

County-wide Recreation and Parks Advisory Board

Monday, March 19, 2018

Meeting Notes

Present: Chris Richardson, John Nissel, Doug Ludwig, Sandra Samuel, Gail Gunod-Green, Mark Pharoah, Ron Maxson, Benjamin DuGoff, Jonathan Brice, Jeffrey Szuchman, Rod Vital, David Pollen, Felecia Wilson, Carl Blake, and Safiatou Barry

Dial-In: Vernard McBeth, Onyel Bhola, Paul Lofgren, Carol Petrucci, and Phyllis Rand

Absent: Seto Adeyefo, Karen Kincer, Matthew Lew, Bradley Ryan, Gabriel Albornoz, Jeff Bourne, Morton Davis and Adriane Clutter

Meeting called to order by Chris Richardson at 6:44pm.

Review of Agenda

- Accepted

Review of February 2018 Meeting Notes

- Accepted

Presentation: Comprehensive Service Delivery Strategy – Coach Chuck Carter & Dave Pollen

- MCTA's mission us to support the growth and development of tennis in Montgomery County and the CSDS is consistent with that goal.
- The CSDS was developed by alternative service providers to complement the PROS plan and consistent Vision 2030 regarding the role of "alternative service providers" in providing public services to Montgomery County residents.
- The CSDS is a long-range 20-year vision to promote and develop the growth of tennis. Critically, it is a comprehensive approach, incorporating all venue types and all providers.

Tennis Demographic

- The latest Tennis Industry Association (TIA) national survey data describes the tennis-playing demographic. [Cite gender equity; ethnic and age diversity]

Tennis Participation Nationwide

- Nationwide, tennis continues a long-term pattern of growth, even allowing for the adverse impact of the economic downturn 2010-2016.

Health Benefits

- Most Importantly, we believe the known health benefits of tennis make it an appealing choice for players, and an appropriate investment for public dollars.

Participation by Studied Sections and Nationwide

- Drilling down from the national data, tennis play in our home Section-USTA is organized into 17 Sections, and our Section is Mid-Atlantic – has increased an average of 9.3% since 2014.
- That's a total of 181.9 thousand new tennis participants – most of the surveyed Sections and well above the national rate.

Mid-Atlantic Section

- The Mid-Atlantic Section ranks 3rd in total tennis players, but #1 in the country for the highest percentage of its population by playing the game.
- And most significantly, given the impression many have of tennis as a “country club sport” ...

Most players rely on public courts

- 47.6% of Mid-Atlantic tennis players report they play primarily on public park courts. Another 17.7% play primarily on school courts. A total of 65.3% play on public courts, compared to only 18% who play primarily at commercial or private clubs. In other words, tennis in Mid-Atlantic Section is heavily reliant on public venues, much so than the sport’s historic image might suggest, and more so than is the case nationally.

Montgomery County Residents List Tennis as Medium Priority for Public Investment

- The industry survey results are consistent with Montgomery County residents’ view of tennis as a medium priority for investment in Recreation Facilities, as reported in the 2012 PROS update.

It all starts with kids having access to quality facilities

- So clearly, the demand for tennis exists locally and is forecast to grow based on the numbers of “new entry” players.
- Equally clearly, the “venue use” data tell us that continued growth and development of tennis depends on the tennis-friendly facilities offered by Montgomery County Parks and Montgomery County Schools.
- And that means, we must do everything we can to maintain or upgrade existing facilities to industry standards
- While all ages benefit from tennis, comprehensive survey data from Monitoring the Future (MTF), a highly respected, federally funded survey, makes a strong case that tennis participation positively influences the lives of our youth in several critical respects and across all socioeconomic levels. Tennis players achieve better grades, have more firmly entrenched college aspirations, are better behaved, and are more community oriented and well-rounded, while avoiding risky behaviors, (all compared to other sport participants and non-participants).
- Tennis does not necessarily cause better behaviors; it’s simply a fact that those who play tennis evidence better behaviors, and it’s logical to view tennis as a catalyst for driving participants in “the right directions.”

The CSDS Rollout is underway

- The CSDS Rollout will impact Parks and MCPS facilities; CUPF and Park Permit offices; County Parks, Recreation, and Municipal-based recreation programming.
- Such programming and the facilities at which they are offered will be viewed favorably for equipment assistance (via Net Generation equipment discounts and grants) and for facility improvements/upgrades (via USTA Facility Assistance grants).
- Already on the table is USTA’s offer finance 100% of the cost of adding blended lines to every MCPS school tennis court that applies in time complete the project by June 2018.
- We are moving forward with new initiatives under CSDS, including
 - o The East County Initiative to add programming for at-risk youth;
 - o A racket donation initiative for County Recreation Centers;
 - o An advocacy initiative targeted at the County Council to restore/increase CIP and PLAR funding essential for facility maintenance/improvement.

- It is critical to note that of the estimated 492 public tennis court inventory in Montgomery County approximately 390 of those (79%) fall under the jurisdiction and control of MCPS and its “permitting agent,” CUPF. We are pleased to participate with Parks and CUPF in an ongoing pilot program aimed at increasing public access to school-based tennis courts for organized events (tournaments, festivals, “play days,” etc.). What we’ve learned from the pilot program will be explored in greater detail when we present before the ICB and MCPS.

What Do We Ask of You?

- Actively advocate for restored/increased CIP and PLAR funding for Parks and schools.
- Actively advocate for RecExtra funding so that alternative service providers can fill the gaps where Parks or Rec staff initiatives are unable to satisfy demand.
- Support launching Unified Tennis at MCPS high schools.
- Finally, we ask you to embrace our Comprehensive Service Delivery Strategy principle, to thin outside the box and across traditional delivery constraints, to provide the tennis programming our communities seek.

Overview of Budgets: FY19 Budget – Robin Riley & John Nissel

Robin Riley – Acting Director

- The total recommended FY19 Operating Budget for the Department of Recreation is \$38,233,908, an increase of \$464,034 or 1.23 percent from the FY18 Approved Budget of \$37,769,874. Personnel Costs comprise 65.50 percent of the budget for 140 full-time position(s) and eleven part-time position(s), and a total of 456.03 FTEs. Total FTEs may include seasonal or temporary positions and may also reflect workforce charged to or from other departments or funds. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 34.50 percent of the FY18 budget. The increase in FY19 funding is from the additional of several positive youth development Initiatives and the re-opening of the Good Hope Recreation Center.
- The Debt Service for the Recreation Fund is appropriated in the Debt Service Fund and is, therefore, not displayed in this section. To pay for the Debt Service, a transfer of funds from the Recreation Fund to the Debt Service Fund of \$11,068,100 is required to cover General Obligation bond and long-term lease costs. Additionally, it should be noted that the Department manages an estimated \$7,852,815 Agency Fund. This Fund is designated for handling contracted programs and service and it entirely revenue supported. The net proceeds of these activities are accounted for in the Recreation Fund.
- In addition, this department’s Capital Improvements Program (CIP) requires Current Revenue funding.

John Nissel – Deputy Director of Parks

- The recommended **operating budget** is \$5 million less than what the Planning Board deemed necessary to support our aging park system. Unless the Council can restore a significant portion of this funding, the Parks Department will not have staff or funding to operate **new parks coming on line, will implement a hiring freeze, suffer deep cuts in supplies, materials and contractual services needed to maintain the parks, and forego any requested resources to enhance existing park programs and fix aging and failing park infrastructure.**

- The recommended **six-year CIP** is \$26 million less than the Planning Board's request. The Parks Department has agreed to \$15 million of this reduction which will downsize and delay several planned projects and reduce funding for parkland acquisition. If the remaining \$11 million is not restored, long-planned projects such as **the Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park, the Brookside Gardens Master Plan Implementation, the Little Bennett Regional Park Day Use Area, the Little Bennett Regional Park Trail Connector, the Wheaton Regional Park Improvements, the Northwest Branch Recreational Park-Athletic Area, funding for the restoration of historical structures, and funding for park asset lifecycle replacement will be reduced;** meaning older playgrounds, courts, trails, and other amenities in our parks.
- Lastly, the County Executive's CIP amendments released on March 15 make drastic changes to the County's approach and funding commitment to environmental remediation projects funded by the Water Quality Protection Fund, which funds environmental programs in the Parks operating and capital budget including **stream protection and storm water management programs.**
- Impose Hiring freeze on all vacant positions for the first quarter of the fiscal year.

Motions

- Board made a motion to testify for the Board based upon the Parks and Recreations recommendations. MOTION to accept; seconded and passed
- Chris Richardson does not want Parks to write the letter but instead provide a list of items to assist the board with writing the letter
- Board made a motion to review the provided information from Parks and Recreation on April 2nd to draft a letter for the Board support. MOTION to accept; seconded and passed.
- Board will review info provide by Parks and MCRD on April 2nd meeting.

CUPF Update - Ron Maxson

- Brief introduction of the new Communication Outreach Coordinator, Ron Vital

Commission on Aging – Phyllis Rand

- Phyllis Rand provided written report

Commission Action Board – Gail Gunod-Green

- Gail Gunod-Green emailed the Community Action Board Ex-Officio Report prior to this meeting.

MCPS Update - Dr. Jonathan Bryce

- No Update

Commission on People with Disabilities – Benjamin DuGoff

- No update

Action items

Doug Ludwig provided information for the Board.

- How do Neighborhoods/Associations request Pop up Parks? (Process)
 - o For the list of upcoming programs taking place this month, visit the [Pop Up Parks webpage](http://www.montgomeryparks.org/pop) (www.montgomeryparks.org/pop). Feel free to email Kokia Tarik (Kokia.Tarik@MontgomeryParks.org) and let her know what activities you'd like to see in your neighborhood park in the future. More events to come!

Recreation Update – Robin Riley, Montgomery County Recreation

- Robin Riley provided a handout at the meeting.

Parks Update

John Nissel, Deputy Director, Montgomery Parks

- Operating budget impacts for new and expanded parks including Batchellors Forest Local Park, Kensington Cabin, Kings LP, Pinecrest LP, South Germantown Recreation Park, and Wheaton Claridge LP
 - o Wheaton Claridge will be opening mid-April
 - o Laytonia Recreation Parks will be opening April 1st
 - o Kensington Cabin will be opening soon; ribbon cutting scheduled for September 2018
- In the process of hiring a new Park Police Chief
- Drone purchased. Benefits of having drones
 - o Tree crews to evaluate trees for disease and for general tree assessment
 - o Provide roof inspections
 - o Finding missing people

New Business

- No new business

Meeting Adjourned at 8:20pm.

NEXT MEETING – April 2 at 6:30 p.m. at Montgomery County Recreation, 4010 Randolph Road, Silver Spring, MD 20902