

Countywide Recreation and Parks Advisory Board
2425 Reddie Drive, 10th Floor, Wheaton, MD
Sept. 8, 2025

Board members present: Ricci, Flores, Holeywell, Zarubin, Bentley, Delgado, Royster, Banda, Ryan, Hutton, Krauze, Hudson, Goettsch

Board members absent:, Jacknis, Mullis, Sparer, Tondo

Staff present: Fasteau, Coppola, Clutter, Fachet, Sandra Samuel

Ex-Officio members present: Ross, Matthews, Kellner, Gilchrest

Ricci called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. and a quorum was established.

Ricci shared the September 2025 agenda and the June 2025 minutes. Zarubin motioned to approve both. Bentley seconded. They were approved unanimously.

Fasteau offered a youth sports update. He described the Children's Bill of Rights in Sports, driven by the Aspen Institute's Project Play. The initiative articulates that all children have a right to participate in sports. Fasteau said Montgomery County Recreation would collaborate with the Sports Advisory Committee, City of Gaithersburg, City of Rockville and City of Takoma Park on a signing ceremony.

The initiative encourages a focus on kids -- not just adults -- in rec sports and is, in a part, a reaction to the trend of for-profit youth sports. The initiative encourages a love and appreciation of sports. A signing ceremony is scheduled for Oct. 9 at a Soccer4Change game at Northwest Branch Recreational Park in Aspen Hill.

The initiative has about 500 endorsees nationwide, including municipalities and youth sports organizations.

Clutter mentioned that girls' participation in sports drops off quickly as they grow older. She said the department is working with the University of Maryland to analyze the issue. She also mentioned the initiative may include a renewed focus on training coaches.

Flores asked if coach certification is a barrier for the department. Clutter said the department has been careful to make sure it is not a barrier. Fasteau alluded to a new partnership between the department and the Positive Coaching Alliance. Hutton also suggested the Bill of Rights document could be used to help rein in unruly youth sports parents.

Holeywell suggested that in the spirit of collaboration, the county's recreation department and the three city departments could cross-promote each other's programming.

Clutter said the municipalities' shared commitment will allow more collaborations around coach training such as conducting training for multiple municipalities at once.

At 7:07 Henry Coppola delivered the parks report (see email), highlighting:

- The Urban Tree Summit
- Various concerts
- Foodie Fridays
- Long Branch Festival
- Burtonsville Day
- Harvest Festival
- Pope Farm Nursery tours
- The runoff vote for the mural design at Glenmont Local Park
- The Parks Half Marathon
- Scheduled restoration completion for Greenbriar Local Park

Ricci asked about conflicts between Montgomery County Little League and BCC having to compete for field times. Coppola referenced a draft policy update that will soon be available for public review following a year of work that will cover field permitting issues. He said ultimately Montgomery Parks and the Montgomery Planning Board will make the decision on the proposed new policies.

At 7:25 p.m., Clutter delivered the Recreation report (see email), highlighting:

- Therapeutic Recreation swim party
- Youth winter basketball registration opening Sept. 29

e County Executive's "community conversations" for the FY 27 budget are currently underway

Clutter said community members in Bethesda are expected to advocate for a new community center. She said the county will have to determine how to prioritize new community centers in the face of limited resources, and it has identified Clarksburg as the area with the great need for a building, while the Bauer Rec Center is in the most need of renovations.

She also said community members are organizing in support of upgrades for upper county

recreation centers and the preservation of locations related to the history of African American sports/Negro baseball leagues.

Clutter said the department had a successful summer, and enrollment continues trending upward. She said advocacy will be important because without funding increases, it may soon hit a cap in enrollment.

Fachet mentioned the department has rolling, temporary closures of recreation centers for building improvements coming in the fall, but there shouldn't be more than two centers closed concurrently. She also highlighted several leadership changes in the department, and that it recently won several NACo awards.

Ricci asked about how the County Executive's community conversations were formatted. Fasteau explained that the executive typically does a presentation and then invites community members to speak. Krauze requested talking points for board members advocating for funding. Fachet and Clutter emphasized that funding for renovations of recreation facilities is important, with some of the oldest buildings being located in community with great needs.

Hutton motion to adjourn the meeting, and Bentley seconded. It was approved unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.