

COUNTYWIDE RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

October 6, 2014
MEETING NOTES

Present: Renee Katz, Paul Lofgren, Ron MacNab, Mark Pharaoh, Chris Richardson, Michael Waters, Felecia Wilson, Gabe Albornoz [Rec], Jeff Bourne [Rec], Morton Davis [Commission on Aging], Susan Hoffmann [Rec], Ron Maxson [CUPF], John Nissel [Parks], Robin Riley [Rec], Mike Riley [Parks]

Absent: Joy Barrow, Wesley Japp, Erik Johnson, Myron Johnson, James Krzyminski, David Magill, Ingrid Pufahl, Sean Thomas Smith, Tony DeVaul [Park Police], Susan Hartung [Commission on Disabilities]

By phone: Vernard McBeth [partial time]

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

The Agenda [with one correction] and the September 2014 meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Rec Update – Gabe Albornoz

- November 1 – 11:30am – Scotland Neighborhood Recreation Center ribboncutting
4pm [tentative] Ross Boddy Neighborhood Recreation Center groundbreaking
- October 1 – kicked off basketball registration. It coincided with our transition to Office 365, new software which presented some challenges.
- Moving forward with ActiveNet, a new software package for booking public facilities, which will be more user-friendly to public customers of Montgomery County Recreation, Montgomery Parks, and Community Use of Public Facilities. MCPS works closely with Community Use of Public Facilities and ActiveNet needs to be more user-friendly to MCPS.
- We are filling three of four Center Director positions at Longwood, Wisconsin Place, Clara Barton and Scotland.
- Held all-day training for the entire department staff, focusing on customer service and internal communications/relations
- Montgomery County has notified the DC Committee on the 2026 Summer Olympics that we are interested in hosting the aquatics component
- In response to a question as to whether the Wheaton Community Recreation Center/Library/Gilchrist Center schematic plans will be available at the World of Montgomery on October 19 in Wheaton, the Board was informed that they will not be ready at that time.
- Jeff Bourne – Division Chief
 - His written report recapping the CIP was provided to Board members.
- Robin Riley – Division Chief

- October 27 – the Youth Advisory Committee [YAC] will hold its kickoff for the school year at the Silver Spring Civic Building.

Parks Update – Mike Riley

- October 7 – Parks makes its semi-annual report to the County Council on their programs
- FY16 budget worksession on the operating budget
- Urban Parks – new Planning Chair Casey Anderson is focused on how we can have open spaces in denser parts of Montgomery County, such as Bethesda, White Flint, etc. Existing parks around the perimeter of Central Business Districts [CBDs] are underutilized. They need to be programmed.
- Parks needs money for maintenance, trails, historic and cultural preservation and interpretation, historic structures, community gardens...more demand than can be met, deer management, marketing of parks and enterprise facilities.
- Mike provides a bi-weekly Directors report to the Council. It is also on the website and he will bring it to the next meeting.
- A Board member requested more dog parks and Mike acknowledged that is a significant need as more people move into urban environments such as highrises.
- Board member: are you satisfied with the trajectory of the Parks budget? Response: We generally get adequate maintenance dollars.
- Board member: do you use iPads for surveys? Perhaps Board members can help cover for staff at events. Response: Perhaps we will bring staff in to provide an overview of how it went at the Sugar Maple Festival.
- Board member: Can you speak to Burtonsville Crossroads recreational amenities? Response: Mike will look into it.

Local Board Reports

- Eastern County, Mark Pharaoh – no meeting/no report
- Mid County, Paul Lofgren – had meeting – one attendant. Where are we on the CERB recommendations? Gabe will call Connie Latham, special assistant to the County Executive on B/C/C to update the Board. Paul commented on the awesome Burtonsville Day. They had an amazing turn out. Kudos to Mark Pharaoh.
- Upper County, Vernard McBeth – attended by phone, but equipment failed. No report.

Ex Officio Reports

- Community Use of Public Facilities, Ron Maxson – Moving forward on ActiveNet and overcoming obstacles. Department is filling vacancies. Awaiting Montgomery County Recreation's needs.
- Commission on Aging, Morton Davis –Phil Smakula is great to work with on “Keeping Seniors Safe.” At Leisure World, working on fraud prevention. He will be happy to speak to any organizations/groups.
- MCPS, [vacant]
- Commission on People with Disabilities, Susan Hartung – absent
- M-NCPPC Police, Chief Tony DeVaul - absent

Old/New Business – Chris Richardson

- Splash Park state regulations – Gabe and Mike met and agree this is an issue they want to tackle. MRPA and the Maryland Association of Counties [MACo] may need to take it up.
- Increase funding for afterschool programs to expand availability – this would be an ask as part of the FY 16 budget request. We want to maintain and increase the program. There are three ways to advocate for this:
 - Contact your Councilmember
 - Include it when the Chair meets with the County Executive during budget season
 - Bring it up during Council budget sessions – we will look into having tee shirts for Board members.
- The Executive Committee requested a way to connect with other Recreation/Parks boards. Would it be through MRPA or nationally through NRPA? NRPA has advocacy training at this link: <http://www.nrpa.org/media/articulate/advocacy/power-of-you/player.html>
 - Mike and Gabe attended a MACo Rec and Parks retreat
 - Program Open Space [POS] is a significant source of funds that has been cut drastically over the years during state budget shortfalls.
 - We need to make ourselves more relevant at the state level. Staff will reach out to the Montgomery County Delegation to arrange for some meetings with leadership.
 - Board may need to hold a summit which will include advocacy training.
- At last month's meeting, the Board expressed a desire for a way to hear from and be in touch with the general public, perhaps geographically by area boards. It was agreed that the Board needs to decide exactly to what end this communication is directed.
- A request was made for a chronological list of calendar events and other activities for Rec and Parks. John Nissel provided one for Parks at the September meeting. Recreation staff provided an October events calendar and recent press releases at this meeting. Calendars will be provided at subsequent meetings.
- Condition of playing fields is an ongoing problem. Gabe suggested that the Board hold a town hall meeting which would result in a very high turn out from the public. Mike shared that Casey Anderson's three priorities are urban parks, trails, and athletic fields. This will be an agenda item for the November meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.