

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
April 1, 2015**

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Brad Knatz, Judy Baker, Brian Clancy, John Marks, Mike Rodgers, Colin Furneaux, Jim Rodriguez and Derek Ludlow

Members Excused: Bobbi Tucker and Carolyn Garber

Staff Present: Candy Sharrer, Bruce Dutterer, Lisa Carroll, Matt Purkins, Brad Rogers, Dawn Harry and Sandy Buterbaugh

Special Guests: Commissioner Richard Weaver, Commissioner Stephen Wantz, Commissioner Dennis Frazier, and County Administrator Roberta Windham

Ex-Officio Member Present: Jeff Degitz

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met on April 1, 2015 in the Algonquin Building at the Hashawha Environmental Center. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Board Chair Judy Baker.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Judy Baker moved to approve the February 25, 2015 meeting minutes, Colin Furneaux seconded, all concurred and minutes were approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Department status was recently reinstated by Commissioners. Jeff Degitz expressed thanks on behalf of the staff.
- New parks brochure developed – A special thanks to Becky Kishter, Program Specialist for her graphic design
- Heritage Tree Project – Bartlett Tree Experts have done tree trimming along trail and QR codes have been installed that will identify species, age and value of trees. A dedication is scheduled for Arbor Day (4/24/15) at 10 am and we will be working on brochure to promote the trail.
- Trail Vision for Patapsco Valley State Park – Meeting with DNR staff April 6 to discuss improved access points and overall vision. A public open house is scheduled for April 20, 6-8 pm at Miller Branch of Howard County Public Library in Ellicott City.
- Possible Rail Trail – Meetings have been held with Rails to Trails, Germany Township (PA), Borough of Littlestown and Adams County, PA staff – all very positive; communication with Genesee and Wyoming continuing
- New Fee Schedule for Major Park Facilities – Adopted in March
- Krimgold Park Playground Project – Working with Jami Henley, re: Bohde's Playground and local fundraising
- Winfield Park – Development update and possible involvement of Nathan Chris Baker Foundation
- Tobacco Free Park – The initiative was approved by Commissioners in March; policy will be implemented once funding for signage is finalized (working with Health Department)
- Park Restoration Update (Brad Rogers) – Currently working on Piney Run roof/siding/windows, backboards at Sandymount & Deer Park, and soon to begin disc golf project and benches at Leister Park.
 - Brad shared that we try to do as much of the restoration as we can in-house to save money.

- Oversized Adirondack Chair Promotion – Two chairs (one purple, one orange) were crafted in-house and will be a part of Recreation & Parks Month.

CONVERSATION WITH THE COMMISSIONERS:

- Commissioner Wantz started by thanking the staff of the Department of Recreation & Parks for all they do. He shared the regrets from the two commissioners that could not attend the meeting today. He applauded the Advisory Board, Jeff Degitz and Commissioner Frazier for the new tobacco free policy in our parks. Commissioner Wantz also introduced Roberta Windham and shared his appreciation for all that she does for the county.
- Commissioner Weaver shared his thanks to the Department of Recreation & Parks for all they do for the county. He also shared that the Commissioners have an Open Door Policy to all staff.
- Commissioner Frazier also thanked the Department of Recreation & Parks for their service and supported Commissioner Weaver’s Open Door Policy by saying that we need to share our concerns/opportunities/possible changes with them so they are able to help the county appropriately.

CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE:

- Significant cuts to Program Open Space in Governor’s proposed budget
- Concerns about “banking” funds for multiple years to afford larger projects and appearance of “not using/needng” funding
- Project most vulnerable to cuts is Westminster Veterans Memorial Park (WVMP) which had \$2.5 million in original recommended CIP for FY 2016.
 - Trying to fund some meaningful portion of WVMP in FY 2016 to allow for construction of major site work, entrance road & parking (minus paving), and athletic fields. This will allow turf to establish while waiting for additional funding to support remaining development.

APRIL TOUR OF PARK SITES:

Jeff Degitz shared that in the past years they would schedule a day to visit the county parks with the advisory board and scheduling conflicts with the members would always arise. Jeff proposed to the board that we limit the site tour to just the county parks with current projects in the C.I.P.

- Judy Baker agreed that seeing the parks with current projects would be beneficial to the board, and perhaps then they could pick another day to visit other sites.
- Brad Knatz also agreed and added that the commissioners should be extended an invite to the visits.
- Colin Furneaux shared that he would like to see two separate trips, one in the a.m. and one in the p.m. as there are some that work and may not be able to attend during the day.
- Jeff shared that an email will be sent around to the advisory board to get a date that would work best for all of them.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR / INTRODUCTION OF JOHN MARKS AS CHAIR:

Jim Rodriguez shared that after speaking with the nominating committee the decision was to nominate Derek Ludlow as Vice Chair. Jim Rodriguez then moved to nominate Derek Ludlow as Vice Chair, John Marks seconded and all concurred.

John Marks officially became chair of the Recreation & Parks Advisory Board. Judy Baker shared her thanks and appreciation serving as chair for the board.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- I. Derek Ludlow shared his concern about volunteer background checks and that a plan should be looked into and instituted. Having a young child himself, he has concern for the safety of the kids. Perhaps a part time staff person could be hired to focus on the background checks for volunteers. Derek added that there are currently national standards for background checks.
 - o Jeff Degitz shared that currently we have a staff person that reviews all volunteer forms through Maryland Judicial Case Search. Improving the program for background checks for volunteers is something the department is pursuing through the budget process and will be looking into possible avenues (due to the significant cost increase) in the coming months.
 - o Jim Rodriguez added that Carroll County Public Schools instituted background checks for volunteers a few years ago now and it has proven to be a very successful process.
 - o Commissioner Wantz shared that through his affiliation with a volunteer fire company he knows firsthand that the cost is roughly \$60 - \$70 per person and the process is a lot of work.
 - o Derek Ludlow proposed a recommendation from the board to upgrade a volunteer background check policy consistent with national standards. Jim Rodriguez seconded and all concurred.
- II. Colin Furneaux would like to see a consistent ten year policy in place for bike paths. Hundreds of people use them every day for recreation, biking to work, and for health reasons. Jeff Degitz shared that the department is working with the Department of Land Use, Development and Planning to develop a countywide bicycle/pedestrian master plan.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Judy Baker and concurred by all, the meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff R. Degitz

Jeff R. Degitz, Administrator

Candy Sharrer

Candy Sharrer, Secretary