

# BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

ERIC VAN DEN BEEMT, CHAIRMAN

## Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2015

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Monday, March 16, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. at the Old Courthouse – Room 118, Towson, Maryland. In attendance were Eric van den Beemt, chairman, Chuck Munzert, vice chairman; board members Mike Milani, Leslie Monfred, Greg Heitner, Brian Weir, Robbie Leonard, Chip Hiebler and Rob Palmisano. Recreation and Parks department staff included Barry F. Williams, director, Beahta Davis, chief, Recreation Services, Chris McCollum, executive director, Agriculture, Nature & Special Facilities and Mike Schneider, community outreach liaison.

### **Call to Order:**

Chairman Eric van den Beemt called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Mr. van den Beemt welcomed new board member Chip Hiebler. Mr. Hiebler spoke to board members, providing brief background information on himself.

### **Board Member Activities:**

Vice Chairman Chuck Munzert stated he had nothing new to report.

Mike Milani reported that the Lansdowne-Riverview Recreation Council is a mess. (This will be discussed later in the meeting.) In addition, he stated he has concerns regarding Board of Education closing of facilities.

Brian Weir commented that he thinks the board should be invited to the Property Management meetings with council presidents. He went on to discuss playground equipment and the bulldozing of the park/playground and stated that nobody knows anything about this.

Leslie Monfred reported that things have been pretty quiet.

Greg Heitner announced that Soukup Arena opened a couple of weeks ago and things seem to be going well.

Robbie Leonard stated he had nothing to report at this time.

Rob Palmisano informed board members that he recently attended a meeting regarding the Loch Raven Watershed, and the goal of reducing phosphate levels. He stated that it seems people want to make a positive difference in their backyard. In addition, he reported that he has attempted to contact the president of the 7<sup>th</sup> District Recreation Council regarding recertification, but has not received a return call.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Munzert motioned to approve the January board meeting minutes, Mr. Heitner seconded, and all were in favor.

### **Chairman's Report:**

Mr. van den Beemt stated that the board has their hands full. He suggested they start by attending the president's meetings in their representative districts. He encouraged board members to let folks know of the issues they are running into. Mr. van den Beemt stated that communication with the councils is key.

### **Director's Comments:**

Director Barry F. Williams commented that Soukup Arena looked great and is filled with people. He announced that the official ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for April.

Mr. Williams reported on an issue regarding Paw Point at Robert E. Lee Park. After providing brief background information on the situation, he informed board members that he instructed the constituent to follow the appropriate appeal process set in place. He shared this with board members because of the recent conversation regarding what cases the board will/will not hear. Mr. Milani replied stating that he thought everyone had the right to an appeal. Mrs. Monfred replied stating that the subcommittees were created to help resolve issues with the recreation councils outside of the monthly board meetings. Mr. Milani responded stating that everyone should have the right to appeal to the Board of Recreation and Parks. Mr. Williams suggested having an at-large member handle the Agriculture, Nature & Special Facilities group. Mr. Leonard volunteered.

### **Old Business:**

Regarding the financial review, Mr. van den Beemt informed board members that the letter he drafted to the recreation councils was forwarded to Mike Field [with the Office of Law], for review. Mr. Field suggested the board contact their County Council representative first to let them know what is happening. Mr. van den Beemt reviewed the list of non-compliant councils and provided an update with regard to those he has spoken to. Mr. Milani stated he would contact Arbutus, Baltimore Highlands and Catonsville. Mr. Heitner stated he would contact Towson. Mr. van den Beemt stated that Lansdowne-Riverview was a separate issue. Mr. Munzert reported that Bengies-Chase submitted their information, but do not have their tax exempt number. Brief discussion ensued. He discussed Ballestone and their financial records; he and Beahta Davis will work on this.

Mr. Heitner provided an update regarding social media. He suggested distributing the information again in a couple of weeks, asking for the names of those from each council (appointed by the president), and reminding them they need to request to join.

### **New Business:**

Mr. van den Beemt referenced the email that was sent from Rhonda Fox-Jones to the board regarding the Liberty Road Recreation Council – her request to appeal the election and provided brief background information for those in attendance. At the January meeting, the board voted to

reject her appeal; Mr. van den Beemt reported that he sent a letter to the council president and to Mrs. Fox-Jones informing them of the board's response.

Regarding the revised Liberty Road Recreation Council Constitution and Bylaws, Mr. Milani stated that the board should make sure the councils are following their by-laws and are not in violation. Discussion ensued. Mr. van den Beemt suggested distributing a copy of Robert E. Lee Nature Councils' Constitution and By-Laws when there are issues with the by-laws of other councils. [Ms. Davis briefly discussed rules for residency stating that if programs are over filled, Baltimore County residents should have priority.] Discussion ensued. Mr. van den Beemt stated that he thinks it is a good idea to send a letter to all councils suggesting they review the constitution and by-laws of Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council. Mr. Heitner suggested talking to the councils about this. Mr. van den Beemt replied stating that board members can discuss this at the upcoming president's meetings and encouraged board members to come back to the next meeting with knowledge of responses from the councils. Mr. van den Beemt suggested Mr. Hiebler could take this on.

Mr. van den Beemt passed out the letter that will be sent to the Board of Education president, requesting a meeting to discuss the Joint Use Agreement. Mr. van den Beemt stated that he does not think the annual dinner meeting is the right time for this discussion.

Board members received a copy of the email from the secretary of the Lansdowne-Riverview Recreation Council, claiming the council was in a state of crisis. Mr. Milani discussed the issues regarding the council (including issues regarding money, who is in charge and whether or not the treasurer is doing her job). He reported that a decision is to be made at their meeting tomorrow night. Further discussion ensued. Mr. van den Beemt would like Mr. Milani to attend the meeting tomorrow evening, to know what has transpired. Ms. Davis stated that she will attend. Mr. Milani will attend as an active observer.

Mr. van den Beemt provided background regarding the Liberty Road Recreation Council – refund issue. Information was distributed to board members, via email, prior to the meeting and Ms. Davis provided additional background information. Ms. Davis stated that the president said he would issue a refund and has not. Mr. Williams stated that he has had conversations with Councilman Jones to get a representative from his district appointed to the board. He will contact him again. This representative is needed and could assist with this issue. Mr. Williams will follow up with Mr. van den Beemt.

Mr. Weir reported that he sat down with the president of the Back River Recreation Council, regarding reports of theft, and was told charges have been filed against the treasurer. Mr. Munzert replied stating that the council has someone to take over as treasurer. Discussion ensued regarding financial procedures. Mr. Weir and Mr. Munzert plan to attend the council meeting on Wednesday night.

Mr. van den Beemt discussed the email he received regarding the Greater Loch Raven Recreation Council. He stated that this is the second email he has received like this, with regard to this council. He referenced the law regarding the 1099's and stated that this is not our rule, it is a law. He plans to contact the council president to see what the issue is.

Mr. Milani inquired about building access for volunteers. Brief discussion ensued and Mr. Williams replied stating that this is a liability issue. Mr. Williams stated that we cannot give volunteers keys to our buildings.

Mr. van den Beemt asked board members to remember recertification when talking to the councils. He encouraged them to reference issues, such as theft within a council, which would be revealed during a financial review.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Mr. Munzert moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Hiebler seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Liupaeter