

Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
Wednesday, January 18, 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; Dan Tracy; Dave Brown; Edward Coleman

Members Absent:

Christine O'Connor

Staff Present:

John Byrd, Executive Secretary; Mike Milani, Bureau Chief of Administrative Services; Laura T. Wetherald, Bureau Chief of Recreation; Lauren Davis, Assistant to Ms. Wetherald and Recording Secretary.

Approval of Minutes:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Motion was made by Mr. Tracy to approve the minutes. A seconded motion was made by Ms. Kiebler. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

No public comments.

Directors Report:

A. Capital Budget Motion:

Ms. Ramsey made a motion to approve the Capital Budget that was presented at our Advisory Board Meeting last month. Mr. Tracy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. GPS Collar Study of Deer Management-Phil Norman, Natural Resource Program Manager:

Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks today announced it has begun a study to evaluate integrated tick control strategies on single-family home sites located adjacent to large public lands in Howard County. The study, which has never been done before in Maryland, is part of a larger, five-year, area-wide Integrated Tick Management Project of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS). DRP is collaborating with the USDA-ARS and the University of Maryland (UMD).

This new study is to test the single and combined effects of three control measures on tick abundance and the presence of tick-borne disease pathogens in Howard County residential neighborhoods and parkland through the deployment of: (1) non-lethal Select TCS™ rodent bait boxes; (2) ARS-patented “4-poster” deer treatment feeders (in county parks only) and (3) Met52® EC natural spray. The ultimate goal is to identify the most effective way to control ticks in residential areas and to reduce the overall tick population density in suburban landscape across Howard County and the state.

To carry out this three-pronged study, the project team (comprised of members from DRP, USDA-ARS and UMD) has selected seven sites throughout Howard County to serve as field study sites. These sites are: Cedar Lane Park; Centennial Park; Rockburn Branch Park; David Force Natural Resource Area; Middle Patuxent Environmental Area; Blandair Park and the Wincopin Trail of Savage Park.

The first year of the study will be spent recruiting homeowners’ interested in participating in the study, sampling ticks to develop for baseline tick density data collection, sampling mice for immature ticks and the pathogens they carry, and trapping white-tailed deer for GPS collar placement. The goal is to catch 50 white-tailed deer and fit each with a GPS collar to track their movement between residential and natural areas. All animals captured will be released

back into their habitat and the GPS collars will remain on each animal for approximately 18 to 24 months, after which they will automatically drop off from the animal and recovered by researchers.

During the second year, the three tick control measures will be deployed individually or in combination at selected study sites. Tick sampling and mouse trapping will continue throughout the entire study to allow for sufficient data collection in order to determine the effectiveness of different tick control measures after one, two and three years of continuous operation.

The tick sampling is done to monitor tick species and population density over time in a given area. The project team will be using a flagging method for tick sampling which involves a researcher gently moving a piece of white flannel at the end of a pole over the ground and vegetation in the areas of interest. For residential properties, researchers are interested in tick numbers from properties that are adjacent to study sites.

The chosen control methods are host-targeted; that is, they treat the primary hosts of ticks which are white-footed mice and white-tailed deer. The white-footed mice are the primary reservoir host for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the causative agent of Lyme disease. Since the pathogen is transmitted to mice from ticks as well, trapping and testing mice allows scientists the ability to monitor the status of the pathogen in the area. White-tailed deer are abundant in Howard County. Monitoring and understanding deer movement patterns will help identify high risk areas so targeted control measures can be developed in order to break the life cycle of the tick to achieve population suppression.

The field work involving mice and deer in Howard County by the project team will follow the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee protocol approved by the USDA-ARS for the safety of the animals.

Bureau of Administrative Services:

Mr. Milani stated that the new summer camp guide will be coming out shortly for residents. The new summer camp guide has a picture of Joe Flacco on the cover. The picture was taken at one of our camps last summer.

Mr. Milani stated that we are still in the budget process. A few things that we were able to do included converting the rangers position to full-time status and being able to convert 9 contingent employees to full-time status. We are looking to have the positions starting by June 1, 2017.

Bureau of Parks: (Presented by Mr. Milani)

Park Operations Division

- Belmont Manor and Historic Park is undergoing site renovations (Mr. Delorme can elaborate). All weekend dates for 2017 are booked with many of the dates for 2018 booked as well.
- The Parks Operations staff are working on winter projects (repairing trails and trail crossings, removing dead trees, completing field renovations, repairing and repainting field hockey goals, removing trees in meadow areas, assisting with holiday events, conducting winter maintenance on equipment, tree pruning, repairing natural turf areas, filling synthetic fields with rubber pellets, etc.).

Natural and Historic Resources Division

- Staff completed a natural resources assessment at Timbers at Troy golf course for the Capitol Projects and Park Planning Bureau.
- Megan Mills completed a five-day Private Forest Conservation Easement planting of 1,100 trees on the Kittleman property.
- Heritage staff are planning a re-opening of the Old Court House in Ellicott City featuring new exhibits in February to commemorate Black History Month. Date TBD.
- Heritage staff are converting the basement of their office (Zaiser House) into an archeology lab/collections storage area.

- To date, 109 deer have been taken between the managed hunts and sharp shooting operations. Some hunts may be modified or cancelled due to Mr. Norman's (who manages this program) absence for an extended length of time.
- Staff will begin trapping and collaring deer for the USDA/UMD/HCDRP Cooperative deer study. Dates still to be determined. Ms. Belensky will be taking over this project during Mr. Norman's absence.
- The Natural and Historic Resources Division is working on winter projects (conducting chainsaw safety training classes, training staff on the GPS based trail data dictionary trail assessment tool, removing no longer monitored bluebird boxes, re-design and installing park kiosks, reconstruction of the front desk area at Robinson Nature Center, planning summer programs, invasive plant removal, qualifying "Turf to Trees" properties, catching up on inspections, etc.).

Horticulture and Land Management Division

- Staff is working with the Columbia Gardeners on building compost bins at the Long Reach garden plots.
- Tree planting plan for Belmont has been completed and is going to MHT and MET for approval.
- The HLMD staff are working on winter projects (leaf removal, mower winter maintenance, cutting down ornamental grasses, tree pruning, sodding and replanting at Belmont, GPS-ing park trees, re-planking trailers, etc.).

Dr. Goodman asked if all the chores have been completed for the pre-file at Timbers of Troy.

Mr. Byrd responded by stated that we are still working on the bunkers and the irrigation. We still have not signed the lease document. We hope to pre-file it to County Council by the end of next week for a February hearing. He believes we will have a good lease agreement by the time it is complete and finalized. The renovations for Timbers of Troy will be complete by this fall. We hope to make an announcement in April for the re-opening of the golf course.

Mr. Byrd stated that we are partnering with the Howard County Conservancy to complete a 2-acre pollinator meadow. We just got approval from MET. It will be between the cottage and overflow parking area.

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

Mr. Byrd stated that we closed Blandair Park until mid-February so that we can get some work done on the roads. The road access from Route 175 is going to open on February 3rd.

Mr. Byrd stated that we ran into an issue with our light poles at Rockburn Park. The bases on all of the older poles are all rotting out and they will all need to be replaced. We are currently coming up with a plan to find a way to financially pay for new light poles. Mr. Delorme and Department of Public Works are working on this issue. If we do replace them, we will be going for all the new lighting.

Mr. Milani stated that there would be a huge problem if we have to shut down the fields. The multipurpose fields are completely booked solid every day.

Mr. Byrd stated that we sent the draft for the Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan over to DNR for their review. Once they review and approve it, the draft will go over to the Planning Board for a presentation. It will then go to County Council in May so that they can accept it. We are right on track with this plan.

Mr. Byrd stated that it was our recommendation to do the land swap over at Governor's Run. We are basically giving them the lawn that they already have and we are getting the woods that we prefer to have.

Bureau of Recreation:

Ms. Wetherald presented a newspaper article that included a nice article and picture of our Daddy Daughter Dance. We have been doing this dance for over 20 years. The picture was taken by a photographer with

the local news station.

Ms. Wetherald stated that we should know next week if our CAPRA reviewers accepted our CAPRA Self-Assessment that we turned in on December 30, 2016. We will then send 3 more travel drives to the CAPRA visitors that will be coming to Howard County Recreation and Parks to visit us. The CAPRA visitors will be here sometime during mid-March to the end of March. They will come in on a Monday and leave on a Thursday.

Ms. Wetherald asked the Board about how she could give her CAPRA presentation during our next meeting. The board decided to come in early at 6:00 pm so that we can eat pizza and Ms. Wetherald can give her presentation. Our regular board meeting for February will still start at 7:00 pm.

Ms. Wetherald passed out our Wine in the Woods rack cards. Since it is our 25th anniversary, we are putting our 25th anniversary logo on the wine glasses. Laura stated to the board that we have plenty of extra wine glasses from our previous Wine in the Woods Festival and they are more than welcome to have a box. Whole Foods will be providing food at our Wine in the Woods Festival. Our website that we are now running ourselves is up and running.

Ms. Wetherald stated that we have been doing our camp evaluations. We are working to create an online test for camp staff. We bring in over 700 staff for camps so we are looking to create a policy and procedure test for staff to take online.

Ms. Wetherald stated that we just hired a new Trips and Tours Coordinator and we are looking to focus more on that area to provide more trips for everyone.

Ms. Wetherald talked about the *Shifts Happens:2016* video that is about lifelong learning, which is something that we do in Howard County. The video talks about everything that is happening regarding data, demographics, and trends.

Old Business:

Mr. Byrd stated that we have the final version of the annual report. We will email it to everyone on the board.

Mr. Byrd stated that the County Executive has decided to move forward with the Savage Mill land swap. Mr. Byrd will bring it to the Planning Board on March 16, 2017.

Mr. Byrd stated that the EPA was supposed to have a report out for the rubber issue on field turf by the end of 2016 but they did not. They are now saying that the report will be out late 2017. You can go on the EPA's website to get a lot of good information about their methodology and what they have already prepared for this study.

Mr. Byrd stated there was a work session during the summer before last and one of the outcomes was to allow local jurisdiction to have more discretion on the allocation on open space funds. That legislation has been submitted by Senator Middleton. This would change the current open space law.

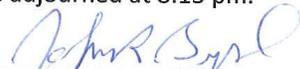
New Business:

Mr. Coleman stated that Long Reach was designated as a sustainable community and the Long Reach Village Board will be reaching out to the County for help to putting together a resource booklet.

Mr. Tracy made the motion to adjourn the meeting. A second motion was made by Ms. Kiebler. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.



Dr. Joel Goodman, Chairman



John R. Byrd, Executive Secretary