

COUNTYWIDE RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
December 8, 2014
MEETING NOTES

Present: Joy Barrow, Wesley Japp, Renee Katz, Paul Lofgren, Ron MacNab, Dave Magill, Vernard McBeth, Ingrid Pufahl, Chris Richardson, Michael Waters, Felecia Wilson, Gabe Albornoz [Rec], Jeff Bourne [Rec], Morton Davis [Commission on Aging], Susan Hoffmann [Rec], John Nissel [Parks], Mike Riley [Parks]

Absent: Erik Johnson, Myron Johnson, James Krzyminski, Mark Pharaoh, Sean Thomas Smith, Tony DeVaul [Park Police], Susan Hartung [Commission on Disabilities], Robin Riley [Rec]

By phone: Ron Maxson [CUPF]

Guests: Ryan Bjorn [Maryland Soccerplex], Jody Fetzer [Parks], Chris Gillis [Council President Leventhal], Trish Heffelfinger [Maryland Soccerplex], David Vismara [Parks]

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:00pm, followed by introductions around the table.

The Agenda review and the November 2014 meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Rec Update – Gabe Albornoz

- Gabe thanked the Board for their service to Montgomery County.
- Our big season now is basketball.
- The winter season presents difficult challenges in terms of meeting demands for gym time, which are at their highest.
- We see a growing interest in volleyball for men and women, particularly among younger persons and the recently retired.
- Futsal is growing in demand
- Recreation is working aggressively with Countystat to benchmark demands
- We are heavily into the budget process. We will greatly appreciate the Board's support moving forward
- A request to install a menorah at Bauer Community Recreation Center to celebrate Chanukah was received on short notice. Bauer is a very busy center and the evening requested would not provide adequate parking facilities for all guests. We are handling it in a positive way.
- Montgomery County is facing a \$100 million deficit which will be seen in FY16. This is due to the fragile state of our economic recovery.
- County Executive Ike Leggett is meeting with Governor-elect Hogan tomorrow to discuss priorities.

Parks Update – Mike Riley

- Parks is having an exciting spring.
- Several parks are under renovation or coming online:
 - North Four Corners Park on University Boulevard

- Greenbriar Park in Potomac
- Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park in Wheaton
- Germantown Center Park near Black Rock will be beautiful when it opens
- A contract has been awarded for Laytonia Recreational Park on Airpark and Shady Grove Road and will include two high end soccer fields and no crumb rubber.
- The new Planning Director has three priorities:
 - Open Spaces – the Bethesda Central Business District Master Plan will come before the Planning Board in the spring
 - Trails - Casey Anderson is a big supporter of bikes for commuting
 - Athletic Fields – the whole issue of Parks maintaining MCPS fields will be revisited

Briefing on Council Bill MC 52-14 Pesticides – Notice

- Chris Gillis, Council President George Leventhal’s Office, sponsor of the bill
 - Impetus for the legislation is to minimize exposure to pesticides to children in places where they are likely to congregate
 - The EPA is not monitoring as it should be
 - Legislation to limit pesticide use is currently in place in Connecticut and New York
 - It exempts gardens, agriculture, rodent control, invasive species, tree health, and golf courses
 - The public bill hearing will be on January 15. It will come before the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee [T&E] on February 2.
 - Q&A followed presentation
 - Do pesticides get into stormwater runoff? Yes, they impact the Bay and the aquatic life therein.
 - Was there outreach to the Ministry of the Environment in Toronto? Yes, the bill is modeled closely after law in several Canadian provinces.
 - Has a study been done in Montgomery County? The state keeps track.
 - What is the basis for the exemption of golf courses? Children are not as likely to be on them.
- Mike Riley/David Vismara/Jody Fetzer, Parks
 - Green is our mission. Parks supports cutting back on pesticide use.
 - Parks has been practicing integrated pest management [IPM] for years.
 - Providing high quality athletic fields is a priority; therefore we will be looking for a carve-out since we practice IPM. Will be going to the Planning Board for an official position.
 - Pleased that invasive species are exempted. Looking for clarification on the exemption for gardens in agricultural areas.
 - On hardscape, it is necessary to use Round Up fairly extensively. We are asking to have a representative of our agency appointed to the work group and while invasive plants are being reviewed.

- Parks has significantly reduced the use of pesticides and is a leader on the east coast. We brought on Jody Fetzer as our Green Management Coordinator before the legislation was contemplated.
- There are things that we cannot do without pesticides. Some organics are not there yet.
- Our fields were not built to be organic, they must be irrigated. We are very concerned how our Parks will function.
- We called Canada, Colorado and Connecticut. What is proposed is not working well for everyone.
- Montgomery County fields experience heavier use than areas farther north.
- Trish Heffelfinger and Ryan Bjorn, Maryland Soccerplex
 - We support the legislation. The Soccerplex is our livelihood. We use professionals to apply our pesticides. We use IPM.
 - We were told that we wouldn't be exempted even if we could demonstrate economic hardship. Even if exemptions were applied on a case by case basis, by the time we saw disease it would be almost too late.
 - We treat the turf as if it's a human. We stress plant health. It must stay hydrated and get proper nutrients so that it will be able to fend off diseases.
 - We use the safest, newest application processes. All pesticides have a "re-entry time interval" and we double it.
 - Pesticides are expensive and we use as little as possible and as infrequently as possible. We use the lowest toxicity level. We want to use the safest products as possible.
- Gabe Albornoz, Recreation
 - We have a quality field problem. We want to minimize playing on poor field surfaces.
 - The County Executive has not taken a position on the bill yet.
 - There are concerns in the sports community and the real estate community.
 - There are cost implications from grounds maintenance.
 - We have a reasonable County Council who wants to hear from everyone.
- The following position was moved by Dave Magill and seconded by Joy Barrow: "The Countywide Recreation Advisory Board recommends that the Montgomery County Council take into consideration athletic fields and other facilities as they review MC 52-14 Pesticides – Notice. The Board has concerns that this bill would adversely impact the ability to maintain fields and other facilities at the highest level."

The vote was a majority of 7 in favor, 1 opposed, and the remainder not voting.

Local Board Reports

- Eastern County, Mark Pharaoh – absent
- Mid County, Paul Lofgren – one person attended the last meeting
- Upper County, Vernard McBeth – the floor is being refinished in Upper County

Ex Officio Reports

- Community Use of Public Facilities, Ron Maxson – gearing up for summer camps. Working on a list of what facilities will be available to Recreation.

- Commission on Aging, Morton Davis – due to the lengthy discussion of MC 52-14, Morty graciously agreed to present his “Keep Seniors Safe” program at the January meeting. In appreciation of his cycling off the Countywide Recreation Advisory Board and the Commission on Aging, Chris presented Morty with a Montgomery County Recreation golf shirt and baseball cap.
- MCPS, [vacant]
- Commission on People with Disabilities, Susan Hartung – absent
- M-NCPPC Police, Chief Tony DeVaul - absent

Old/New Business – Chris Richardson

- It is Parks and Recreation month in July and Chris would like the Board to observe it. It was suggested that a subcommittee be created to come up with recommendation[s]

Meeting was adjourned at 8:52pm.