

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
Wednesday, October 18 – 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, Edward Coleman, Joanne Kiebler, Tom Franklin, Dan Tracy and Samuel Nitkin

Members Absent:

Dave Brown and Ananta Hejeebu

Call to Order:

Dr. Goodman called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Staff Present:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Motion was made by Mr. Coleman to approve the minutes. A second motion was made by Mr. Tracy. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

Mr. Byrd reported we do not have any public comments.

Director's Report:

Mr. Byrd reported that we are officially accredited. Mr. Wetherald, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Byrd, and Mr. Delerme went to New Orleans to receive the departments certificate from the National Recreation and Parks Association for CAPRA. We are accredited for the next 5 years and we have already

started the process for CAPRA 2022. Howard County Recreation and Parks is one of 165 agencies to be accredited. There are about 10,000 Recreation and Parks agencies in the nation.

Mr. Byrd reported that our department was selected to be the chair agency for the United Way Campaign in the County. So far, we have raised about \$20,000 during the first week of pledges.

Dr. Goodman asked what the Department's role is within the United Way Campaign.

Mr. Byrd responded by stating "our role is to coordinate the pledges. We market the campaign to County employees and we coordinate the online pledges. We also hand out the incentive prizes."

Bureau of Parks:

Park Operations Division

- Mr. Marshall reported, on September 11th, the Parks Bureau and the Bureau of Capital Projects and Park Planning staff embarked on a hurricane recovery mission to assist with Hurricane Irma relief efforts in Florida. The team returned home safely on September 28th.
- Mr. Marshall stated that we are more organized for a hurricane than the state of Florida.
- Mr. Marshall reported, the Korean Festival was held on September 16th at Centennial Park. The crowd was monumental at an estimated 30,000 in attendance.

Natural and Historic Resources Division

- Number of deer taken for sharpshooting and managed hunts – 51.
- Mr. Marshall stated, Scott Bowen and David Keane participated in a conference call with MEMA and other OEM staff regarding the Department's chainsaw training and chainsaw trailer. Multiple agencies that responded to the Florida recovery were impressed (or jealous) of the chainsaw trailer. The chainsaw trailer was funded through a federal grant.
 - It has been deployed for the tornado that swept through western Howard County last summer and used for the yearly

Chainsaw Training that we teach our employees. The S-212 Wildland Fire Chainsaw training was offered to a few Howard County employees and after the completion of the training, staff was saying the class was so great that anyone that runs a chainsaw should take this training. We reached out to the training team and they were so overwhelmed with applicants that they offered a “Train the Trainer” class. At the completion of the “Train the Trainer” training, a Chainsaw Proficiency Training and Safety Team was created and we have been training in-house staff since. The training is a 3-day course; one in a half days in a classroom with a PowerPoint, a half a day taking apart the chainsaws, and a day running the saws and felling trees. The training has received awards from Maryland Recreation and Parks Association and Howard County Government and is praised throughout the Recreation and Parks staff. The Emergency Chainsaw Trailer is a chainsaw shop on wheels. It has 2 lighted workbenches with 4 vices for working on the 12 chainsaws that are stored within the trailer. There is an air compressor onboard to clean the saws and keep them in working order. It also stores fuel, bar oil, spare chains, wedges, spare bars, chain sharpeners and many other tools to meet any chainsaw needs or repairs. It also has back up Personal Protective Equipment for staff (chainsaw chaps, helmets, gloves, glasses, safety vests, etc.) along with multiple Logger First Aid Kits.

- Mr. Marshall stated, the first of three Ghostly Guides paranormal tours of PFI took place on Friday September 29th to a sold-out crowd. Ghost tours and events continue to be very popular.

Horticulture and Land Management Division

- Mr. Marshall reported, HLMD has selected American elms to replace the two that have perished in front of the Belmont Manor and Historic Park. Trees will be planted in November.
- Mr. Marshall reported, the parks continues to lose ash trees due to the emerald ash borer beetle. Troy Park has a large stand of ash trees that have died and staff are removing several ash trees at the

Gateway Building.

Other

- Mr. Marshall reminded everyone about the Celebration of Partners in Parks event that will be held on November 5, 2017 at Belmont from 2:00-4:00 pm. Currently, 140 have RSVP'd to the event.
- Mr. Byrd added that the B&O Museum opened on October 6th. During that weekend, we had over 500 people attend for the reopening. The museum looks great and we have a new manager on board.

Bureau of Capital Projects, Park Planning and Construction:

Mr. Delerme stated, during the upcoming spring time we will renovate the caboose at the B&O Museum.

Dr. Goodman asked what type of staff members are working at the B&O Museum.

Mr. Milani stated that currently we only have contingent and part time staff members working there. We are going to work on converting some employees to full-time staff.

Mr. Delerme reported that not much has changed from last month regarding the progress of Blandair Park and Troy Park. Both parks are projected to be completed by December 1st.

Mr. Delerme reported that the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area restrooms and office area is going to bid on the October 24th.

Mr. Byrd reported that the Bollman Truss Bridge is complete just in time for the holiday season.

Ms. Ramsey stated that the team working on the roundabout at Blandair Park has really done a good job managing the project.

Bureau of Recreation:

Ms. Wetherald passed the flyers for the upcoming Holiday Mart and Christmas in the Park. Holiday Mart is December 2nd from 10:00am to 5:00pm at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center at Glenwood. Christmas in the Park is Tuesday December 5th from 6:00pm-7:15pm. Santa and other characters will be on site. Our RLC department is putting together a group of children that would like to sing at the event.

Ms. Wetherald stated that we held our Celebration of Sports event last night at Turf Valley. There was about 600 people in attendance. We recognized Bill Sanders, Walter Brown, and James May, and Craig Proffen.

Ms. Wetherald stated that the EAAA organization will be having their yearly Haunted Experience at Rockburn Branch Park. This event has been going on for 25 years. The money raised during this event goes towards scholarships for High School Students.

Ms. Wetherald passed out the new design for next year's Wine in the Woods event. The poster was created by Daoud Salam who works in our marketing department.

Ms. Wetherald reported that this is our third time getting 100% for our CAPRA accreditation. We are now starting the process for our 5th accreditation. This time we will have a new CAPRA oversight team of people who are familiar with the process and who we know can get the job done. Bryan Moody, Heather Johannes, Matthew Madera, and Nicola Morgal will all be a part of the new oversight team for CAPRA. Last time we had about 60 members of our staff involved.

Ms. Wetherald provided some statistics on our summer programs that we offer. This year for summer programs, we offered just a few less programs than in the past. We offered 669 last year and 653 this year. The total participants for last year was 46,028 and this year was 45,000. This shows that we offered less programs this year but still had more participants. The registration number for last year was 6,500 and the registration for this year is 7,200.

Mr. Wetherald reported that we extended our camps to run until the Labor Day break. It was difficult finding people to work during this last week due to college students going back to school or teachers going back to work. This year the revenue for camps was \$3,709,000 and last year it was \$3,209,000. This year we offered 1,781 sections of camps and last summer it was 1,263 sections. We had 1,592 programs that ran and last year it the number was 1,060. The number of programs cancelled was 189. We try to maintain a 25% cancellation rate. We had 442 filled programs this year and last year we had 237 filled programs.

Ms. Wetherald stated that today we had an event with our LERN partners. We had about 50 of our staff today in a training.

Mr. Wetherald reported that our Truck or Treat event is coming up on October 28th. This year we are charging for this event. We are starting earlier this year to accommodate the kids that are sensitive to sounds and lights.

Bureau of Administrative Services:

Mr. Milani reported that we are continuing to look at our contingent staff to see if there are any that we can convert to full-time staff. From the Budget office, we learned that this is going to be a 3 or 4-year process.

Mr. Milani also reported that we are looking to covert some of our self-sustaining employees to the general fund.

Mr. Milani stated that we are starting the budget process for next year. We are looking at a flat budget but no cuts.

Old Business:

Mr. Byrd stated that the public hearing for the Timbers of Troy lease was Monday night. Not much happened during the event.

Mr. Byrd reported that the Savage Land Swap process continues tomorrow night with the Planning Board. The community now can present their case.

Mr. Tracy asked about the possibility about a high school being built on the property of Rockburn Park.

Mr. Byrd responded by stating the school board is considering the corner of landing road and Montgomery road to be the site for a new High School. The Department has not had any input other than to provide information about the physical aspect of the site.

Mr. Coleman reported that he did put in a good word for us to the Planning Board about our activity room and preschool programs at the new Talbot Springs school.

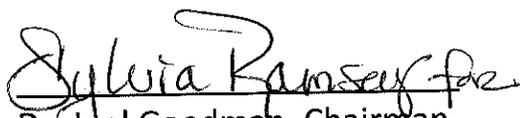
New Business:

Dr. Goodman reported that the one of the community partners, the Howard Astronomical League, is hosting an "International Observe the Moon Night" on Saturday, October 28th from 6:00pm-11:00pm.

Dr. Goodman stated that he is a member of the Ellicott City Rotary Club, and they were happy to be able to partner with Recreation and Parks to plant 26 trees adjacent to the Belmont Carriage House.

Dr. Goodman stated that the department does a great job-sharing space with Office of Aging and other agencies.

Mr. Franklin made the motion to adjourn the meeting. A second motion was made by Mr. Tracy. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm.


Dr. Joel Goodman, Chairman


John R. Byrd, Executive Secretary