

Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
Wednesday, May 18, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.
Recreation and Parks Headquarters, Conference Room 1
7120 Oakland Mills Rd.
Columbia, MD 21046

Members Present:

Dave Grabowski, Chair, Ed Coleman, Co-Chair; Herman Charity; Antonia Watts, Marian Vessels

Staff Present:

Raul Delerme, Director; Michael H. Milani, Bureau Chief of Administrative Services; Nicola Morgal, Bureau Chief of Recreation; Bryan Moody, Bureau Chief of Parks; Ryan Etter, Recording Secretary

Call to Order:

Mr. Grabowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Approval of March Minutes:

Minutes were approved unanimously

Public Comments:

No Public Comments

Director's Report:

- Staff are working hard for Wine in the Woods event for this weekend
- Interviews for new student board member have been completed
 - Have made a choice, waiting for County Executive to proceed through the legislative process.
- Budget session for the General Fund was in front of County Council. Staff did great – went well.
- Looking to get Use of Occupancy permit for Harriet Tubman Cultural Center on June 30th
 - Ribbon cutting in mid/late July

Bureau of Parks:

- Currently treating Canada thistle in naturalized areas of the park system
 - Using a new contractor that staff seem happy with; was able to spray garden plots and gardeners were happy
 - Developing plan to manage Canada thistle in Blandair Phase 3 internally
- Working with the Office of Human Resources to establish a policy and practice for disciplining staff for testing positive for marijuana/THC use
 - Staff with CDL licenses are randomly tested currently
 - Been a rising issue elsewhere in the County
- The relocation of Natural and Historic Resources Division staff to the Ascend One Building is 99% complete but still waiting on the final construction of the gun safe area
- Special events assistance in the past month included Eid al Fitr assistance by Zone 1 staff and Park Rangers at Cedar Lane Park on April 27 and May 2; Assisted with parking by Parks Bureau and Recreation Bureau staff at Symphony Woods on May 1 for the Asian American and Pacific Islander Event; ongoing WIW prep; coordination for May 24 Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act event in Ellicott City; and a couple known events coming in June
- Robinson Nature Center is reporting its highest gross revenue in a fiscal year since opening in 2011 at \$399K as on May 5
 - Piloted a 6th grade outdoor education program for HCPSS last month with students and staff from Oakland Mills Middle School
 - Outdoor Extravaganza for Autism Acceptance was at the Robinson Nature Center on April 24, had double the attendance from last year thanks to Therapeutic Recreation, Marketing, and others
- Expanded mowing and mulching at several sites this year, going well; may expand further to free staff for beautification efforts and special projects
- Same hiring and retainage issues as everybody else; applicant pools remain smaller and have less of a maintenance background
- Zone 1 Manager interviews were completed, and a candidate has been nominated but not yet notified
- Trouble-shooting QR code pavilion sign-in process with Parks staff, Rangers, and IT to reduce staff time checking pavilions and confirm site conditions at arrival – has flaws

- Howard Hughes transferred Dickinson, Hawthorn, and Huntington Parks to BOE/HCPSS. New use agreements between the County and BOE/HCPSS are required for DRP's use and maintenance of these parks. Recreation & Parks drafted these agreements and provided them to BOE/HCPSS to review, comment, and sign in 2021 and have received no response. Recreation & Parks has a 2016 bond bill grant to make improvements to Huntington Park that expires in 2023. We need to have BOE/HCPSS approval before moving forward.

Bureau of Capital Projects, Park Planning and Construction (Presented by Mr. Milani):

- Belmont Station Bridge Project is completed and open to the public.
- Cradlerock Cricket- Sod work around the pitch and lines will be completed in the next week.
- Centennial Park South Boat Dock Area- Hayes Construction has reframed the deck area and is currently installing the IPE decking. They are almost finished installing the decking. All the segmental block walls are finished. The pathway is being paved this week between the boat launch and the restroom building.
- Centennial Park West Basketball Court – has been repaved and new basketball posts, backboards and rims have been installed.
- The following tennis courts have received blended pickleball lines:
 - Atholton Park
 - High Ridge Park
- Basketball lines have been restriped at:
 - RCCC
 - Western Regional Park
- Wine in the Woods is almost set up. Looks beautiful.

Bureau of Recreation:

- Wine in the Woods is this weekend
 - Sold over 13000 pre-sale tickets
 - New Explorers Tent has sold out for Saturday and almost for Sunday
 - High temperatures expected
 - Everything is looking great

- Breweries are excited to be included for the first time
- Summer Camp numbers are very good
 - 35 hires for camp staff
 - Close to 10,000 kids registered for camps
- RLC Program is coming to end for school year
 - Staffing issues are still a concern but are getting better
 - Pre-registration for next year has started
 - 800 on waitlist
- HCPSS is taking back the Recreation and Parks activity rooms in schools. This will negatively impact child care, classes and camps moving forward and will most likely affect the number of children we can have in our programs.
- Harriet Tubman Cultural Center is fully staffed
 - Programs have been added to fall brochure
 - Currently working on operating hours and schedule
- Asian American and Pacific Islander Event went well
 - Had staff tents set up showing off what the department does
- 4 new full-time staff starting on Monday
- Antonia Watts asked how the Recreational Licensed Childcare staff is retained throughout the summer before next school year
 - Nicola Morgal commented that most of the staff stay and do summer camps.
 - Also, hoping to offer childcare staff a stipend as a thank you for their work throughout the year.
- Antonia Watts also asked about the 800 children on the wait list
 - They could be taken off list with more staffing and space
 - Nicola Morgal confirmed that both are key, but space is important because they do not want to overload the locations with too many kids as the quality would decline of the program.
- Antonia Watts asked about having non-school locations for childcare and providing transportation
 - Nicola Morgal and Mike Milani commented that it's too costly regarding buses and having the staff on the buses

Bureau of Administrative Services:

- Budget hearing yesterday
 - Asking to move 5 positions from Recreation and Parks fund to general fund
 - Trying to buy vehicles
 - Delivery times will take many months
 - Did get general fund money for positions that are getting the minimum wage increase
 - Cost will be \$900,000 for the wage increase
 - Got more money for overtime Budget
 - Requested funding for stipends for childcare staff
- Tournament season
 - Calendar is on website for public to see when and where all events are being held

Old Business:

- Purchased Shipley Park across from Marriott's Ridge High School

New Business:

No new business

Mr. Grabowski made the motion to adjourn the meeting. A second motion was made by Mr. Coleman. The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 pm.



Dave Grabowski, Chairperson *CHAIR.*



Raul Delorme, Executive Secretary

