

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

ERIC VAN DEN BEEMT, CHAIRMAN

Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, November 8, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. at the Department of Recreation and Parks administrative offices, Cockeysville, Maryland. In attendance were Eric van den Beemt, chairman, Chuck Munzert, vice chairman; board members Mike Milani, Leslie Monfred, Brian Weir, Chip Hiebler and Dylan Sloan. Recreation and Parks department staff included Barry F. Williams, director, Kara Burman, acting chief, Recreation Services and Mike Schneider, community outreach liaison.

Call to Order:

Chairman Eric van den Beemt called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He apologized for missing last month's meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

Chip Hiebler motioned to approve the October board meeting minutes, Vice Chairman Chuck Munzert seconded, and all were in favor.

Board Member Activities:

Mike Milani reported that Catonsville Recreation Council continues to do better; however, they are requesting clarification on priority use of the stadium field at CCBC – Catonsville. Mr. Milani directed the council to contact Kara Burman. In addition, he announced that it is a big weekend for Mid Maryland Youth Football League, and stated there are several Baltimore County teams involved.

Brian Weir thanked all who helped out with the recent situation at Cox's Point Park [Property Management winterized the facilities at this site, despite being told the Haunted Hallows program was taking place]. Mr. Weir stated, in the future, maybe the Board could take action and tell Property Management not to winterize anything until after the completion of programming. In addition, Mr. Weir reported that he received a call tonight [while on his way to the meeting] about a church group working through Colgate Recreation Council, which held a block party and closed off the street. The group also had bounce houses again, which they have been told are not permitted. Mr. Weir stated that he would contact Fritz Fertig to check on this. Regarding winterization, Director Barry F. Williams replied stating that Property Management would push the date back to November 1 next year, but commented that this is still not adequate for special events/programming. Mr. Williams stated that staff have met with Property Management early on, but the past couple of years, winterization has gotten earlier and earlier. Mr. van den Beemt replied stating that the Board made a big deal about the difficulties/multitude of issues regarding Property Management [at the dinner meeting with the Baltimore County Council] and inquired about whether or not anything was heard/done. Discussion ensued regarding the issues with Property Management, with board members making reference to the way things used to operate when maintenance was part of Recreation and Parks. Mr. Milani stated that the time to act is now; people need to let those running for office know what the citizens of Baltimore County want.

Leslie Monfred announced her attendance at the kick-off event for Councilwoman Vicki Almond, stating that it was a great time with lots of energy in the room.

Mr. van den Beemt informed board members that he recently spent some time at Oregon Ridge, and would discuss under “New Business.”

Director’s Comments:

Mr. Williams reported on the partnership with the public library, regarding the organization of panels at Sollers Point. He informed board members that former president Bill Clinton came to speak to folks. Discussion ensued with Mr. Williams stating this was a good event. He attended along with interim superintendent Verletta White. Mr. Hiebler was also in attendance.

Mr. Williams announced that many have approached him about Pickleball. He reported that we will have 10 sites with Pickleball courts, which will cost ~\$20,000. Discussion ensued with Mr. Williams recognizing this as a great opportunity for generational play, further stating that he is very excited about this.

Old Business:

Regarding recertification, Mr. Milani reviewed paperwork for Arbutus, Baltimore Highlands and Banneker Councils. See item under “Action.”

Mr. Munzert recently attended the Middle River Recreation Council meeting and reported that two programs from Back River Recreation Council changed their mind regarding the move: Sandalwood Golden Age and softball. The Sandalwood Golden Age program decided to meet somewhere else, and the softball program disbanded. A check was written to those programs for the money each had. Mr. Munzert stated that the Back River account will remain open until Ballestone becomes a separate council. He reported that all programs seemed to be happy. In addition, Mr. Munzert reported that the court hearing, regarding restitution, is scheduled for November 15; he was summonsed to attend. He stated that they need to make sure the restitution goes to Middle River Recreation Council. The council agreed, that after a year, whatever money comes in from restitution will be divided amongst the programs formerly with Back River.

At the July board meeting, Mr. Hiebler discussed his concern regarding the proposed revisions to the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council By-Laws (Article 10, Section 3, regarding the number of officers signing checks – for up to \$1,000). Mr. van den Beemt reported that he notified the council of the board’s directive to decrease the amount to \$500. He stated that the council agreed to decrease the amount to \$500, which is what it was before. See item under “Action.”

New Business:

Mr. Munzert reported on complaints [that would be directed to Bengies-Chase Recreation Council] regarding a parent who is a child sex offender, and is assisting the team. Parents are upset with the coach for not telling them anything. Discussion ensued. Ms. Monfred stated that any volunteer assisting a team MUST complete the background check. Mr. Munzert stated that the coach has not addressed the individual. Ms. Burman stated that this is the first time we are hearing that the parent assists the team. Mr. Munzert reported that the parents stated that the individual assists the team; however, Mr. Munzert was at a game and witnessed the individual watching the game as a spectator. However, the coach told Mr. Munzert that the individual does assist the team. Lengthy discussion ensued about the situation, and the background check policy. Ms. Monfred inquired about whether or not SSCI could send an email reminding volunteers to re-apply. She stated that she believes this was discussed while Beahta Davis was still here. Mr. Weir stated that a change was made allowing the background check to remain good for one year, instead of having to re-apply each season. Mr. Williams stated that he would look into this.

Mr. Munzert discussed the situation at Hawthorne Park, stating that the police average 5-6 calls to this site, per week. This issue was discussed with the civic association and a vote was taken to shut down the use of the

basketball courts. Ms. Burman replied stating that she believes this site was placed on a 30-day monitoring period, as per the directive, and briefly discussed the next steps. Mr. Munzert stated that there was a facility where kids could play basketball on Friday nights, and reported that there is talk about trying to get this running again. There are ~50-60 people at Hawthorne Park on any given night, resulting in issues such as drugs and parking.

Mr. Munzert reported that several Eastern Area presidents got together to look at seasonal sports, in an attempt to change the name of the program and avoid paying group leadership fees.

Mr. van den Beemt reported on a situation where a program has turned into non-council teams. This happens often where a program is made up of recreation council and non-recreation council teams, and causes an issue regarding the pecking order for use of fields/facilities. Mr. Williams and Ms. Burman reported that they are seeing this more and more. Mr. van den Beemt stated that Steve Cammarata, from the Central Maryland Soccer Association, emailed him stating he has an issue with another league in Baltimore County (Eastern Developmental Program Soccer) that is not paying referees by check, as they should be. It was stated that this is not a program of a recreation council; Mr. Cammarata is losing his pool of referees because they are going elsewhere where they can get paid in cash. Board members discussed past discussion regarding best practices, and not paying by cash on the field. Lengthy discussion ensued. Mr. Munzert stated that Mr. Cammarata is making the board aware that they made him follow the rules and others are not. Mr. van den Beemt stated that Baltimore County does not require councils to use RefPay, but has advised councils, for best practices, to do so.

As stated earlier, Mr. van den Beemt spent some time with members of the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council. During this time, they discussed the inaugural Nikki Perlow Foundation Forest of Hope project at Oregon Ridge Park. This is an outdoor art installation project that celebrates life and recovery from addiction. The group was given permission to conduct this event; however, the council was opposed. Mr. van den Beemt stated that many were upset that the event was allowed to happen. The council stated that they were not told about this; however, the department stated that they were. Mr. Williams stated that the County Executive gave the recommendation for the event. The paint used, would not hurt the trees, and a resident artist worked with the group. In addition, there are interpretive signs at each of the painted trees. Mr. van den Beemt relayed that most visitors surveyed had no opinion or did not like the painted trees, but none knew what it was for. Mr. Williams replied stating that the council was advised, and received literature. In addition, the event was widely publicized. He believes the council encouraged people to complain, without even seeing the paintings. In addition, Mr. Williams stated that the council president belongs to the foundation. He stated the council admitted that they were told, but stated they did not know the extent of the project. Mr. van den Beemt shared his conversation with Mr. Williams. He further stated that he recognizes that there were people unhappy with this, and said that we would never intentionally injure trees nor the partnership with the council. Mr. Williams stated that the council president wanted to meet with him. He agreed to meet, not with the entire group, but rather one-on-one. Mr. Williams reported that Chris McCollum informed him that many liked the painted trees.

Mr. van den Beemt informed board members that the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council was trying to convert the library to a meeting/workshop room, but were told that it would cost ~\$72,000. This was a quote from Property Management. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Weir announced that he received pictures again, from the PTA at Battle Grove Elementary School, of fields under water at North Point Village Park. This has been going on for two years; work orders have been submitted, but nothing has been taken care of.

Action:

Board members reviewed recertification paperwork for Arbutus, Baltimore Highlands and Banneker Councils. Mr. Milani motioned to recertify these councils; Mr. Hiebler seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Mr. Hiebler motioned to approve the proposed revisions to the Oregon Ridge Nature Council By-Laws. Mr. Munzert seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Hiebler moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Munzert seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Winters