

# County-wide Recreation and Parks Advisory Board

Monday, October 2, 2017

## Meeting Notes

**Present:** Gabe Albornoz [Rec], Chris Richardson, John Nissel [Parks], Doug Ludwig [Parks], Robin Riley [Rec], Arie Baker [Parks], Susan Hoffmann [Rec], Phyllis Rand [Commission on Aging], Craig Kwiecinski, Seto Adeyefa, Brad Ryan, Carol Petrucci, Morton Davis, Felecia Wilson(phone), Carl Blake, Gail Gunod-Green, Jeffrey Szuchman, Safiatou Barry, Mark Pharoah, Matthew Lee, Jonathan Brice (phone), Gary Lyst, Sylvia Bell, Jonas Tizabi, Karen Kincer, Lisa Castillo, Sonia Rada, Reuel Tizabi, Sara Tenenbaum (CUPF), Daniela Tizabi, Lisa Swain, Peggy Logan

*Meeting called to order by Chris Richardson at 7:00pm.*

### Review of Agenda

- accepted

### Review of September 2017 Meeting Notes

- accepted

### Parks Update

John Nissel, Deputy Director of Operations, Montgomery Parks

- the Parks Department has partnered with Pepco to implement a pilot natural surface trail project along with a section of the Bethesda-Dickerson corridor.
  - o The trail section is 5 miles long and will run from near Quince Orchard Road to Schaeffer Road near Germantown Recreational Park.
- Parks Rules and Regulations were recently updated and adopted on July 1 to better effect today's use of the parks, facilities, and amenities.
- The Athletic Field Showcase will be held on October 26<sup>th</sup> at Ridge Road Regional Park from noon to 2pm.

- The showcase will highlight the many ways the department works to improve the quality of the athletic fields.
  - Lunch will be provided.
  - All board members will receive an invite.
- The ADA and Inclusion Services Team has had an extremely successful year with the removal of over 1,200 barriers.
  - Established a barrier removal and documentation protocol for tracking all work.
  - Over 1000 staff have been trained in the area of disability services.
  - Submitted the final transition plan for ADA compliance with the Department of Justice that includes over 12,000 barrier violations identified in our audit.
- This Spring and Summer, the department hosted over 90 pop up park events.
  - Events included Touch-A-Truck, Rock Wall, and Pump Track
- In 2017, the department has hosted over 124 events like the Persian Festival, Parks Half Marathon, Parks Total Eclipse and the MOCO EPIC to name a few.
- This Fall the department will begin construction on two solar fields.
  - At South Germantown Recreational Park, the solar field will be a 3,978 panel 1.32-megawatt array
  - At Rock Creek Regional Park, the solar field will be a 3,456 panel 1.173 MW array
- Parks has teamed up with Zagster Bike Share Program to bring bikes to both Wheaton and Black Hill Regional Parks.
- Emerald Ash Borer Update
  - Total Ash trees removed today is 2,672.
  - Total Ash trees removed in 2017 is 1,239.
  - Approximately 2,400 trees yet to be removed.
  - Portable saw mills have been purchase to make use of the copious amounts of ash trees removed.
- Parks has purchase 8.5 acres of additional park land in the past 6 months.

- 2017 NRPA Conference in New Orleans was attended by thousands of parks and recreation professionals from all around the country.

*Q: Will you replant trees to replace the ones that are being removed?*

*A: Yes. They are being replaced with native trees, grown locally at Pope Farm.*

*Q: Do citizens in that community get to choose or vote on which trees?*

*A: Our staff select the trees based on the area or setting to match trees and greenery already planted.*

*Q: How do you decide where to host Pop Up Parks?*

*A: The Park Activation Team decides where and moves them around to keep it diverse.*

*Q: Can the department create a system where neighborhood associations can request Pop Up Parks?*

*A: Yes; we can team up and bring activities to your event.*

*Q: What trends did you see at NRPA?*

*A: SeniorScapes and themed playgrounds were very big. There was also a lot of vendors in the exhibit hall with equipment for Pop Up parks and pickleball.*

## Recreation Update

Gabe Albornoz, Director, Montgomery County Recreation

- Thank you for your service
- 
- The Burtonsville Day Parade was a great success
  - o Many thanks to Mark Pharaoh
- Ross Boddy Community Recreation Center used to be a school that served the African American community.
  - o One of four schools renovated into a recreation center under the Ike Leggett
  - o This facility has a teaching kitchen and a new gymnasium

- Recreation centers that serve as voting sites
  - o Six (6) of nine (9) early voting sites are recreation centers
  - o Wheaton Library has been torn down and a new voting site has to be identified.
    - One option would be Holiday Park Senior Center but some community members are against this option because it would displace the senior programs for two weeks.
    - The alternative would be an old Catholic school but this option also has some opposition because of the religious connection.
  
- Basketball program registration has started.
  
- The department has received 5 awards for four (4) programs
  - o CHILL – a program for English Language Learners and newly arrived students and they travel to Ski Liberty
  - o 100 Mile Challenge
  - o Food, Fun & Fitness – support program at MCPS
  - o Safe Walk Home – students from Walker Mill High School are trained and supervised by adults and walk kids from the elementary schools

Robin Riley, Division Chief, Montgomery County Recreation

- Holiday Park Travel Expo will be held on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- MoCo's Got Talent at the Fillmore in May 2018
  - o Children participate at various recreation centers
  - o Fundraiser for hurricane relief
- Summer Camp planning has begun

*Q: How many students from Watkin Mills HS?*

*A: Approximately 15 students walking small groups.*

Susan Hoffmann, Manager, Montgomery County Recreation

- Jazz Festival was held September 10<sup>th</sup>
- Thanksgiving Day Parade is scheduled for November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017

*Q: How do you market these events?*

*A: Events are marketed via social media, some television ads, the website, and printed catalogs.*

*Parks Marketing is working on ways to reach out to various ethnic groups and socio-economic diversities.*

### CUPF Update

Sara Tenenbaum, CUPF

- Next month, CUPF will begin permitting athletic fields
- Parks will need to provide a list of field closure dates

### Pickleball Presentation

Sylvia Bell

- Pickleball is a sport comprised of elements from tennis, table tennis, and badminton
- The sport was invented in Banbridge Island, Washington approximately fifty-one years ago but became more popular in this century
- The sport is being played in all states, Guam, Canada and countless other countries.
  - o It has been included in many State Senior Olympics.
  - o Also in the Maryland Senior Olympics for the last couple of years.
- Over 100 places to play in Maryland
  - o In Montgomery County, the growth has been tremendous.
  - o In 2014 there was one court with 25 players; 2017 there are approximately 15 community centers with Pickleball and approximately 400 players.

*Q: How are you getting these numbers? What is your source?*

*A: Based on an email list that is managed by Mrs. Bell.*

- Pickleball provides benefits for players of all ages
  - o Keeps seniors healthy
  - o Children learn to play in school and it's a bonding experience to learn from their parents or grandparents
- Requesting that lines be painted on Parks' outdoor tennis courts
- Ask that pickleball courts be added indoors and out at the new Clarksburg Center as well as at Wheaton and Good Hope  
*\*the new center at Wheaton will have 6 indoor courts\**

- There are various tennis courts throughout the county that are suitable for pickleball, particularly near the six centers that currently host indoor pickleball
  - o It was suggested in 2015 that the pickleball lines be painted whenever routine maintenance was done on any tennis courts
  - o Only the court at Longwood was painted

*Q: Does the color of the of the lines matter?*

*A: Only to distinguish it from the tennis lines.*

*Q: Why the name Pickleball?*

*A: The creator of the game had a dog who would always fetch the ball. His name was Pickles.*

- Pickleball is set to grow as rapidly as tennis did sixty years ago
  - o Of the 127 county locations with tennis courts, many of them can be repurposed for Pickleball.
  - o Other courts can have the lines added.

*Q: Can school courts be used?*

*A: Currently there is no permit needed. School courts usually have walk-on usage. The MCPS C.O.O., Andy Zuckerman, or Supervisor of Athletics, Jeff Sullivan, would be the best person to respond and Dr. Bryce will follow up with him.*

- Pickleball Players Wish List includes:
  - o Non-volley zone lines on badminton courts
  - o More evening and weekend timeslots for indoor pickleball
  - o Better communication regarding center closures
  - o Better lighting
  - o Day passes for out of state visitors
  - o Facilities with more courts to be able to host tournaments and leagues

*Q: If tennis courts were repurposed, how many pickleball courts would you need? A bank of 8 per court?*

*A: Depending on the location, but a bank of 8 would be best.*

## Commission on Aging

Phyllis Rand

- FY19 Priorities for the commission
  - o Affordable housing for seniors
  - o Financial abuse of the elderly
  - o Respite care

## Creating/Repurposing Existing Space for Soccer

Jonas Tizabi

- 24.5 million people in the United States play soccer
  - o 3 million are registered in youth soccer
- The Washington, D.C. metropolitan area is a hub for soccer talent nationally.
  - o Maryland ranks #1 in boys and #4 in boys for recruits in Division 1 colleges
- Within one week, petition garnered more than 220 signatures.
- Athletic spaces available for soccer do not meet the same standards as spaces reserved for other sports.
  - o Facilities available to basketball and tennis do not require a permit and have lighting
  - o Fields available for soccer (and baseball) require permits and there is no lighting.
    - Permits prevent impromptu activities (pick-up games)
    - Field time at many sites are assigned to leagues and organizations
- Requesting that some courts throughout the county be repurposed for “futsal” which is soccer on concrete
- Playing on concrete has advantages such as:
  - o Decreased maintenance costs
  - o No special footwear
  - o Lights available at night
  - o Increases the utilization of the space
  - o Fewer injuries
  - o Faster speed of play
  - o Year-round play
- Tennis and basketball courts can be repurposed for soccer.

- Municipalities in California and Florida have already begun to repurpose existing spaces to meet the growing demand for soccer.
- To build a new court it would cost approximately \$52k-\$82k
  - o To repurpose an existing space would cost between \$6,500 and \$10,500
- Potential locations for futsal/soccer courts
  - o West Fairland Park
  - o Calverton-Galway Park
  - o Martin Luther King, Jr. Park
  - o Georgian Forest Local Park
  - o Sligo Creek SVU3
  - o Stonegate Local Park

*Q: Are you proposing this for drop-in usage or permitted?*

*A: Ideally, for drop-in usage.*

*Q: Can goals be placed on current basketball court set up?*

*A: yes.*

*Q: Do the lines cause a problem?*

*A: Can be played without lines or with basketball lines.*

*Q: Does CUPF permit basketball courts?*

*A: Not currently; maybe MCPS courts.*

### Community Action Board

Gail Gunod-Green

- There is an enormous disparity between minimum wage and self-sufficiency standards.
- Community Advocacy Institutes teaches low income individuals to advocate for their needs
- Germantown applicants mentioned there wasn't enough organized activities for the youth.
- MCPS' Head Start Program commenced on September 11<sup>th</sup> and is governed by the Community Action Board
  - o Community Action Agency receives a federal grant for the Head Start Program.



Old/New Business

Chris Richardson

- Executive Committee will request time on Gabe and John's calendar immediately after board meetings beginning in November

*Meeting Adjourned at 9:12pm*