

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting**  
**February 28, 2007**  
**Unapproved Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chairman Tom Ronaghan, Gary Davis, Vince DePalmer, Tom Hersh, Jody Ledford, Kevin Null, Sue Podobnik, Jim Rodriguez

**Ex-Officio Member Present:** Jeff Degitz

**Department Staff Present:** Bruce Dutterer, Barbara Lages, Melissa Boyle

**Guests:** See Addendum #1

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met on February 28, 2007 in the Public Meeting Room of the County Office Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Tom Ronaghan.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The October Minutes were unanimously approved with a motion by Sue Podobnik and second by Jody Ledford.

**UPDATES/ISSUES:**

Jeff Degitz provided the following updates:

**Customer Service Survey Results** – The survey results were handed out to the Board for review at their leisure (Addendum #2). These results were presented to the Board of Commissioners in January. Mr. Degitz reported that there were good responses from the recreation councils, the community recreation programs have been well received, and requests were made for more athletic facilities, trails and passive recreation facilities.

**Fire at Hap Baker Firearms Facility** – The fire on February 9 completely destroyed the rifle range but did not damage the pistol range. The goal is to reopen the pistol range in the next few weeks and rebuild the rifle range as soon as possible, once the insurance process has been completed.

**Community Investment Program (CIP)** – Revenue estimates for Program Open Space funds and Impact Fees, especially, are going down which will impact Recreation and Parks projects proposed in the 5-year plan. Projections indicate that the proposed plan is \$3.5M over expected revenues.

**Off Highway Vehicles (OHV):** An email letter was shared with the Board from Goodwin O’Neal, a Sykesville resident, requesting the Board consider establishing a public riding area for OHV’s. Mr. Degitz advised Mr. O’Neal that a future request would need to be proposed to the Board, and because of budget constraints he wanted to discuss the request with the Board at this meeting. It was agreed to invite Mr. O’Neal to the March Advisory Board meeting to present his proposal and the need for Mr. Degitz to explain the expected future funding shortage.

## **SELF-HELP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS:**

**Equestrian Council** – Larry Balins presented a request to replace the 15-year old fencing and posts on the larger of the 2 riding rings (Ring #1) at the Equestrian Center. Fencing was replaced in January on the smaller ring entirely with the Council's funds and labor. Council membership is growing and rental of the Center has increased. Events held at the Equestrian Center are the Council's main source of revenue. Total Cost: \$4,025; County funds - \$3,060.75; Council contribution - \$964.25 and 24 volunteer hours.

**Charles Carroll** – Robert Brown, representing Charles Carroll Elementary School PTA, presented a request for the third phase of play equipment at the elementary school to accommodate older students (grades 2-5). Phase I, completed in Spring 2004, consisted of a replacement tot lot for pre-kindergarten through grade 2 and was fully funded by the PTA. Phase II which consisted of fencing to separate the playground area from the parking lot and a wooded area was installed in Summer 2004 and funded by Carroll County Public Schools. The upgrades are expected to benefit the Union Mills and Silver Run community and is supported by Charles Carroll Recreation Council. The PTA currently has \$13,000 toward the project. Total cost: \$28,773.42; County funds - \$15,000; PTA funds - \$13,773.42. Mr. Rodriguez asked that Mr. Brown contact the Board of Education's Risk Management Department to ensure that they have no insurance coverage issues with the climbing wall part of the play equipment.

**Freedom Area** – Andy Roberts presented two project requests:

- Equipment for use by the Freedom Cloud Dancers Special Needs Event. This program (similar to the Special Olympics) currently has 11 participants and holds one event each year; however, they hope to expand the number of participants and number of events in the future. The equipment requested will enhance the program's reach to special needs children. Currently the Recreation Council has to borrow equipment from Robert Moton Elementary School and hope that it will be available. The Council plans to hold future Special Needs Events at the new South Carroll Community Center gymnasium and will set up this equipment at that facility. Total Cost: \$697.95; County funds - \$523.46; Council funds - \$174.49.
- Purchase and spread new stone dust behind the backstops, player benches and safety fences on all softball/baseball fields at Freedom Park. Existing stone has deteriorated over the years resulting in safety issues and a large area that collects and holds water. Total cost: \$1,500; County funds - \$1,177.50; Council contribution - \$322.50 and 30 volunteer hours.

**Friends of Hashawha/Bear Branch Advisory Council** – Melissa Boyle, Hashawha Manager, along with Mike Roland, Susan Bollinger, Steve Heacock and Niel Borrelli, presented a request to add an attached lean-to greenhouse to the side of the existing barn to serve as a "grow out" station for native plants that will be used for plant propagation and restoration projects. The greenhouse will be Phase II of the Wetlands Classroom project. Phase I, completed last year, converted the lower barn to a Wetlands Classroom that will be used by the Outdoor School Teachers and Bear Branch Nature Center Naturalists for teaching students in grades K-12 about wetlands, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The Classroom was funded in large part by the Francesca Borrelli Johnson Environmental Fund and Hashawha/Bear Branch Advisory Council. The greenhouse project will be maintained by the Outdoor School Teachers, Bear Branch Naturalists and volunteers, as well as children attending Outdoor School. The Borrelli Fund has committed \$5,000 to the project and the Carroll County Public Schools' Education Foundation, \$1,000. Total cost: \$20,810; County funds - \$15,525; Council contribution - \$5,285 and 300 volunteer hours.

**North Carroll Recreation Council** – Two project requests were presented by Vickie Beard:

- Purchase of a 10' x 16' storage shed with a garage type door for storing maintenance equipment used on the 3 softball fields at Hampstead Elementary School. It would be located behind Field A. The shed would be the same type as the one in Cape Horn Park and would provide more security and easier, continued upkeep and manicure of the fields. Total cost: \$2,800; County funds - \$2,110.50; Council contribution - \$689.50 and 6 volunteer hours.
- 55' batting cage that will be located behind the dugout at North Carroll High School softball field. It will serve as a safe warm-up area for both batters and pitchers and provide protection to the fans as well. Total cost: \$1,831.45; County funds - \$1,394.59; Council contribution - \$436.86 and 12 volunteer hours.

**West Carroll Recreation Council** – Brad Rockwood presented two project requests:

- Message board/kiosk at New Windsor Middle School to be mounted onto an existing storage shed located between the parking area and fields adjacent to Rt. 75. A message board at this location will provide an ideal place to post information about sports registrations and events for the public. Currently, the Council advertises through newsletters and the local newspaper which do not reach a large part of the population. With a message board, they will be able to keep updated themselves. Total cost: \$703; County funds - \$534.25; Council contribution - \$168.75 and 4 volunteer hours.
- Rugby goal posts for New Windsor Middle School lower field to accommodate players 12 years and older. This program is growing and the goal posts will allow for two games to be played safely at the same time. They can be used for soccer as well. Four steel sleeves and the concrete mix for the project will be donated. Total cost: \$2,654; County funds - \$2,030.75; Council contribution - \$623.25 and 23 volunteer hours.

**Westminster Area Recreation Council** – Three project requests were presented:

- Cathy Phillips, Director of the Carroll Gymnastics Center, presented a request for improvement of gymnastic equipment. The Gymnastics Center was located for many years at the County's Multi-Service Center but had to relocate to Four Seasons, Hampstead-Mexico Road, in Hampstead a few years ago. The gymnastics program, which serves preschool age children to adults, has experienced significant growth and new equipment is requested to assure the safety of the gymnasts and to replace damaged and deteriorating equipment. Equipment includes a balance beam, vault trainer, mats and other miscellaneous equipment. This equipment would become the property of the gymnastics program and, ultimately, Westminster Area Recreation Council. Total cost: \$10,164.50; County funds - \$7,623.38; Community funds - \$2,541.12.
- DeeAnne Weber, representing Westminster Elementary School PTO, presented a request for a new play structure that will be conducive for children of all ages attending the school and provide an opportunity to increase their physical activity level. Currently, there are limited community playgrounds in the area for older elementary-age children. The PTO has raised \$10,000 and expects to raise another \$4,500 by the end of the school year with fundraisers. Ms. Weber read a sample letter from many that had been written by students willing to donate their own money for the play equipment. Total Cost: \$29,500.58; County funds - \$15,000; PTO contribution - \$14,500.58.
- John Baugher, Assistant Principal, Winters Mill High School, presented a request for purchase and installation of a 5' high x 8'-10' wide illuminated, double-sided monument sign for advertising recreation council and school programs, as well as other community events. The sign would be located along Gorsuch Road. \$18,500 has been raised by the PTA, Athletic Boosters, Band Boosters and classes. No funds have

- been budgeted in the Board of Education’s capital budget. Ms. Podobnik asked which recreation council programs use Winters Mill High that would benefit from the sign. Mr. Baugher responded that it is currently used by cheerleading and the Titans baseball program. Wrestling has used the school in the past, but is now using Westminster High. Total Cost: \$34,620; County funds - \$15,000; Community funds - \$19,620.

Chairman Ronaghan reported that \$79,000 has been requested for the Self-Help projects and there is \$66,000 available. The Capital Budget Committee will meet to determine funding recommendations for the projects and present those recommendations to the Advisory Board at the March 28 meeting.

Chairman Ronaghan expressed appreciation to the volunteers and community members in attendance for everything they do for the County.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

The Nominating Committee (Kevin Null, Sue Podobnik and Jim Rodriguez) will meet to nominate a Vice Chair prior to the March meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. with a motion from Sue Podobnik and second by Jim Rodriguez.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeff Degitz, Director

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Darlene Rohrbaugh, Secretary

RECREATION AND PARK ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Agenda #1

Date: February 28, 2007

NAME

ADDRESS

Linda DiVerno 2590 Burness Ln, Finksburg MD 21048

Cathy Phillips 56 Savoir Drive Hanover PA 17331

Josiah Zentgraf 511 Burton Rd. Westminster, MD 21157

John Baughner 745 Holward Lane Westminster, MD 21158

Gandy Taylor 2105 Tulsa Rd. Eldersburg, MD 21784

Valee Gehr Dawson 4616 Gething Road Westminster, MD 21158

Robert Brown 1350 Green Meadow Lane Westminster MD 21158

Brad Rackwood 3881 Watson Lane Union Bridge 21791

Amy Roberts 2302 Harvest Farm Rd. Eldersburg, MD 21784

Ken Whalen - Freedom Pac 7110 Shrovet Rd, Sykesville, MD 21784

Moissa Cartilage - Westminster 89 Cypress Ct West MD 21158

Dee Ann Weber (West) 753 Sahara Drive Westminster, MD 21158

Shelly Vernon - (West) 331 Hilltop Drive Westminster, MD 21158

Jo Ann Riley Westminster, MD 21158

Wendy Steele (West) 930 Litchfield Circle Westminster, MD 21158

RECREATION AND PARK ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Date: 2/28/07

NAME

ADDRESS

Vickie Beard 4021 Schalk Rd #2, Manchester, MD 21102

JoAnn Zaleski 707 Redwood Dr. Westminster MD 21157

Therese Sharkey 600 Sadie Dr. Westminster MD 21158

Laurie Brewer 546 Willow Ave. Westminster Md 21157

Lynda Boluna 2000 Snowy Rd, Reisterstown MD 21136 (County)

Larry Bolund 2020 Emory Rd Reisterstown, MD 21136 (County)

Michael Roland 1250 Hughes Shp, Westminster, MD 21158

Meissa Boyle Haskawha Environmental Center

Steve Heacock Carroll Co. OUTDOOR school

M. SWAN BOWLING FRANCESCA BORELLI THOMSON WESTLANDS CLASSROOM @ HASKAWHA

Niel J. Borelli

Randana Hooy CC Rest Plus

Pam Skout FARE

## **ADDENDUM #2**

Department of Recreation & Parks

Customer Service Survey Project                      2006 – 2007

### Summary:

The Department of Recreation and Parks developed three customer service surveys in 2006 – one for each area of the Department including Parks and Facilities; Volunteer Recreation Councils and Community Recreation Programs. Surveys were distributed and collected between September 1 and December 31, 2006.

These surveys were developed with assistance and input from the Carroll Association of Recreation Councils and Department staff under the leadership of Recreation Supervisor Barbara Lages.

Surveys were distributed through a variety of channels including the following:

- Public libraries
- Park facilities
- Distribution to recreation council community coordinators
- Distributed by community service worker to park users
- Web Site
- Handouts to community recreation program and trip participants
- Mailed to randomly selected limited numbers of program participants

Total number of completed surveys submitted to Department of Recreation & Parks:

- 193 Park & Facility Surveys
- 167 Recreation Council Surveys
- 134 Community Recreation Program Surveys
  
- 494 Total Completed Surveys

## Park Facilities

Of the 193 completed surveys that were received, respondents had visited every one of our parks at least once except for Salt Box Park in Woodbine.

Of the total parks visited:

- 48% rated their experience as excellent
- 30% rated their experience as good
- 16% rated their experience as average
- 4% rated their experience as below average

83% felt the parks visited were clean, safe and attractive

83% rated the park's staff as helpful, courteous and knowledgeable

The most heavily visited sites included Piney Run Park, Freedom Park and Hashawha

Park visitation was equal during the spring, summer and fall and decreased during the winter

Weekday usage is fairly consistent from day to day although Monday is the lightest day

Saturdays and Sundays are the heaviest days for park usage

Individuals learned about the park from:

- |                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Brochures          | 33% |
| Word of mouth      | 27% |
| Newspaper/TV/Radio | 14% |
| Web Site           | 8%  |

Responses to the survey received from ages 9-86 with an average age of 47.

66% of respondents have children living at home, 34% did not

Top Reasons to Visit the Park:

1. Walk Trails
2. Nature appreciation
3. Take child to playground
4. Picnic
5. Use fields for sports

Suggestions for Improvements:

- Better train maintenance and signage
- Need more athletic fields
- Need more trails
- Improved bathrooms
- Bathrooms open year round
- More parking
- Westminster Community Pond needs new entrance
- Improve conditions of existing athletic fields

## Community Recreation Programs

Respondents received their programs guide through:

42% US mail  
31% newspaper  
14% library  
13% email

Respondents overall opinion of the guide:

43% excellent  
48% good  
6% average  
3% below average

### Overall Evaluation of Programs & Trips

#### Cost

43% Excellent  
50% Good  
7% Average  
0% Below Average

#### Registration Process

52% Excellent  
39% Good  
8% Average  
1% Below Average

#### Variety of Programs

41% Excellent  
48% Good  
8% Average  
2% Below Average

#### Class Locations

47% Excellent  
45% Good  
6% Average  
2% Below Average

### Trip Evaluations

#### Leader Knowledgeable

95% Yes                      5% No

#### Leader Helpful

91% Yes                      9% No

#### Trip was Safe

100% Yes                      0% No

#### Tickets/Arrangement

91% Yes                      9% No

Class Evaluations:

Instructor Prepared	98% Yes	2% No
Instructor Knowledgeable	98% Yes	2 %No
Material covered	98%	2% No
Facility Used	87% Yes	13% No

Age Range of Respondents: 53 years old

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Additional Comments:

Want Debit and credit card payments to be allowed  
Taneytown Area lacking in programs  
Poor movie selection during bus rides  
Some classes too short  
Room too small for class  
Separate registration form for trips

## Volunteer Recreation Councils

91% of respondents had children living at home

### Programs with the Highest Participation:

Soccer 78%  
Baseball 53%  
Basketball 52%  
Lacrosse 41%  
Softball 27%

### Ease in Obtaining Program Information

24% Excellent  
40% Good  
33% Average  
5% Below Average

### Program Costs

37% Excellent  
44% Good  
16% Average  
4% Below Average

### Quality of Instruction

50% Excellent  
36% Good  
14% Average  
0% Below Average

### Facilities

30% Excellent  
51% Good  
13% Average  
6% Below Average

### Variety of Programs

38% Excellent  
43% Good  
17% Average  
2% Below Average

Would you rather pay a higher registration fee and eliminate fund raisers:

52% Yes                      48% No

### Additional comments:

Where do fees go beyond uniform costs?

No trophies for clinic age groups

Some school principals make school usage difficult

Schools should mow outdoor fields more frequently

New to area and found it difficult to gather information

Need better website

Confusing communication between levels of volunteers & public