



Meeting Minutes

Sports Advisory Committee

Ross Boddy Community Recreation Center
18529 Brooke Road
Sandy Spring
Thursday, October 16, 2023

Board Members: Mary Kate Crawford, Rick James, Tina Won Sherman, Ben Corb, Samantha Griffin, Thomas Cove, Princess Clemente, David Schardt, Tony Korson, Chris Wajda, Doug Schuessler, Amy Lopez, Joe Hooks, Doug Remer

Absent Board Members: Trish Heffelfinger, Dustin Jeter, Max Levitt

Ex-Officio: Steve Solomon, Elijah Davis, Rebecca Frece, Nancy Petzold-Earp, Kathy Green, Yuling Mei
Staff: Jason Fasteau

Guests:

Montgomery County Parks:

Carl Weber - Athletic Field Coordinator, Park Planning and Stewardship
Melanie Huggins, Athletic Fields Permitting Supervisor
Haviz Adejo, Permitting and Information Manager

Montgomery County Recreation

Robin Riley - Director
Adriane Clutter - Division Chief, Programs

- 6:10 p.m. Call to order - Tom Cove
- 6:12 p.m. Review and Approve Agenda - Motion to approve: Amy Lopez, Unanimous Approval
- 6:14 p.m. Review and Approve September Minutes - Motion to approve: Ben Corb, Unanimous Approval
- 6:15 p.m. Tom's comments on strategies moving forward. What are we seeking?
Recommendation?
To whom? Research project? Funding? A reminder that each group has 15 minutes to present



6:18 p.m.

Field permitting panel and discussion (Montgomery Parks, CUPF, City of Gaithersburg)

- Melaine and Haviz - permitting process for Montgomery Parks
- Nancy - permitting process for CUPF including Priority Use Process
- Rebecca - permitting process for the City of Gaithersburg

Q&A

Ben: Regarding historical use, is there a point where the county would consider eliminating them?

Nancy: CUPF has been trying to get rid of historical use for years, but larger groups lobby the County Council to keep them.

Carl: Montgomery Parks knows this is an issue and over the next two years will conduct an internal use analysis, get feedback, and then go to the Planning Board with recommendations.

Tony: The Adopt a Field policy means the organizations pay to upkeep the fields in exchange for favorable hours but they are only for a few days a week. The program was intended to improve a subset of a field.

Carl: The Adopt a Field agreements are being reviewed as well as there are only two left and the fields are not being maintained.

Doug R.: Would it be possible to get field use in specific locations (priority allocated by location)?

Melanie: No, but that idea may be looked at more closely. Montgomery Parks needs to get a handle on the historical use issue first.

Mary Kate: Is there data on historical use, what percentage of permits are allocated to these groups?

Nancy: Yes, there is some data.

David: Do high schools control their fields?

Nancy: Yes, the AD controls grass fields, so need to approve any use on those fields. CUPF would like to get into those fields. High schools always have first priority for use.

Tom: How is the high school's control adjudicated if issues arise?

Nancy: Contact the Board of Education. Be prepared to speak about how the fields are maintained.

Joe: How are complaints about athletic field use captured? Who keeps the ADs accountable in terms of their use of the high school fields?

Haviz and Melanie: Montgomery Parks has a complaint system. Also, they are aware of the frequently asked about issues and are trying to address them.

Carl: Montgomery Parks will be looking into this as part of their internal review.

7:00 p.m. Reports from Ad Hoc Working Groups (Participation, Programs, Recognition, Facilities)

Facilities Ad Hoc Working Group (Mary Kate Crawford, Chair)

Reviewed the points from the September meeting on vision and “communities of concern”

Feedback from the September meeting was the exploration of a large indoor track complex and Adopt a Field and Parks-owned fields at Blair HS

Large indoor track complex - consolidation for building FedEx field; equity issues still exist

Adopt a field and Blair HS fields - some complexity but some successes like Julius West MS

Additional conversations included talking with Carl in Montgomery Parks to gain insights and use of Montgomery County fields

What’s next includes how to align MCPS and CUPF inventory to increase equity/accessibility; increase permitting at school fields (making fields more inviting); create parks hubs of field activities; and case study proposal (options are identifying communities of concern, identify a specific community, and investigate public-private partnerships and the impact on equity).

Joe: A premier facility not part of this group’s mission

Tony: Are external users driving development in the county? Re: building a new premier facility like a Sports and Learning complex. Compared to Florida

Kathy:

- Having a premier facility would increase sports participation in our county
- The Adopt-A-Field program is helpful as long as the adopters maintain fields, but not all do so
- The system needs more accountability because MCPS is responsible for fixing maintenance errors. Also, damage to infrastructure and amenities like goals, benches, etc. can take time to fix
- The baseline maintenance cost to maintain a HS grass field is \$35-40K
- Who is responsible for the maintenance of HS fields? Often it’s coaches and ADs

Doug S.:

- It’s only HS fields that are limited for use, not MS or ES fields

- There are severe budget limitations re: MCPS grass fields
- These HS grass fields and Adopt-A-Fields aren't the answer to everyone's concerns about field access and availability
- These questions are relevant to large-volume users and aren't relevant to underserved communities
- How do we increase participation rates in underserved communities

Kathy:

- How do we create a pipeline for students in underserved communities in sports?

Nancy:

- We could look at where fields are underutilized

Participation Ad Hoc Working Group (Amy Lopez)

Underserved/under resources - lack of access

What is the service we are looking to provide to county residents?

1. Sports programming - kids with special needs, non-binary, girls, scholarships or free access. ESOL, MCPS SSL hours, senior citizens, family participation, variety of sports development, skills-based rather than competitive. Propose ways to create and promote these types of programs
2. Coach and referee program - recruitment and ongoing support; coaches are from their communities (shared language, identities)
3. Grassroots approach: community Liaisons - who can advocate for the kids in their community
4. Scholarship programs: compiled into one place, pool of funds for families, rec assist already exists - tricky to navigate (funds for everything from transportation, equipment, etc)
5. Office of Grants Management - could make recommendations about what kind of grants we could seek

Equipment program - sports bras, equipment, hijabs, in the hands of participants who need them to be able to participate

Samantha - comments about how her organization helps train and place coaches

Ben - reinforce notion that SSL could be a great feeder for coaches and referees

Tony - how can we get the privileged groups to put money and resources into underserved communities

Joe - reinforce SSL recommendation, and those that give back to their community.

Community liaisons exist, but more communication is necessary

Amy - shared about partnerships with Montgomery County housing

Doctors' offices - this is already happening for food and housing

Programs WG (Tina)

2 buckets

1. Existing Programs: Having a baseline of programs would be helpful. What is offered already? This is needed in order to identify gaps. Continued conversation about pulling together a directory of programming in the county (youth, adult, and senior). Could be collected based on permitting information, surveying, etc. Opportunity for an event to invite all programmers into a space.

Reinforced idea for a case study, what are the characteristics? What gaps exist? Could help us identify what new programming would be needed? Could we test out a way to improve communication around new programming? (App or social media campaign?)

Supportive of liaison ideas (bridging Moco Rec/ Moco Parks with families)

2. Future Programs: use the case study approach to think about what new programs should be offered (or try it again in a new zip code). How can we expand either incrementally or county-wide?

Question: Tony - in regard to the soccer program that sold out - does the sport matter?
Chris - brought up existing information about planning at the county level (energized public space and community equity index)

Adriane - welcomes feedback and strategies to get into communities that don't have high levels of participation. A reminder that everyone deserves high-quality coaches and officials.

Kathy - we have the programs, but we are missing the boat. Is it about trust? How can we build relationships with families so they trust what is being offered?

Joe - Like to see a resource map based on my zip code - what programs are available in my area?

Nancy - single parent of 4 - limitations for child care and transportation needs

Recognition WG (David)

Provide handout to the group - [linked here](#)

Princess - making sure we recognize those that make outstanding contributions to sport in the county (and not just those who win). Could have a large event to celebrate all of these individuals? Connecting the community while celebrating the work of county citizens. Strengthening connections with local media.

Tom requests a motion for the committee to endorse specific recommendations, with revisions, moving forward: Rick motions, no one seconds

Ben - A recommendation to send thoughts on the group's ideas to David within the week

Tony - is this expected to be coupled with MoCo Sports Hall of Fame?

Steve Solomon - comments about the money and resources that will go into if a large event is expected/planned such as combining the events between HOF, SAC, and MCPS

Jason - collaboration and a pipeline of student-athletes to the Hall of Fame- inspiration to look ahead to the hall of fame

8:11 p.m.

Thanks from Tom

Proposal for the next steps: Leadership group and Working Group chairs reflect on the feedback today and start to look ahead. Recurring themes:

1. Directory - how can we deliver something like this?
2. Community Liaison - how can we create this position?
3. Community of Concern - how can we build trust?
4. Communication/marketing - how can we make our programs more visible and accessible?
5. Data - where are the issues? What are the issues?
6. Case Study Idea - let's look at how we will move forward with this

8:15 p.m.

Adjourn - motion Amy - unanimous support