

Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
September 26, 2007

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Jody Ledford, Chair, Vince DePalmer, Colin Furneaux, Kevin Null, Hernán Padilla, Sue Podobnik, Tom Ronaghan,

Members Excused: Gary Davis, Tom Hersh, Jim Rodriguez, Bobbi Tucker

Staff Present: Bruce Dutterer, Barbara Lages

Guests Present: Wind O'Neal, Motocross Council; Recreation Council representatives: Geoff Rice, North Carroll; Tony Chiavacci and Mark Ruby, Westminster Area; Denise Khouri, Ed Suddath, Andy Roberts, Pam Short, Ken Whalen, Freedom Area; Sandy Oxx, Arts Council.

Ex-Officio Member Present: Jeff Degitz

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met on September 26, 2007, in Room 003 of the County Office Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairperson Jody Ledford.

Recent appointee to the Board, Mr. Hernán Padilla, was introduced. Ms. Bobbi Tucker has also been appointed and fills the last remaining vacancy. She will attend her first meeting next month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The July Minutes were unanimously approved with a motion from Tom Ronaghan, second by Sue Podobnik.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- **Hap Baker Firearms Facility** - Reconstruction of the rifle range is nearing completion. A re-opening ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday, October 9 at 9 a.m.; Board members are invited to attend.
- **Cape Horn Field Improvements** – Contractor is on site and working on fields #1 and #2; these fields will remain closed for about 1 year after renovations are completed.
- **Middlebrook Trail** – A public meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 22, 7 a.m., in the Westminster Senior & Community Center. The Homeowners' Association has been notified. This trail will be the Department's first linear trail.
- **Renovations to Parks** – New playground, swings and pavilion have been ordered for Westminster Community Pond; new playground for the Sports Complex; and new swings and single table pavilions for Freedom Park.
- **Monarch Madness** took place at Bear Branch Nature Center last weekend with an estimated 1,000 people attending.
- **Apple Festival** will be held this Saturday at Piney Run Park.

SELF-HELP PROJECT REQUESTS:

Westminster Area Recreation Council – Tony Chiavacci presented two requests:

- **Park Sign for Landon C. Burns Park**

Since the new entrance to the Ag Center has been constructed, the entrance to Burns Park has also changed. The current entrance will be closed during the winter and the new sign will be placed at the new location. The existing sign is in poor condition and cannot be moved. Total project cost: \$1,550; Council contribution - \$387; County - \$1,163.

- **Equipment Storage Box & Equipment**

Westminster Area Lacrosse Program requests a 60”x24”x24” storage chest to store uniforms, equipment and field maintenance items that will be installed at East Middle School; 2 sets of practice goals, goal nets and 2 portable Wall Ball practice stands to be used at East Middle, and Friendship Valley Elementary. Currently, the program uses a storage building at the City of Westminster’s Dutterer Park. Beginning its sixth season, the lacrosse program has grown to 500 participants. Total project cost: \$1,566; Council contribution - \$391.50; County = \$1,174.50.

North Carroll Recreation Council – Geoff Price presented two requests for improvements at the Town of Manchester’s Christmas Tree Park fields. The Town supports these projects:

- **Press Box**

Construct a 16’x24’ press box for the football program that will allow storage on the first level and the press box on the second for announcing and filming games. Since the building will be wood with vinyl siding, security concerns were raised. Mr. Price explained that a block building or a pod type container would be much more expensive due to the cost of the foundation since the site is not on a level area. Recreation Council volunteers will construct the building and the Town has offered assistance. Total project cost: \$7,797; Council contribution - \$1,501.25 and 256 volunteer hours; County - \$6,295.75.

- **Bleachers**

Two 5-row, 50 seat bleachers and 3 concrete pads are requested that will allow shared use for football and baseball during their seasons. The existing bleachers have to be moved from field to field, season by season. Total project cost: \$7,256; Council contribution - \$1,793 and 12 volunteer hours; County - \$5,463.

Freedom Area Recreation Council-Liberty High School Athletic Boosters – Ed Suddath presented two separate requests for replacement of backstop fencing at Liberty High School’s softball and baseball fields:

- **Replace backstop and sideline fencing for the softball and baseball fields**

on Route 32 side of the school property that has been in place since the school opened in 1981. In addition to use by the school’s athletic program, these fields are used extensively by the community. Approximately 548 games and practices take place each year on the softball and baseball fields with teams from the community, not Liberty High School. Photographs were viewed of the fencing’s deterioration with rusting and damaged areas.

The Principal's comments stated that replacement fencing is a priority for the school and community that utilizes the fields due to appearance and safety concerns for players. He stated that the backstop replacements were presented to Carroll County Public Schools for funding; however, funding is not available at this time, and that the ability for the Boosters to work with Recreation & Parks to secure funding for these projects before the Spring season is crucial in providing a safe structure for community users and the school's athletes. Total project cost for *each* project: \$11,925; Council contributions - \$2,981.25; County - \$8,943.75.

Lengthy discussion followed regarding the school's maintenance responsibilities. Board members strongly voiced concern about the idea that Recreation & Parks should take full responsibility for a school liability issue. Mr. Furneaux requested data on percentage of field use by the school and community. Mr. Suddath, with the Boosters, will research and send the information to the Department. Ms. Podobnik stressed that the keyword in this issue is "shared" and also that the Board of Education should be concerned about possible injuries to the players.

Mr. Null asked about the status of the plan that had been discussed by the Board to work with the Board of Education to revamp the Joint Use Agreement. Mr. Degitz reported that the School Use Guidelines have been reviewed with them and there are ongoing discussions.

Freedom Area Recreation Council – Andy Roberts presented two requests for improvements at Hodges Park:

- **Install two concrete pads on Field #2**
Softball field #2 was developed with previous Self-Help funds. To complete this field, (2) 12'x37' concrete pads are needed around the players' benches. Currently, when it rains, the bench areas fill with water and remain muddy for a long time. Total project cost: \$2,600; Council contribution - \$650; County - \$1,950.
- **Bleachers for softball fields**
(4) 3-row, 15' bleachers are requested on two softball fields. Each will seat 30 people. With the amount of use on the fields, the bleachers will provide seating for parents, spectators and other teams waiting to use the fields. Total project cost: \$3,107; Council contribution - \$776.75; County - \$2,330.25.

Carroll County Arts Council –

- Sandy Oxx requested funds to soundproof the Community Gallery located on the second floor of the Carroll Arts Center so that it can be used for rehearsals and classes while the theatre is also in use. Because of the sound "spill over", both facilities can't be used at the same time. In addition, the lack of cushioning on the floor causes lights to blow out from the movement during dance classes. The cushioning and soundproofing were not done during the initial construction of the Center. This room was unfinished when the facility opened nearly 5 years ago, but was finished by a donor a year later. Ms. Oxx explained that it was felt that the project was better suited for a professional rather than volunteers. Labor is included in the project request. Mr. Padilla asked if other facilities that may have used the recommended materials can be researched. Staff may also be able to check out

other materials as well. Total project cost: \$12,696; Council contribution - \$3,174; County - \$9,522.

Ms. Ledford thanked everyone for coming out and making the effort for their communities.

Mr. Degitz explained that the requests will go to the Capital Committee for recommendations and voted on by the full Board at their October meeting and, then, to the County Commissioners for their recommendation. The process should be completed by mid-November. \$60,000 is available for Self-Help projects this fiscal year and the projects requested tonight total \$45,787 in County funds.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Barbara Lages announced that the Annual Volunteer of the Year event will be held, November 8th, at 7:30 p.m., at Bear Branch Nature Center this year as the Carroll Arts Center is unavailable. Invitations will be mailed in the next couple of weeks.

Wind O'Neal updated the Board on pursuing a location in the County for a motocross facility. He has started a motocross council as recommended by the Board and an email address – mxccouncil@comcast.net. He continues to have discussions with Mr. Degitz and has contacted DNR but, to date, has received no response on their interest. Mr. Degitz explained the difficulty in finding land that wouldn't have an impact due to noise issues. According to Mr. O'Neal, the minimum needed for a track is 10-20 acres, plus a buffer area, a road and gate. Mr. DePalmer questioned possible use of reservoir sites. It was explained that these are environmentally sensitive areas and the County is also moving more aggressively to build the reservoirs. Mr. O'Neal reported on the Motocross of Nations he recently attended in St. Mary's County. Team USA won the competition out of 33 countries participating.

Mr. DePalmer reported that the Sports Complex softball field used by the Senior Softball program still needs to be skinned to the fence area. Mr. Degitz advised that Gary Davis was coordinating with the Sports Complex Manager to work on fields, but not all user groups want the field skinned to the fence area.

Due to a conflict with staff attending a MACO/MRPA meeting on the Board's next meeting date, October 24th, the Board agreed to change the date to Monday, October 29th. It will be held at Piney Run Nature Center at 1:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned with a motion by Sue Podobnik and seconded by Kevin Null at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff R. Degitz, Director

Darlene Rohrbaugh, Secretary