

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting  
Public Meeting Room, County Office Building  
February 25, 2009**

**Approved Minutes**

**Members Present:** Sue Podobnik, Chair, Samuel Case, Joseph Cook, Gary Davis, Colin Furneaux, Bradley Knatz, Jody Ledford, Jim Rodriguez, Tom Ronaghan, Bobbi Tucker

**Members Absent:** Hernan Padilla

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

**Staff Present:** Abby Gruber, Barbara Lages, Matt Purkins

**Guest:** Steve Zeender and Curtis Petry, Mid Maryland Semi Pro Baseball League (MMSBPBL)

Chairperson Podobnik opened the meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board at 7:30 p.m. New Board members, H. Samuel Case, Joseph Cook and S. Bradley Knatz were welcomed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The October Minutes were unanimously approved as written with a motion by Tom Ronaghan and seconded by Gary Davis.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- Dog Park status – The Commissioners voted to move forward with the project; working on lease/MOU and the group will start fundraising. Whatever fees they charge will cover any operating expenses; there will be no expense to the County. The dog park will be located in the current tennis court area.
- Cape Horn Field Improvements – Field 1 will open May 1 and field 2 in the fall; field 3 improvements will begin this spring.
- Bennett Cerf Park & Random House – Working with Random House regarding adjustment to property lines and possible trail acquisition or easement.
- Staff Update – Received approval to fill the open Piney Run Maintenance Supervisor position and interviews are currently in process. With the County's current hiring freeze, we would not be able to fill the staff position budgeted for the new South Carroll Senior and Community Center, expected to open this fall. We will be eliminating a position at Hashawha, however, and moving that person to the Senior and Community Center position.
- Bark Hill Ballfields contract was awarded and work will begin when the weather breaks. The fields should be playable in a year.
- Krimgold Park project has received final approval from Planning Commission and expected to be bid in March.
- Westminster Astronomical Society (WAS) held groundbreaking last Sunday for the observatory that will be located on the grass island at Bear Branch Nature Center. WAS has raised over \$30,000 to cover all capital expenses.
- New field schedule for Hashawha, Piney Run, Sports Complex and Hap Baker Firearms Facility was approved by the Board of Commissioners to maintain the goal of 80% self-supporting overall for facilities.
- Maple Sugarin' Festival at Hashawha will be held, Sunday, March 1, 10:30 am-4:00 pm; \$2/car and \$4 for pancake breakfast.

- Pending legislation in Annapolis – Two Senate bills are pending that would clarify uses for Program Open Space funds:
  - SB 163 - Would not allow POS funds to be used for indoor facilities, i.e., recreation centers, gymnasiums
  - SB 384 - Would not allow POS funds to be used for impervious surfaces (paving) which would affect park roads, parking lots, tennis courts and trails.

The Department supports continuing the use of Program Open Space funds for both of these purposes. The passage of these bills would have a serious impact on the County's parks. Information on these bills will be forwarded to the Advisory Board members and Recreation Councils if they choose to contact legislators.

Mr. Degitz reported that although the State is fully funding POS next year, it will be a very small amount (approximately \$160,000) due to the real estate market and is expected to be lean for the next few years.

### **RECREATION COUNCIL PAID INSTRUCTORS**

Discussion followed on issues involved with the current system of volunteer recreation councils handling the payments to their instructors. Abby Gruber, Bureau Chief of Recreation, explained that six of the eight community recreation councils pay instructors for a total payout around \$142,000 in 2008. 1099 forms are issued to the councils and they are responsible for making sure their instructors who are paid over \$600 per year are completing the forms correctly. Some councils were not aware of this process. The Department has concerns as to whether recreation council treasurers should have this responsibility or should it be integrated into the Department who would, then, issue a 1099 from the County to instructors. Mr. Rodriguez asked who would be responsible. Ms. Gruber responded that the responsibility is the County's. She advised that if an instructor is contracted through the County, they would be insured as well.

Mr. Davis suggested offering a one evening course for recreation council treasurers or providing an information sheet so they know the procedure. One of the issues for the councils is difficulty in getting instructor's social security numbers for the 1099's. Mr. Knatz recommended that instructors provide their social security numbers when they are hired and before any checks are paid rather than trying to get this information at 1099 time.

Ms. Podobnik felt that the biggest concern of the recreation councils will be that if they send their money to the County will they get it back. Ms. Gruber expressed that the purpose is to protect the recreation councils and the County's position, not to take money from them. Ms. Podobnik asked if the Department is in a position to accommodate this responsibility. Mr. Degitz replied that \$150,000 is a small component and he is comfortable with the staff absorbing this task. Mr. Davis suggested another option may be for council treasurers to write a check to the County and then the County would pay the instructor, keeping recreation councils in the loop.

Mr. Furneaux suggested that the Recreation Programming Committee meet to work on this issue. Committee assignments are made at the March meeting, so members are encouraged to think about committees on which they would like to serve. It was agreed that once assignments are made, the Recreation Programming Committee will meet regarding the paid instructors' issue.

### **SPORTS COMPLEX SEASON PREVIEW:**

Matt Purkins, Sports Complex Manager, presented an overview of the leagues offered through the Sports Complex as well as other user groups and tournaments scheduled at the facility this season. The complex is heavily scheduled from mid-March through October with men's softball, co-ed softball,

church softball and men's flag football (a new league for ages 18 and over). Other user groups include senior softball, Charles Carroll Recreation Council, Westminster Soccer Association, Faith Christian School Soccer, Maryland State Youth Soccer and North Carroll Community School. The Sports Complex will host 34 softball tournaments over 30 weekends including tournaments run by three of the four major softball sanctioning bodies.

### **FIELD MAINTENANCE GRANTS:**

Over the last several years, there has been an influx of Self-Help requests from recreation councils for ball diamond mix. It's important to ensure safety for the children on our fields, but there are also many other tangible things that could be funded with Self-Help monies.

Annually, \$10,000 is allocated in the Recreation Operating Budget for field improvement grants. Abby Gruber presented a Power Point presentation outlining ball mix needs, how Self-Help and grant funds have been allocated to recreation councils over the past six years, and possible solutions to work toward sustainable maintenance.

Since September 2003, \$75,088 worth of ball diamond mix has been requested by recreation councils, an average of \$12,515 per year. The majority of these funds, 64%, were used for ball mix at school sites and 36% for County parks.

An annual \$10,000 field improvement grant is allocated in the Recreation budget for County fields and is divided among recreation councils based on the number of fields each council maintains. At the current cost of \$27 per ton, \$10,000 would buy approximately 370 tons of ball mix per year. During the past six years, 3,149 tons has been ordered through the Self-Help program for an average yearly need of 524 tons. The \$10,000 annual allocation of field improvement grant money would almost cover the ball mix needs of the recreation councils. There would be a shortfall of 154 tons or \$4,100 annually to cover all the councils every year.

Discussion followed on possible solutions to overcome the shortfall including balanced distribution that would put councils on a schedule that would pair bigger councils with smaller councils. Gary Davis suggested looking into the use of County equipment for County fields which was how it used to be handled. Mr. Degitz stated that there may be opportunities to work with the Bureau of Facilities, but they are down in positions, too. Mr. Ronaghan asked if \$4,100 of the annual Self-Help allocation could be set aside for ball mix. Mr. Degitz felt that with the six year history of facts and figures it may be possible to boost the field maintenance grant.

Ms. Gruber will discuss the equipment issue with Facilities and also work out a distribution schedule before going any farther. She will report back to the Board at the March meeting. The Board commended Ms. Gruber for a well-done presentation.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

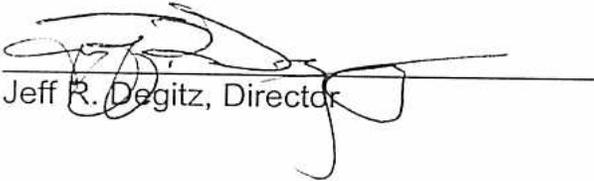
Steve Zeender and Curt Petry, with Mid Maryland Semi-Pro Baseball League (MMSPBL) which has 8 teams in Frederick and Reisterstown inquired about the status of playing fields at Landon C. Burns Park. Four teams in the league are looking to use fields in Carroll County this year. Mr. Zeender has been in contact with Abby Gruber about scheduling the lower baseball field; however, this field is planned to be converted to a 70' diamond this spring, depending on the weather. Mr. Zeender asked to have use of the other ballfield if the lower field is unavailable. Ms. Gruber explained that youth teams are priority users and will be scheduled first, and if Landon Burns fields are not available, she will do her best to find another field for the MMSPBL teams. Priority use of school fields through the Joint-Use Agreement was also explained: 1<sup>st</sup> – Board of Education use; 2<sup>nd</sup> – PTO; 3<sup>rd</sup> – Recreation & Parks; 4<sup>th</sup> – Non-profit groups (which the

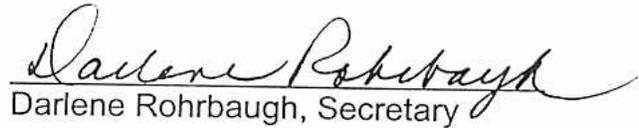
MMSPBL league would fall under). Mr. Degitz explained that a Field Use Policy was recently passed encouraging groups to join community recreation councils, which are 3<sup>rd</sup> priority users. Mr. Zeender commented that if the League is able to get the use of a County field, they would be interested in putting monies into it.

**The Nominating Committee will meet prior to the March meeting to recommend a nominee for Chair-Elect.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m. with a motion from Gary Davis and second by Colin Furneau.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jeff R. Degitz, Director

  
Darlene Rohrbaugh, Secretary