

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
Wednesday, February 15, 2017 – 7:00pm
Department of Recreation and Parks Headquarters
Conference Room #1
7120 Oakland Mills Road
Columbia, MD 21046**

Members Present:

Dr. Joel Goodman, Chair; Sylvia Ramsey, Co-Chair; Jonathan Gresham; Tom Franklin; Joanne Kiebler; Edward Coleman

Members Absent:

Christine O'Connor; Dave Brown; Dan Tracy

Staff Present:

John Byrd, Executive Secretary; Mike Milani, Bureau Chief of Administrative Services; Laura T. Wetherald, Bureau Chief of Recreation; A. Raul Delerme, Bureau Chief of Capital Projects, Park Planning and Construction; Lauren Davis, Assistant to Ms. Wetherald and Recording Secretary.

Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Goodman called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.
Motion was made by Ms. Ramsey to approve the minutes. A seconded motion was made by Ms. Kiebler. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

Director's Report:

Mr. Byrd stated that the joint review committee from the summer of 2015 had recommended more latitude for local jurisdiction to use their program open space allocation. There are two bills that essentially reflect the same change in the law which will allow local jurisdiction to use a larger portion of their allocation for development if they meant their acquisition goals.

Mr. Byrd stated that we just found a bill today that removes the cap for tort claims for injuries that occur on artificial turf fields. Mr. Byrd forwarded this bill over to the Office of Law for their interpretation. The same exact bill was submitted two years ago and it did not pass.

Mr. Byrd reported the Sunday hunting bill that the local delegation was going to propose was withdrawn. He went to testify to the delegation committee last week.

Mr. Byrd stated that March is being proposed as being Maryland Good Sportsmanship Month and we are supporting that.

Mr. Byrd state that he did submit testimony regarding the Howard County School System hours to state the impact that it will have on Recreation and Parks.

Bureau of Parks:

Park Operations Division

- Belmont Manor and Historic Park is undergoing site renovations (Raul can elaborate). All weekend dates for 2017 are booked with many of the dates for 2018 booked as well.
- Centennial Park: Department of Public Works coordinating with the contractor W.F. Wilson Inc. to replace water lines throughout the site. Construction has begun and traffic flow in and out of the park (west entrance) will continue during this construction phase.
- Entrance into Blandair Park off Rt. 175 is now open.
- Winter projects continue.

Natural and Historic Resources Division

- Heritage staff are planning a re-opening of the Old Court House in Ellicott City featuring new exhibits including the Network to Freedom kick off on Saturday, April 8, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.
- To date, 183 deer have been taken between the managed hunts and sharp shooting operations.
- The trapping and collaring of deer for the USDA/UMD/HCDRP Cooperative deer study has begun.
- Sue Muller completed the processing of all Rockburn Branch Park

moth survey records for 2016. There were 54 new records confirmed for the Maryland Biodiversity Project including two new state records.

- Cheryl Farfaras is working on an early successional habitat restoration project to replace one-half acre of non-native, invasive autumn olives with native shrubs to create a transitional edge between the center meadow and surrounding tall trees, and to restore and enhance a stand of Virginia pines.
- Robinson staff led 24 public programs in January including the 3rd annual Frozen Fest which had almost double the attendance/revenue of last year's event with 283 participants and \$2,720 in ticket sales.
- Megan Mills secured an additional \$40,000 in funding from the Office of Community Sustainability to continue the Turf to Trees program in the spring of 2017.

Horticulture and Land Management Division

- Tree planting plan for Belmont has been completed and is going to MHT and MET for approval.
- Staff will be working with the Howard County Conservancy to install a butterfly meadow behind the Carriage House at Belmont Manor and Historic Park.
- Staff discussing with Forestry Board on the next area to plant at the Western Regional Arboretum this spring. They will also discuss the mapping, creating a brochure and identifying trees for the public.
- Winter projects continue.

Bureau of Capital Projects, Park Planning and Construction:

Mr. Delorme reported that the construction at Belmont is going well due to the great weather.

Mr. Delorme stated that we are hoping to stay on track to open the Park back up in August and to start Phase 3 in August. We are reviewing the plans now for Phase 3 but it will include the maintenance shop, 3 bocce ball courts, 2 croquet courts, a play-for-all playground, horseshoe pits, restrooms, and another pavilion.

Mr. Delorme stated that Troy Park is still under construction and will be completed in August.

Mr. Delorme reported that we are starting the construction on Huntington playground in a few weeks. We are also in the process of reconstructing the basketball area.

Mr. Delorme stated that he is meeting tomorrow with the Special Olympics to discuss the possibilities of us adding 2 more bocce ball courts to Cedar Lane Parks.

Mr. Delorme reported that the golf course bunker project at Timber at Troy is going well and they may be done working on the bunkers by early next week. The irrigation line is pretty much complete.

Mr. Delorme mentioned that we sent our Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan to DNR in January. They have reviewed it and sent back their comments. We recently went over their comments with our consultants and we are addressing those comments now to send back to DNR. Once that process is complete, we will send it over to the Planning Board by the end of March.

Mr. Delorme stated that he and John Byrd meant with the shelter home citizens near Martin Road Park. They are looking to do a community enhancement project and they approached our department to discuss how they can enhance Martin Road Park. We may be able to provide a few different amenities to help with this project.

Mr. Byrd stated that we are taking the Capital Budget to the Planning Board tomorrow night.

Mr. Coleman asked if the pedestrian signs by Blandair Park were put up by Recreation and Parks or Traffic.

Mr. Byrd and Mr. Delorme stated that we did not put those signs up.

Bureau of Recreation:

Mrs. Wetherald passed around the flyer for the CAPRA Social that will be held Monday March 20th at Belmont from 4:30pm-6:30pm. She stated that the Board should be receiving an invite shortly.

Mrs. Wetherald stated that we now have access to the Chrysalis as part of the agreement with them. In the contract, Recreation and Parks has access to 4 or 5 events a season. We intend to have 3 or 4 concerts at the location this summer on nights that won't provide any conflict with other organizations or events. To permit the facility, all we need to do is contact Michael McCall. Until the bathroom is built, we must use the portable restrooms.

Mrs. Wetherald also stated that we will be using the Chrysalis stage for our Wine in the Woods event.

Mrs. Wetherald state that she had an exciting meeting with Office on Aging staff, the new Director of Office on Aging, and Citizens Resources and Services. We asked them to bring their aging team and we brought our programmers. We also brought in a guest speaker to speak on the topic of programming for people age 50 and up. We are looking to address the aging population within the County and any changes that occur with it.

Mrs. Wetherald stated that we have a program called Snow Blast. Due to the weather, we have not had the chance to use it. It is a program at the Roger Carter Community Center, where people can call in to drop off their kids when schools are still closed due to snow. This will allow parents to get back to work and have their kids at a safe place.

Mrs. Wetherald reported that our revamped Summer Blast Camps went from barely breaking even to bringing in over \$123,000 for the summer because it was so successful.

Mrs. Wetherald reported that we got involved in youth basketball officials training. About 17 youth went through a training and then we used our own programs for them to officiate in. After completing the training that received a patch from Recreation and Parks.

Bureau of Administrative Services:

Mr. Milani reported that our summer camp registration started two weeks ago. Revenue is up \$41,000 from last summer.

Mr. Milani stated that we are working right now on our operating budget and negotiating with the Budget office to try to identify some things that we can move out of the Recreation and Parks fund over to the general fund.

Mr. Milani stated that our new warehouse manager is doing a great job in cleaning things up in our building and building C. We met today with the County and they have enough money to move the way the gas is distributed behind the building. They are going to move it inside the fence in the back. We are also going to start our office project to give us more office space within the building. Lastly, we are going to fix Mr. Milani's old office so that we can get another employee in that office.

Old Business:

Mr. Byrd reported that the settlement at Savage Mill will go to the Planning Board in March. The next step will be the County Council, then the State, and lastly the National Parks Service for approval.

New Business:

Mr. Goodman wanted everyone to save the date for the Solar System Walk that will be held on Saturday evening at the Howard County Conservatory on May 6th. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Tom Franklin made the motion to adjourn the meeting. A second motion was made by Ms. Joanne Kiebler. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.



Dr. Joel Goodman, Chairman



John R. Byrd, Executive Secretary