

# COUNTYWIDE RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

## Monday, June 22, 2020 Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams Minutes

**Present Board:** Carl Blake, Dave Pullen, Karen Kincer, Chris Richardson, Felecia Wilson, Melanie Stickle, Michael Shimoff, and Michael Ma. **Ex-Officio:** Rodrigue Vital, Stephanie Edelstein, and Jeff Sullivan. **Staff:** Robin Riley, John Nissel, Adriane Clutter, Doug Ludwig, Sandra Samuel, and Melanie Sasse

**Absent:** Benjamin DuGoff, Safiatou Barry, Lyle Ganz, Mark Pharaoh, Isaac Osei Asare, and Traci Anderson

Meeting started at 6:34 pm, Quorum present

### Welcome and Announcements – Chair

- Karen Kincer welcomed the board

### Review of Agenda

- Motion made by Dave Pullen and seconded Carl Blake. Approved.

### Review and approval of May minutes

- Motion made by Dave Pullen and seconded Melanie Stickle. Approved.

### Community announcements

- Karen Kincer – Confusion in public deciphering all opening statements and how it is being handled differently
  - Private vs. public and available agency resources
- Melanie Stickle mentioned families wants playgrounds open
  - Families traveling to other counties (Howard County), more sports league play there also
- Carl Blake said many teams practicing on fields are not practicing social distancing (risky business)
  - Master swimming group - looking for guidance to use the county outside pools
  - Waiting decisions on outside pool access

### Reports

#### Officers and Committee Reports

#### Ex Officio Reports

##### **Community Use of Public Facilities – Rod Vital**

- No Report – Cancellations and Refunds
  - With Phase 2 opening waiting on final approval from MCPS to reissue permits
  - For the use fields, no way to enforce social distancing

##### **Commission on Aging – Stephanie Edelstein**

- Zoom is working well
- Focus/Appreciation for meals to senior thanks to Robin and her staff
- Focus on the Commission meeting is more on senior nursing and assisting living
- Governor had order testing on all nursing home residents and staff, but the requirement did not extend to residents and staff of the assisting living, which includes the smaller groups homes
- The Commission has sent a letter to the State Dept. of Health requesting that to occur

- Upcoming Reopening of the courts and the potential of evictions of all ages group
- State Delegation has gone to the governor as Montgomery County does not have the authority to pause on the eviction.
- Starting to look at FY22 priorities

#### **Community Action Board – \_\_\_\_\_**

- No Report

#### **Montgomery County Public Schools – Jeffrey Sullivan**

- Opening on our facilities
  - Fields will be opened for permitting on July 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Adopted Fields partners and artificial turf users will use the same permitting process to ensure compliance with COVID-19 expectations and restrictions
- MCPS Athletics Guidance
  - Conducting out of season optional conditioning programs, open to all students
  - The governance of our State Athletics Association falls under the Maryland State Dept. of Education and Maryland Secondary Schools Athletics Association (which is an arm of MSDE); all our rules are COMAR state law
  - Applying for waivers – will be sent to the State Board tomorrow
  - Have plans for sports to move forward – needs approval
  - Have a task force at MCPS consisting of coaches, athletic directors, trainers, transportation, facilities, and security to enforce guidelines ready.
  - MCPS Guiding Principles
    - Is promoting our core values of equity and access to allow for the participation of all students.
    - Ensuring the gradual, safe return of student-athletes to in-person participation interscholastic athletic activities.
    - Maximizing participation opportunities, including the timely implementation and incremental transition to new phases.
    - Providing ongoing communication regarding the MCPS Athletics program in alignment with state and local guidelines, consideration, and recommendations.
  - Pushing for a target in mid-July, getting back into small group conditioning, and working through various aspects.
  - Waiting for the guidance to implement “Screening.”
  - Carl Blake asked with the small group conditioning.
    - What is the thinking considering it is going to be hot and humid over the summer, as far as the facilities that might be able to provide locker rooms and air conditioning and things like that? What is the current thinking on using those facilities to support small groups and the amount of risk involved?
      - The current thinking for Phase 1 is we are not prepared to go inside indoor facilities. We would be looking at outdoor facilities right now. We would be looking at the morning and evening hours to stay out of the day’s heat, and we do have (on the website) posted heat guidelines and fall heat plans that drive our program. We shared those resources to coaches with reminders that doing this time awaits a green light to go, with the deep conditioned athlete, hydration and fall heat plan MCPS athletics to make a firm decision before getting back to the action.

#### **Commission on People with Disabilities – Benjamin DuGoff**

- No Report - absent

## Recreation Report - Robin Riley

- The county lost two employees to COVID-19, and MCRD lost one employee
- Thanked Adriane and her team for getting senior meals prepped
- Grab & Go program in East County and White Oak, 700 boxes of fresh produce, frozen meat, and dry goods
- Pet food was added last week
- Working a non-profit, Matt Levitt, Level the Playing Field, provided 100 sport kits
- Pools – Indoor and Outdoor
  - Thanked Melanie and her team
  - Working to prep and get inspected
  - Will follow state guidelines with conditions.
  - No career staff at outdoor pools (seasonal staff only)
  - Will open with modifications
    - 2-hour sessions with cleaning
    - 1 per lap lane, 1 per 36 sq. Ft.
    - Only pass holders are allowed.
- Camps – Adriane Clutter and Melanie
  - Working with Parks, Tacoma Park, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Prince George’s County collectively using the same protocol, sharing best practices
  - “Summer Programming” instead of offering 3000 kids, we are down to 700 kids
  - As far as the equity level reaching out to our most vulnerable population first
  - Working public schools and Health and Human Services to identify those with a greater need
- Campaign – This is Why
  - “This is Why,” Good social media campaign
  - Kids could submit a video
  - Go to Facebook and watch the video
  - Adriane Clutter– Proud of the camp team
    - Thanked Robin
- Melanie Sasse mentioned aquatic was ready to go and worked the health dept., just waiting for the approval to open facilities
- Adriane Clutter said how proud she is of the entire camp team and all their efforts and thanked Robin
- Launched COVID Corps
  - 1600 applications (Crashed HR System), 100 positions
- We are running shelters at two facilities, Long Branch and Coffield.
  - We will not have summer activities.
- Karen Kincer asked when will the senior centers be opened
  - Waiting for approval from the Governor, the County Executive, and the Public Health Officer. Winter at best.

## Parks Report - John Nissel

- Thanked MCRD Staff – Great Partnership
- Thanked Karen Kincer for doing a great job running the board
- Trails and Parkways continued to be crowded, including parking spaces
- Increase in Parks usage; up to 30% to 40%, will continue as the weather gets warmer
- Fields use is an issue with social distancing protocol getting into Phase 2
- Purposely not lining fields, leaving grass higher to discourage games but encouraging practices

- Thanked CUPF, MCPS, and MCRD with assisting with decisions making with “how we get fields open.”
- Teams will need to take responsibility for social distancing guidelines.
- Parks sent out a response to the “Black Lives Matter” Resolution from the Commission to all staff and will be placed on the website.
- 6 % saving plans – 6,000,000 off Parks budget
  - Abbreviated work schedule for labor staff
    - Every week 1/3 of staff is home or on social distancing leave, and 2/3 are working, still negotiating with the union
- Wheaton HQ is looking great, taking a tour this week
- Working on Covid-19 office protocols, staff located over 40 locations across Parks
- Parks decided not to run traditional camps, doing some virtually in the nature centers programs
- Looking at other programs with social distancing guidelines
- Re-Opening Phase 2
  - Difference between state/county is difficult
  - Working with Dr. Gayles, the County Health Officer, for guidance
    - Reopen restrooms in Phase 2?
    - Need a protocol from the health office
  - Nature Centers will reopen with limited activities and visitations
  - PAB’s reopen, one permit per day to ensure proper cleaning
  - 50-person limit on gatherings
  - Ice rinks, Tennis courts, and event center will reopen at a 50-person capacity
  - Athletic fields – maintaining MCPS fields with our contract
    - Scaled back on mowing and lining the fields
    - Fields can rest and rejuvenate, plenty of nutrients management.
  - Possibly starting gameplay on the field on September 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Brookside Gardens –
    - Opening restrooms and gift shops
    - Looking for guidance from the health dept for the Garden of Lights in November
      - Cost around \$50,000 to set up the show
      - It is an Enterprise run function, not a tax-supported function
      - Need the revenue to pay for the expenses
      - We will decide in the next couple of weeks.
  - Ice Rink –
    - Is listed as a recreational establishment, that should be close to the public
    - The Governor July 10<sup>th</sup> order stated ice rinks could be opened at a maximum 50% capacity
    - Need guidance from the health dept.
    - We have all the protocols in place.
  - Basketball Courts and Playgrounds –
    - 225 Basketball courts that are still closed
    - The executive order does not explicitly address basketball, the Maryland Sports Commission recognizes as a high-risk sport
    - Seeking further guidance from the health dept. because it is a high-risk contact sport
    - Parks has 273 Playground
      - Closed due to social distancing
      - Seeking guidance from the health office
      - It has been a challenge.
  - Doug Ludwig confirmed 6% is little over \$6 million in cuts for the budget saving plan
    - Trails and trailheads have busier than ever.

- Can be a little bit of a problem with social distancing
  - Think is good more people are getting out into the parks, especially families
- Chris Richardson – Do you feel busier than in the past?
  - John Nissel answered, “Yes.”
  - Drive-thru theater opportunities? John answered the Park Activation Program has looked into program like this.
  - Drive-In Movies
    - Parks has purchased a large movie theater screen and looking for a park where people can tune in their car radio for audio.
- Carl Blake – Trail Running/Racing on social media
  - Many organizations are taking waitlist for cannot complete the registration due to not having a permit from the Parks that run the race. Consider how heavy the trails are right now; what should these groups expect going forward for the rest of the year? Will there be a season with no trail racing or maybe a possibility?
  - John- It will probably happen in Phase 3. Parks’ recommendations from our working group are races and marathons would be Phase 3.

### Nominating Committee Report & Executive Board Elections

- Nominating Committee
  - Karen Kincer – Chair
  - Carl Blake – Vice Chair
  - Executive Committee - Felicia, Melanie, and Mark
- Karen – thanked Howard and Melanie

### Plans for 2020-2021 Board Year Meetings

- The board is traditionally in a recess in July and August, reconvene in September.
- Meeting Date and Time – second Monday on the month at 6:30 pm, County Executive Office Bldg.
  - Is there a preference for virtual or in-person?
  - Virtual attendance is much better
  - Teams is a challenge; can we get zoom?
- Election
  - Karen Kincer - We had to do a Microsoft Forum to vote for the board. Is that ok?
    - Robin Riley responded, “Yes.” The Election must be anonymous.
    - Expanded and doing much more on the Zoom platform, providing classes. Moving forward, if we want to switch from Teams to Zoom, that is something we can now do.
  - Robin Riley recommended Wheaton HQ when the in-person meetings start.
  - Carl Blake suggests for the 20/21 year runs through some of the features for a better platform of different technology to see what works best for the board and make use of the best technology. From a public health standpoint, advocates for keeping the meetings online while there is still a health risk.
  - Dave Pullen agreed that online is the way to go for the foreseeable future. Whatever platform we use, it is essential to see all the parties, engages reactions, and get a personal feel.
- Chris Richardson mentioned problems may occur with the Council meetings.
- The board will continue with the second Monday of the month and will adjust when needed.
- Sandra Samuel will book the conference room for future meetings at Wheaton HQ for in-person meetings.
- Karen thanked the board.
- Meeting adjourned by 7:56 pm, motion by Dave Pullen and seconded by Carl Blake.

