

Meeting Minutes  
 Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board  
 Robinson Nature Center - Columbia, MD  
 7-9 PM  
 June 9, 2016

Name	Affiliation
John Byrd	Director of Department of Recreation and Parks
Georgia Eacker	ESB
Chris Tsien	ESB
Ed Wilson	ESB
Mark Southerland	ESB
Ned Tillman	ESB
Tom Paxton	ESB
Cathy Hudson	Public
Joel Hurewitz	Public
Ross Swatek	Public
Maria Alvarez	Public

7:00pm

Board Chair Ned Tillman welcomed the meeting attendees. Joel Hurewitz was invited to take ten minutes to share his stance on the enforcement of noise ordinances around Merriweather Post Pavilion prior to the Board moving on to the meeting’s official Agenda. Some citizens of Columbia feel that their voice has not been heard with respect to complaints made against Merriweather’s noise levels.

Ned Tillman thanked the ‘Merriweather noise issue’ contingent and invited them to stay for the duration, offering to give more time to the issue at the end of the meeting if time permitted. Ned then welcomed Director of Recreation and Parks, John Byrd, to talk to the board about how Sustainability fits into the mission and operations of DRP.

7:15pm

Mr. Byrd said that a lot of sustainability in DRP has been based around finding financial efficiencies that also yield environmentally positive results. Some examples include: using less fertilizer, less pesticide, efficient energy use in buildings, creating no mow areas, and closing off social and old trails to concentrate funding on more heavily used permanent trails.

The DRP Director pointed out that half of Rec and Parks money comes from income that they generate, which makes their funding more sustainable. DRP also creates a “Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan” that allows the Department to apply for Program Open Space money, which too makes their programs more sustainable from the County’s standpoint.

Mr. Byrd gave a brief history of trends in the County's Recreation and Parks Department. The Department has acquired a lot of land in the past but less is acquired as land values goes up. The Department spends more money and effort now on creating active recreation opportunities in densely populated areas. Demographic and cultural changes have been a challenge for the County to keep up with, but they also have success stories such as identifying the need for two Cricket fields which are now heavily used. Now tracking the increasingly popular sport of Pickle ball, which is likely to increase with our aging population, the Department strives to stay on top of meeting the Howard's communities' recreational needs. Meeting the demand for community garden space has proven difficult.

DRP has some indicators that they are keeping up with the needs of a diversifying population. Cricket field use and enrollment in summer camps by diverse groups are two of these indicators.

There is an 850 person sample size phone survey, being contracted out by DRP to OpinionWorks for assistance in development of the "Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan". There will also be two public meetings in July and 1 in September for the public to express their opinions about the Department and how it can improve. Specific meeting information and a comment submission tool are available on the DRP website. The September meeting will be on the 21st, but no time or place is given online to date (7.19.16). A public hearing in September will release the first draft of the plan. The ESB expressed an interest in seeing the data from the survey and John Byrd suspected that DRP could accommodate this. More information on the "Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan" via: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/News/ArticleID/435/News041116> .

The three biggest challenges to DRP that the ESB may be able to help with:

- 1) Competition for space among programs and customer needs
- 2) Money. Securing funding.
- 3) Projecting the needs of the future.

8:30pm

Ned briefed the ESB on the progress of the mold subcommittee which may meet in July to discuss the appropriate method of responding to the request made of the Board in CR- 31-2016.

8:45pm

Committee updates: Mark Southerland reported on the Commercial Stormwater Solutions Work Group. The commercial stakeholders are buying into the idea of this creative solutions group. They have asked to hear more from DPZ and MDE about permitting and more from DPW about the physical in the ground practices necessary to install SWM BMPs and meet MS4 requirements.

8:55pm

The board requested that Joel Hurewitz submit to the Board a written explanation of what actions he or

others have already taken to resolve their conflict with Merriweather Post Pavilion, why they feel that the ESB is an appropriate group to address their concern, and what action they would like to see the ESB take if the ESB were to address this conflict.

**There will be no July meeting. Will meet on August 25th at the George Howard Building, from 7-9pm, in the Columbia/Ellicott City Room on the first floor.**