

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
October 29, 2007**

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Jody Ledford, Chair, Gary Davis, Vince DePalmer, Colin Furneaux, Jim Rodriguez, Tom Ronaghan

Members Excused: Tom Hersh, Kevin Null, Hernán Padilla, Sue Podobnik, Bobbi Tucker

Staff Present: Sandy Buterbaugh, Melissa Boyle, Matt Purkins, Bruce Dutterer, Brad Rogers

Guests Present: Wind O'Neal, Motocross Council

Ex-Officio Member Present: Jeff Degitz

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met on October 29, 2007, at Piney Run Nature Center. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chairperson Jody Ledford.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Minutes of the September 26th meeting were unanimously approved with a motion by Tom Ronaghan seconded by Gary Davis.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- **Annual Volunteer of the Year Event** will be held November 18, 7:30 p.m., at Bear Branch Nature Center. Chairperson Jody Ledford will speak on behalf of the Board.
- **Instructors' Insurance** – After determining that the insurance that the County has been purchasing for a number of years for instructors is not adequate, staff met with recreation councils regarding the issue. The current insurance costs \$100/year per instructor and expires January 1st. This also affects instructors in the Community Recreation Program. The Risk Management Office is looking into possible alternatives, including hiring instructors as County employees. Some recreation councils have expressed an interest in finding their own insurance; however, it may not be affordable. Hiring instructors as County employees may result in some migrating to the Community Recreation Program. Tom Ronaghan reported that Baltimore County had the same problem and they decided to hire their instructors as County employees. This issue affects paid instructors only, not general liability for volunteer or for teams.
- **Middlebrook Trail** – Forty citizens attended a public meeting last week with about 50% in favor of the project. Concerns include close proximity to houses, crime, and trail surface (paved or stone dust). On Friday, staff will walk the site with interested citizens.
- **State Budget Issues** - \$53M may be cut from Program Open Space which would have a tremendous impact on the Recreation & Parks CIP. Members of the Board are encouraged to speak on behalf of P.O.S. if the opportunity arises.

CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT:

Chairperson Ledford reviewed the September 26 Capital Committee Report for Self-Help Project requests. The Committee recommends approval of all requests with the exception of one of the Liberty High School fencing projects. They also asked that information be provided on field usage at Liberty High. Mr. Degitz shared the following information received from Ed Suddath with the Athletic Boosters: Freedom Area Recreation Council has 548 practices and games that take place on both fields and Liberty High School has 109, indicating 83% recreation council use and 17% school use.

Discussion followed on the Liberty High School projects and use of Self-Help funds for other projects on Board of Education property as well as concerns about school maintenance and liability responsibilities. Gary Davis stated that without the Liberty High School fields, the recreation council would be hurting and it should be looked at as a joint effort.

Mr. Rodriguez provided information on Board of Education funds spent for school renovations. Between 1998 and 2006, \$672,000 was spent for renovations and July 2006-October 2007, \$372,000. He has \$11,000 available in his operating budget for 7 high schools. Maintenance issues and improvements to ballfields are funded to a certain degree with the Athletic Booster's help and Athletic Department funds, but larger projects need Self-Help assistance. Mr. Davis commented that recreation councils are getting much more out of ballfield improvements than tot lots. Mr. Rodriguez advised that it would be more cost effective to replace both fences at the same time.

Gary Davis made a motion to fund all Self-Help project requests presented on September 26 with a second by Jim Rodriguez. With a vote of 2 aye and 4 nay, motion was not accepted.

Mr. Ronaghan then motioned to fully fund the Self-Help project requests presented on September 26 except for the two Liberty High School fencing projects. These projects would receive 83% of the County's total portion requested for the two projects, \$14,847 (\$7,423.50 each) based on the 83% recreation council usage. The motion was seconded by Vince DePalmer and unanimously approved. Approximately \$21,000 will be available for February Self-Help requests.

The Board requested that it be provided with the percentage of use on all future requests where a facility is used by both a school and recreation council. Mr. Degitz added that this is especially important for high school facilities.

MOTOCROSS DISCUSSION:

Last March, Mr. Wind O'Neal brought before the Board a request to consider developing a motocross park in the County. Because of funding issues and needed planning for the CIP, Mr. Degitz asked the Board for direction regarding a motocross facility. Mr. Ronaghan advised that Board recognizes the need but does not support budgeting funds for a motocross park until land becomes available that would adapt to this use.

Mr. O'Neal shows aerials of four State-owned properties that he thought could be possible locations for the park: near Springfield Hospital, on Nicodemus Road, next to the Northern Landfill, and near Piney Run Park.

Discussion followed on the noise issue and noise ordinance. Mr. Furneaux commented that while dirt bike riding is a good sport, controlling the noise is a major obstacle and restrictions are needed. Mr. O'Neal felt that this could be controlled through a park membership where certain decibel requirements would have to be met.

Mr. O'Neal will continue to look for land, work with the State, and write to the Delegation and the Governor.

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT:

A Power Point presentation on trail development was shown to the Board. Mr. DePalmer suggested considering a trail from Cape Horn Park to the new EbbValley Elementary School, north of Manchester.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Degitz, Director

Darlene Rohrbaugh, Secretary