a separate fundraising account, which was held outside of the recreation council. The two coaches, who are married, were asked to leave; they never appealed. Beahta Davis responded stating that the disgruntled letters that came in were from the coaches' family members. She believes this issue has been resolved.

Mr. Weir inquired about where we are with the Joint Use Agreement. Mr. Williams responded stating that he discussed this at a previous meeting. Mr. Weir stated that he is still running into many issues in his area. Mr. Williams urged Mr. Weir to talk to staff to resolve these issues. He further stated that he has spoken with Dr. Dallas Dance; however, if this is still an issue, the board can discuss this with the Board of Education at the June dinner meeting. Mr. Williams asked board

members to submit any issues to Lisa Liupaeter prior to the meeting so that we may get them to Board of Education in advance.

**Action:**

Mr. van den Beemt motioned to draft a letter to the Perry Hall Recreation Council, Mr. Munzert seconded and the motion passed 4:2, with two abstentions.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Mr. Heitner moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Weir seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Liupaeter