

Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
October 25, 2006
Unapproved Minutes

Members Present: Chairman Tom Ronaghan, Judy Baker, Gary Davis, Vince DePalmer, Jody Ledford, Art Nelligan, Kevin Null, Sue Podobnik, Jim Rodriguez

Members Excused: Earl Hersh, Tom Hersh

Ex-Officio Member Present: Jeff Degitz

Department Staff Present: Brad Rogers, Bruce Dutterer, Barbara Lages, Bill Schaefer, Melissa Boyle, Loren Lustig and Sandy Buterbaugh.

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met on October 25, 2006, at Piney Run Park Nature Center. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chairman Tom Ronaghan.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The September Minutes were unanimously approved with a motion by Judy Baker and seconded by Jody Ledford.

UPDATES/ISSUES:

Jeff Degitz provided the following updates:

Annual Volunteer of the Year Event – This event will be held on Thursday, November 2, at 7:30 p.m. in the Carroll Arts Center; all three County Commissioners plan to attend.

Recreation Council Consolidation – Since the consolidation of New Windsor and Union Bridge Recreation Councils awhile back, the Department is now considering possible consolidation of Sandymount and Deer Park Recreation Councils. While there has been discussion with some council members about the proposal, a meeting will be held with both councils in the next couple of months for discussion.

Sports Complex – There are two cell phone towers located at the Complex that generate \$30,000 per year in revenue. One of the vendors has a year left on their contract and wants to renegotiate for a slightly lesser amount. While all revenue goes into the County's General Fund, it is credited to the Department and used as justification for budget requests, so the impact of any reduction will need to be considered. Mr. DePalmer requested cutting back the grass to first and third bases and behind the catcher on Field 5 to accommodate the Senior Softball program, and provide safety for the base runners who are between 60 and 80 years of age. Gary Davis who is with the Maryland Star Softball program volunteered his group to help with these improvements.

FY 2008 CAPITAL BUDGET PRIORITIES:

Mr. Degitz advised that the Department’s Budget Analyst has requested that the FY 08 proposed Capital Projects be prioritized in the event that Program Open Space is not fully funded. The following draft was presented to the Board for review and discussion.

- DRAFT -

FY 2008 CAPITAL BUDGET

PRIORITIES

1.	Middlebrooke Trail	\$ 130,000
2.	Westminster Community Pond Renovations	\$ 392,325
3.	Double Pipe Creek Park	\$ 100,000
4.	Deer Park Practice Field	\$ 110,000
5.	Park Restoration	\$ 62,000
6.	Piney Run Tennis Courts Resurfacing	\$ 97,000
7.	Tot Lot Replacement	\$ 45,000
8.	Freedom Park Shelter/Play Equipment	\$ 62,000
9.	Piney Run Nature Center Additions	\$ 191,000
	Land Acquisition	\$1,000,000

- Although the Middlebrooke Trail would be the first trail project that takes you from point A to point B, the Board felt that the Westminster Community Pond Renovations project should be the top priority because of its poor condition, the planned addition of trails, and the need to address the safety issue with the entrance road.
- Projects to maintain and renovate existing facilities were considered very important and recommended for high priorities.
- Other discussion recommended Double Pipe Creek Park stay a high priority because there are no other parks in this area of the County and the work can be done quickly to provide a recreation facility for this community.
- Park Restoration project includes trail paving at Hashawha, improvements to Piney Run gatehouse and boathouse, Bennett Cerf Park renovations and Cape Horn Park field renovations.
- Deer Park Practice Field has been in the CIP for several years now as well as Piney Run Nature Center addition. Some issues, however, need to be addressed with the Piney Run project. When first proposed, the addition estimate was \$91,000, but now it’s increased to \$191,000 and may also require the addition of a bathroom.
- Mr. DePalmer felt that the Nature Center project should be a higher priority because the cost will only get higher. Jeff advised that staff will need to determine exactly what is needed and then determine if it can be accomplished with the funds available.

Judy Baker made a motion to reverse Priorities 1 and 2 as listed in the Draft of Priorities, making Westminster Community Pond Renovations Priority 1 and Middlebrooke Trail Priority 2, and leave priorities 3 through 9 as shown. The motion was seconded by Art Nelligan and unanimously approved.

HASHAWHA/BEAR BRANCH UPDATE:

Melissa Boyle, Manager, informed the Board about the wetlands classroom that will be completed in November. Barn space was turned into a 25' x 25' accessible classroom facility with electric, heat and a living laboratory. The project has been an idea for at least 10 years and was established by the Francesca Borelli Environmental Fund with Friends of Hashawha Advisory Council. The grand opening is expected late April. Melissa invited the Board to tour the facility during its March meeting. She also reported that Hashawha's 30-year anniversary celebration is being planned and will be held in March or April.

HAP BAKER FIREARMS FACILITY UPDATE:

Brad Rogers, Bureau Chief of Parks, reported that the facility is very popular and well-used. During hunting season, people are 4 to 5 deep waiting in line. October is the busiest month with attendance of 1,500. The facility has a 10-lane, 25-200 yard rifle range and a 9-lane, 5-17 yard pistol range. Staff will be reconstructing some of the baffles in the next few months.

ANNUAL REPORT:

Mr. Degitz presented the Department's 2006 Annual Report and advised that it is also on the Department's website. The report provides a good summary of what the Department is doing and highlights the volunteer recreation councils and the amount of volunteer hours contributed toward programs, and funds raised and spent by the councils.

RECOGNITION OF BOARD MEMBERS:

Plaques were presented to Judy Baker and Art Nelligan in recognition of their service on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board from 1999 – 2006. Earl Hersh was unable to attend the meeting, but was also recognized for his service 1999-2006.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Barbara Lages announced that Bill Schaefer, Recreation Supervisor, will be retiring at the end of the year and a dinner will be held at the Westminster Riding Club on December 28th in his honor. She also reported that the Customer Service Surveys have been distributed and will be collected until December 31st.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m. with a motion by Sue Podobnik, seconded by Judy Baker.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Degitz, Director

Darlene Rohrbaugh, Secretary