

Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
May 18, 2016
Department of Recreation and Parks Headquarters
Conference Room #1
7120 Oakland Mills Road
Columbia, MD 21046

Members Present:

Dr. Joel Goodman, Chair; Dave Brown; Joanne Kiebler; Tom Franklin; Sylvia Ramsey; Jonathan Gresham and Dan Tracy.

Members Absent:

Williams Santos and Cindy Vaillancourt.

Staff Present:

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

Approval of Minutes:

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

Dr. Goodman made a Motion to approve the April minutes noting a typo regarding information about one of the Wine in the Woods performers. Mr. Tracy seconded. The Motion passed unanimously.

Directors Report:

Mr. Byrd talked about how the County Executive received a follow up letter regarding a wedding. He stated that this was really nice for Cathy Allen to receive that. He stated that he knows that Cathy Allen and her staff at Belmont do everything they can to put on the best events at Belmont.

Mr. Marshall reported that a Bride and Groom stopped by Belmont, the day before their honeymoon, to thank everyone and to express how great the staff was for their wedding.

Mr. Byrd reported on the Belmont easement meeting. Recreation and Parks was asked to go back to the neighbors to resolve some of their concerns regarding the volume of programming and the traffic that it would cause. It was a very productive meeting. Mr. Byrd asked Cathy Allen and Meg Boyd to come up with the most realistic scope of programming there could be with the staff that is currently at Belmont. They came up with a compromise that would satisfy MET (Maryland Environmental Trust) requirements and the surrounding residents. He reported that just a few hours ago, they received the revised easement language back. The goal is to get it approved by next Wednesday.

Mr. Brown asked what the easement is.

Mr. Marshall responded by saying it is on Zone 2.

Mr. Byrd responded by saying that it was the parcel that included the development rights for the property so now those can be sold once the Board of Public Works approves the easement. Mr. Byrd stated that it should pass in June.

Dr. Goodman asked what that means in the long run.

Mr. Byrd responded by saying that it extinguishes the opportunity to subdivide the property in perpetuity. It also provides about \$45,000 per development rights and that there are about 70 of them that they could sell. The county would receive that cash and we would then put that money back into the Belmont project.

Mr. Delorme showed several pictures of what area was included in the easement.

Mr. Byrd and Mr. Marshall stated that we will have both MHT and MET easements on the property. MHT has some say on Zone 2.

Mr. Byrd reported Sasaki Associates, the company hired to help with the Land, Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan are very enthusiastic about the project.

Mr. Byrd reported on the Budget. He stated that the County Executive called and agreed to unfreeze the Therapeutic Recreation position in the Budget. That will go in on Monday, as an amendment, to the County Council.

Dr. Goodman wanted to thank the Board for their prompt response to the email that was sent out by Mr. Byrd. He stated around 2:30 p.m. he received a call from David Lee saying that they were finding those funds.

Mr. Byrd also thanked the Board for all their efforts and quick turnaround time.

Mr. Byrd reported that our overall operating budget is about 4% more than last year. One significant change includes the Park Ranger's positions and the TR position.

Mr. Milani reported that a tournament position will be unfrozen with this budget. This is a sports position that will be a supervisor position. He also stated that the two positions will be moved from the Recreation and Parks Fund to the General Fund. This move will also increase the budget.

Mr. Byrd reported that most of our adjustments are a result of the audits that we received this year to make corrections.

Mr. Byrd introduced our new student council member, Jonathan Gresham.

Mr. Gresham introduced himself to the Board.

Bureau of Recreation:

Ms. Wetherald reported updates and statistics on Wine in the Woods. The attendance for last year's Wine in the Woods was 26,400. The cost to produce is a little over \$606,000; the gross income is about \$742,000; and we bring in a net of about \$136,119. Crafters pay about \$200 for their spot and we bring about \$6,000 of income from our crafters. Our food vendors pay anywhere from \$40-\$1,500 and we bring in about \$26,000 on food vendors. Phil Bryan and Nicola Morgal brought in about \$128,000 in sponsorship this year. We have 132

full time staff that help put on this event which does not include all of the contingent staff that also help out. We have about 514 volunteers that help out during that weekend. That also does not include the volunteer help from each winery, who brings in about 10-15 volunteers each day. As of May 4, 2016, a total of 5,621 online tickets have been sold compared to 3,037 tickets sold last year. Right now we have about 10,000 people how have paid in advance. Our point of sale tickets is around 500. She stated that next year will be our 25th year doing Wine in the Woods.

Ms. Wetherald reported that we changed our Recreation Childcare Camp from Summer Sunsatons to Summer Blast. We have more specialty camps that focus on activities such as sports, drama, arts and aquatics. She stated that this change is getting a good response.

Ms. Wetherald reported that about 30 staff members were not placed at a camp due to these camp changes. Ms. Wetherald is looking to hopefully place these staff members in other positions throughout Recreation and Parks. Some staff members are part-time benefited and some are contingent.

Ms. Wetherald reported that our Therapeutic staff members did receive non-violent crisis intervention training. She talked about how some of our customers including kids and adults can sometimes have a burst in anger. This training provides the proper information to handle these outbursts so that are staff are safe.

Ms. Wetherald passed around our new rental guide. She also talked about our new virtual tours that will be available for our Community Centers.

Ms. Wetherald passed out a flyer as well as talked about the upcoming Solar Fest. This event is going to be held, Saturday, July 9, 2016 at Alpha Ridge Park. This event is an evening of science, engineering, arts & crafts, games, astronomy and more. This event is \$5 per child.

Ms. Wetherald reported that one of her goals this year in the Bureau is to focus on the arts. She challenged her staff to incorporate arts into their programs. One of our programs is putting on The Lion King.

Ms. Wetherald reported on HOCO walks which were created to promote health and wellness. This event is held the first Saturday of each month in our Parks. Each walk is about a mile long and will have one VIP guest. You get a map and a neon color snap bracelet.

Ms. Wetherald talked about Earth Day that was held on April 23rd. We had 25 volunteers at Cedar Lane Park in which we planted over 50 River Birches and Sycamore trees. There were 20 volunteers that went to the Gary J. Arthur Community Center and planted trees. This is all done under Shawnte Berry, the Volunteers and Special Projects Manager.

Ms. Wetherald reported that we have repurposed the area down by the boat dock at Centennial Park. The vendor that was there left and we have now taken over the concession stand. The new concession stand is called The Adventure Shack. It will have hot dogs, pizza, ice cream, and some health foods including baked items. The Adventure and Outdoor staff under Dawn Thomas has taken this new project on.

A question for Ms. Wetherald was asked: When you buy Wine in the Woods tickets, do you buy them for Saturday and Sunday?

Ms. Wetherald responded by saying yes and that you do not get a refund.

Mr. Delorme asked Ms. Wetherald when we started selling Saturday and Sunday tickets separately.

Ms. Wetherald responded by saying when we started using MissionTix which has been for about 4 or 5 years. Ms. Wetherald stated MissionTix has work out really well and that they provide incredible research data.

Bureau of Parks:

Mr. Marshall passed a sample of a product that they are going to use at Belmont on a certain parking area. This product will help guests at the site drive through the parking area during rain events. This product will stay on the ground and the grass grows through it. There is a smaller version that is more for the pedestrian area at the site. Mr. Marshall stated that he hopes that it works out so that we can expand it to other Parks in the County. He continued to state

that the price for this product is fairly reasonable. This product will also help eliminate our erosion problem.

Mr. Marshall reported that they have hired a gardener for Belmont. This person is contingent and will be managing the volunteers at Belmont. Their duties will probably expand to Waverly Mansion.

Mr. Marshall reported that the plants for the aqua garden at Belmont will go in by the end of the month. The aqua garden is located where the pool used to be. The aqua garden contains fish and all sorts of plants.

Mr. Marshall reported the park rangers positions will be posted this coming Friday. The park rangers are getting a lot of interest from people outside of the County. These positions will take effect after July 11, 2016.

A question was proposed: About how much will the new Park Rangers salary be?

Mr. Marshall responded by stating in the mid \$30,000 range. Mr. Marshall also stated that with these new positions, they were able to create a management structure. There will be different day and night shifts in which staff will rotate. They will also rotate on the weekends so that the same staff will not always be working on the weekends.

Mr. Marshall reported that he is currently proofing a Park Ranger's manual that they have spent the last 2 years creating. The manual is 370 pages long.

Ms. Wetherald stated that we have had one for 10 years for CAPRA but it is being updated.

Mr. Marshall reported that all the heritage sites are now open. He stated that the show this year at the Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park will include a walkable Romeo & Juliet which will begin on June 10, 2016. The guests at these shows will get to walk with the actors through the ruins as the play goes on. The next show will be The Three Musketeers.

Mr. Marshall stated that on June 11th, the Ellicott City Colored School, Restored is hosting a program commemorating the ending of slavery in all the states.

Mr. Marshall reported that the MET Board Trustee meeting will be on June 6th.

Mr. Marshall reported various statistics on Belmont. During the month of April, Belmont had 521 inquires, 69 off the web, and 316 tours. This totaled to be 906 inquiring about Belmont and the activities there. Belmont is already booked every Saturday and Sunday throughout the 2017 wedding season. He also stated that we now have requests for weddings during the middle of the week.

Mr. Marshall stated that since Belmont has opened, we have only had two complaints.

Mr. Marshall reported that the Howard County Conservancy completes a species list.

Mr. Marshall reported that we have promoted five of our staff. There were three Contingent Workers who were promoted to full time Park Maintenance Workers. The other two positions were taken by Steve Schwarzman, who will be working at Rockburn and Pat Wiebking who will be working at Cedar Lane.

Mr. Marshall reported the "find your park booklet" that is now available.

Mr. Marshall reported that he started initial meetings with the group to discuss the improvements for the Route 29 pedestrian bridge. This bridge goes over Route 29 between Oakland Mills and the Columbia Mall area. Money has been set aside to do improvements to the bridge. The group has not come up with a final plan for the bridge. He stated that there is money to do some minor updates to the bridge. Mr. Marshall talked about the different ideas for the bridge that have come up in meetings.

Mr. Byrd reported that the budget for the bridge updates is about \$500,000. He stated that the question now is whether the County is going to match that \$500,000. He also talked about the different plans that were discussed and how lighting is important.

Bureau of Capital Projects, Park Planning and Construction:

Mr. Delerme talked about how there will be comment cards at the Wine in the Woods.

Mr. Delerme reported that the bids for Phase 2 for Troy Park came in today. The lowest bid came in a \$7.6 million to Bob Potter. He is hoping to have that project started in July.

Mr. Delerme reported that the Robinson Nature Center storage building and office is completed.

Mr. Delerme showed various pictures on the projector screen of the "Play for All Playground" that is going to be at Blandair. He stated that the playground will be 80% accessible.

Mr. Delerme showed pictures of some of our various sites. He mentioned that the ribbon cutting for South Branch Park will be June 11, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

Old Business:

Mr. Byrd provided an update on the Timbers at Troy lease. We have received the comments back from Kemper Sports Management, Inc. We are currently in another review of those comments. We are looking to have another lease agreement before the County Council sometime in October. We are still looking to have the lease executed by January 1, 2017.

Mr. Byrd reported that Mr. Delerme is working with the design consultant for the irrigation system. Then the RFP will be done for the irrigation system and for the bunkers combined under one project.

Mr. Brown reported the Board of Education had a great meeting with Al Harden and his staff regarding Columbia Baseball.

Mr. Brown also mentioned that he is the Vice President of the PTA at Marriott's Ridge High School. He asked Mr. Gresham to talk about his experience at the after prom party that was held at the Roger Carter Community Center. Mr. Brown complimented the staff at Roger Carter Community Center, stating that they were great to work with. He said that the climbing wall was a big hit.

There were about 600 students that attended this event.

Mr. Brown also stated that it has been really great working with Ms. Wetherald division in setting up our camps.

Ms. Wetherald responded by saying it has been a pleasure working with Mr. Brown.

Mr. Byrd discussed the new school site that was acquired by the County. There is potential for three schools. Along with the schools sites, sports fields would be put in place. Some of the funding for the project will come from Program Open Space.

Mr. Tracy discussed his concerns about reading that we are building a new park without any mention beforehand.

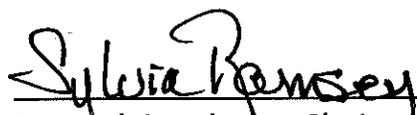
Mr. Byrd mentioned that the Board does not have letterhead.

New Business:

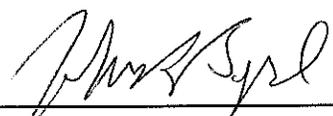
Dr. Goodman mentioned that the STEMulating Minds Group is putting on the 4th annual HOCO Stem festival on Sunday June 5th at Howard Community College. Last year, there were about 1,200 attendees. This is an event for children grades K-12 to do hands on activities, meet with professionals, and learn what a career in STEM is like.

Dr. Goodman asked Mr. Gresham to make his first motion. Mr. Gresham made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Tracy seconded.

Dr. Goodman adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.



Dr. Joel Goodman, Chairman



John R. Byrd, Executive Secretary