

Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
Wednesday, May 20, 2020- 7:00pm
Department of Recreation Headquarters
WebEx Video Meeting

Members Present:

Sylvia Ramsey, Chair; Ed Coleman, Co-Chair; Dave Grabowski; Mavis Ellis; Tom Franklin

Staff Present:

John S. Marshall, Bureau Chief of Parks; Robert E. Linz, Acting Bureau Chief of Capital Projects, Park Planning and Construction; Michael H. Milani, Bureau Chief of Administration; Laura T. Wetherald, Bureau Chief of Recreation; Ryan Etter, Recording Secretary

Call to Order:

Ms. Ramsey called the meeting to order at 7pm.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion was made by Mr. Grabowski to approve the February meeting minutes. Seconded by Mr. Coleman. Motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

John Trocher, 2918 Excelsior Springs Court, Ellicott City 20142

“I have a general question. I have lived here for 28 years. Any insight on when playgrounds, basketball courts, Howard County Pools and Community pools may open?”

Raul Delerme-

“We are under Phase 1 of the Governor’s Reopening Plan. We have a team working on reopening plans for different items in our parks. At this time there is no announcement on this until the next phase. This is a fluid situation currently with the pandemic.”

John Trocher-

"I'm most interested in the community pools. I sit on the board of directors for North St. Johns Community pool. We have next to nothing in terms on when to open."

Raul Delerme-

"We only have the one pool that we are responsible for at Roger Carter Community Center. Of course, the others are not run by the county. From what I have been hearing, is that dates are July or even later. We haven't even considered opening ours yet."

Jacob Rettig, 9622 Green Moon Path Columbia, MD 21046

"I sent an email earlier and it was answered. When are summer camps expected to open? Preferably younger elementary kids."

Laura Wetherald-

"As far as camps go there have been no decision past June 15th. We hope to make a decision fairly quickly. We are looking at outdoor camps. We are looking at indoor camps. What we are focusing on now are virtual camps and virtual programs for our spring season. Camps can only go in groups of 10 with staff. We hope to go through the whole summer."

Joy Earl, 8644 Open Meadow Way Columbia, MD 21045

"The question I have is if there will be any virtual summer classes. You may have answered, I joined late."

Laura Wetherald-

"Yes, if you go to our website or search #AtHomeWithHoCoRec, we have a list of programs for all ages that are going to be virtual summer camps. We are weekly updating the list. With social media we are trying to do every day updates."

Director's Report:

- Park gates are open
- Timbers of Troy Golf Course is open
- Disc Golf Course is open
- Bike Skills course is open
- Horse Ring at Schooley Mill Park is open
- Tennis and Pickleball courts are open
- Worthington Dog Park is open by appointment only
- Centennial Park is open for recreational boating and fishing, but not doing any rentals
- Programs, leagues, and events are cancelled/postponed until June 15th
- July 4th Fireworks have been cancelled

Bureau of Parks:

- Water fountain installation delayed due to budget freeze. Fountains are in warehouse but need funds to pour new concrete pads.
- Hardware for the lightning alerting system is being installed. Connection challenges will be handled by the end of June. Hope to fully be operational by August.
- Megan Mills is working on a grant that would triple the tree plantings for the Turf to Trees and StreamReleaf programs
- Vivian C. "Millie" Bailey Park is essentially complete. The park will stay closed until playgrounds are opened.
- MPEA building a parking lot are now open
- Park staff were able to complete several of their back-logged projects when the park gates were closed, such as painting parking lot lines
- Robinson Nature Center is hosting childcare for front line staff confronting the virus. The Department's Childcare staff along with Nature Center staff have taken on this challenge.

Bureau of Capital Projects, Park Planning and Construction:

- Centennial Park West Bridge fabrication has been non-stop, delivery of new bridge on June 11th
- Starting design of new Centennial North Playground
- Centennial handball courts – repainting walls and lines

- Oakland Mills Tunnel – hoping to start by late May
- Blandair Park rubber has been finished on playgrounds and artificial turf
- Schooley Mill Park cricket pitch expansion is complete
- Holiday Hills Park shade shelter for playground has been ordered – installation will be this summer
- MPEA is open, installing entrance sign

Bureau of Recreation:

- Emergency childcare for essential workers
 - Arranged to have 5 sites open
 - Only have needed Robinson Nature Center site
- All facilities are closed; in process of looking when/how to open
- #AtHomeWithHoCoRec online programming has begun
 - Converted existing classes as well as new classes in a virtual setting
- Virtual Programming team has been created to facilitate new programming process
- Camp Recovery Team created to see how the camp season can proceed with the COVID-19 guidelines
- Created Camp in a Bag program
 - Parents pay a lower price for 3-week class
 - Pick up supplies for the whole class
 - Complete daily tasks with weekly themes
- Created Staff Training team to figure out how to complete training online
- 40% of customers have said they would like to do a virtual camp/program

Bureau of Administrative Services:

- Presented operating budget - may have to adjust because of Covid-19
- Because of so many refunds, had to send check to ActiveNet to cover costs
- 100% refund, no questions asked during this situation
- Put committee together to start reopening
- Will start to open fields

Old Business:

No Old Business


New Business:

No New Business

Ms. Ramsey made the motion to adjourn the meeting. A second motion was made by Mr. Grabowski and Mr. Franklin. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.



Sylvia Ramsey, Chairperson



Raul Delorme, Executive Secretary

