

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting**  
**March 28, 2007**  
**Approved Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chairman Tom Ronaghan, Gary Davis, Vince DePalmer, Jody Ledford, Sue Podobnik

**Members Excused:** Tom Hersh

**Members Absent:** Kevin Null, Jim Rodriguez

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

**Department Staff Present:** Melissa Boyle, Bruce Dutterer, Abby Gruber, Barbara Lages, Matt Purkins, Brad Rogers

**Guests:** Mr. Goodwin O'Neal

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met on March 28, 2007 at Hashawha Environmental Center. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chairman Ronaghan.

The Department's new Bureau Chief of Recreation, Abby Gruber, was introduced.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Jody Ledford motioned to approve the February Minutes, seconded by Gary Davis and unanimously approved.

**UPDATES/ISSUES:**

Jeff Degitz provided the following updates:

**Fee increases** – Jeff will be meeting with the Board of Commissioners regarding proposed fee increases at Piney Run, Sports Complex and Hashawha. Fees have not been raised since 2004. The Board reviewed a Summary of Expenditures and Revenues for Recreation & Park Facilities (Addendum #1) since 2004 showing the increase in operating costs that has resulted in these facilities becoming less self-sustaining (from 86% in FY2004 to 73% in FY2008 with current fees). The proposed increases expect to bring revenues back up to 80% in FY2008. The Department's intent is to strike a balance between the ability to be 100% self-sustaining and remaining competitive with other facilities, and keeping it affordable for the citizens, so the proposed increases will be modest: Piney Run daily entrance fee from \$4 to \$5 per person, season passes from \$20 to \$30 and pavilion rentals that currently range from \$75 to \$100 will be \$100 to \$150, depending on pavilion size; Sports Complex field rental from \$15 to \$17 per game. Senior Softball and recreation council youth program fees will continue to be waived. Department staff compared fees of nearby facilities including Patapsco State Park, Codorus State Park, Cascade Lake and Centennial Park and we continue to have the lowest rates. If approved, the new fees would become effective at Piney Run on opening day, April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Cape Horn Ballfields** – Some funds will be allocated to redo the fields, one field this spring, one in the fall and one the following year. These improvements will be coordinated with North Carroll Recreation Council.

**Krimgold Park** – The County’s SAC review meeting was recently held and attended by citizens expressing the same concerns made at the public meeting, which includes traffic issues, noise, vandalism and impact on wells. Mr. Degitz advised that the Department is planning another public meeting before the April 17 Planning Commission reviews the project.

**Community Investment Program (CIP)** – The Department of Management & Budget is trying to balance the amount of anticipated revenue with the proposed projects. Impact fees have dropped and, although Program Open Space funds will be fully funded in FY 2008, it is unknown whether that will continue in future years. Projects proposed in FY 08 by the Advisory Board remain unchanged. Projects that have been removed by Management & Budget in future years include: Little Pipe Creek Trail, Sandymount Gym, West Carroll Regional Park, Bennett Cerf Park Trail, and Dog Park. Program Open Space funds are available in the event land should become available in the areas identified for future parks. Mr. Degitz has advised Management & Budget that if additional funds become available, we want some of these projects put back in the CIP and not in year six of the plan.

**Hashawha 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** – A celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Hashawha Environmental Center will be held April 7 from 12- 4 p.m.

**DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC RIDING AREA FOR OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES:**

Mr. Goodwin O’Neal, a resident of Sykesville, presented a request to establish a public riding area for off-highway vehicles (OHV’s) which include motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles. Many families have bought land and moved to the County to have a place of their own to ride their OHV’s, but with the current noise ordinance, they can be fined \$250 if anyone makes a complaint, even though they are riding on their own property.

Mr. O’Neal provided information on Pocomoke and Green Ridge trails that are three hours away and are basically flat, dirt roads. Green Ridge’s assistant manager advised that a \$15 fee is charged for a sticker that permits riding on the trails; however, that may increase to stay competitive with Pennsylvania’s \$25 fee. Green Ridge issues 2,600 stickers per year and Pocomoke, 1,000. The assistant manager feels that several tracks are needed across the State to keep riders interested and agreed to be a contact for additional information. Mr. O’Neal explained that 66 acres would be needed for a deluxe track, but it could be as small as 20 plus a buffer area. With natural terrain, maintenance would be low cost and could be done with the help of the users.

Chairman Ronaghan advised that if suitable land is found in the future that lends itself to this kind of facility, the Board will certainly consider a motor cross track; however, with the budget situation, a commitment can’t be made at this time. Mr. DePalmer suggested that Mr. O’Neal work on developing a motor cross plan.

**CAPITAL COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Chairman Ronaghan reported that the committee recommends funding all the Self-Help project requests presented in February, with the exception of the sign for Winters Mill High School, for a total of \$63,980 in County funds. (Addendum #2) The \$2,203 balance of available Self-Help funds would be added to next year’s allocation.

Sue Podobnik made a motion to accept the Committee’s recommendations. Gary Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Ms. Podobnik reported that she was nominated for Vice Chair by the committee. With no other nominations from the floor, Mr. Davis motioned that the nominations be closed, seconded by Mr. Ronaghan and unanimously approved.

**MEMBER'S COMMENTS:**

Mr. DePalmer brought up for discussion an issue with North Carroll Recreation Council and a Shiloh Middle School ballfield. Mr. Degitz reported that the field has never been playable and a community group invested money improving it and, then got permission to use it. A year or two later, North Carroll Recreation Council requested to use this field, but the school, with Dr. Ecker's approval, let the group who had improved the field continue to have use of it. The Board of Education stated that this program is sponsored by the PTA so it is now considered a school program, giving it first priority use of the field. Dr. Ecker has met with the North Carroll Recreation Council's Executive Board to work through this issue. Mr. Davis suggested a meeting with Dr. Ecker and the Board of Education to discuss the issue and the need for consistency with the Use of Facility Policy. Mr. DePalmer expressed the importance of the Recreation & Parks Advisory Board supporting the recreation council system and asked that Mr. Degitz take this into consideration in discussions with the Board of Education.

Mr. Davis advised that the question has come up from PTA's as to who is responsible for maintenance of playgrounds located on school property. Mr. Degitz advised that the schools are responsible, but because of liability issues, they usually do not want to make repairs and want to replace the equipment.

Discussion followed on the use of the new North Carroll Community Center. Mr. DePalmer has observed that it appears to be closed by 6 p.m. and feels it should be used more by the community. He would like to see programs for youth ages 20 and under. Mr. Degitz explained that the original plan for the new Ebb Valley Elementary was to have a community gym, but it was decided that a better location would be at the planned new North Carroll Senior Center which was to be built at another location. That opportunity was lost, however, when the decision was made to locate the senior center at the old Ames Building. Mr. Degitz reported that the Bureau of Aging has renamed all the centers to "senior and community centers". He advised that some of the department programs are using the North Carroll Community Center and it is also available to North Carroll Recreation Council for their programs, just not any undeveloped space in the building. Mr. DePalmer felt that North Carroll's Community Center should have a staff person like South Carroll's Community Center will have. Mr. Degitz responded that he doesn't anticipate the volume at North Carroll that will be at South Carroll, but keys to the building could be given to the Council's Program Coordinators. He is hopeful that the gym will be built at Leister Park.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m. followed by a tour of the new Wetlands Classroom.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeff Degitz, Director

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Darlene Rohrbaugh, Secretary

**ADDENDUM #1**

**Summary of Expenditures & Revenues for Recreation & Parks Facilities**

	<b>Approved Operating Budgets</b> (Piney Run, Hashawha & Sports Complex)	<b>Revenues Collected</b> (Piney Run, Hashawha & Sports Complex)	<b>Percentage of Operations Self Sustaining</b>
FY 2004	\$1,052,621	\$908,711	86%
FY2005	\$1,119,727	\$914,992	82%
FY2006	\$1,243,790	\$986,117	79%
FY2007	\$1,293,620	\$986,117 (anticipated with current fees)	76%
FY2008	\$1,353,830	\$986,117(anticipated without fee increases)	73%
FY2008	\$1,353,830	\$1,076,972	80%

**Why do our proposed fee increases only bring us back up to 80% self sustaining at the three facilities?**

We are trying to minimize the effects of these fee increases on the public and also must remain competitive with similar facilities. At the same time, these increases have become necessary as the cost of operating the park has risen considerably in the past four years. We will continue to review our operations for cost saving measures on an ongoing basis as we are committed to operating these facilities with as little burden on the taxpayers as possible

## **ADDENDUM #2**

**RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD**  
**OPERATING/CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**March 20, 2007**

Members in Attendance: Tom Ronaghan, Jody Ledford,  
Members Excused: Gary Davis, Vince DePalmer, Kevin Null, Sue Podobnik  
Staff Present: Jeff Degitz, Bruce Dutterer

The Capital Budget Committee met on March 20, 2007, at 4:00 p.m., in the Recreation and Parks office, to review Self-Help project requests presented at the February 28 Advisory Board meeting and determine recommendations for funding. The County's available funds are \$66,183; requests total \$78,980.

Tom Ronaghan and Jody Ledford both felt that Westminster Area Recreation Council's request from Winters Mill High School for \$15,000 for a monument sign to advertise school and community programs/events would be of little benefit to the community. Mr. Degitz advised that, via an email received from Kevin Null and a phone call to Gary Davis, both committee members had the same opinion and recommended eliminating this request. There would then be enough funds available to fund all of the other requests.

The request for gymnastics equipment for the Carroll Gymnastics Center program was also discussed due to a concern in the past regarding the use of Self-Help funds to purchase equipment. Self-Help funds have been approved for some types of equipment, such as goal posts, but not small items like bats and balls. The policy for any equipment purchased through the Self-Help program is that it must stay within the recreation council, in the County. Some of the equipment requested by the Gymnastics Center will be add-ons to existing equipment that was previously purchased with Self-Help funds.

A motion was made by Tom Ronaghan to accept all of the recreation council project requests, as presented, with the exception of the Winters Mill High School sign. The motion was seconded by Jody Ledford. The Committee's recommendation will be presented to the Board at the March 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The 11 project requests recommended for approval total \$63,980 in County funds which would leave a balance of \$2,203 in the Self-Help fund.

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene Rohrbaugh, Secretary