

COUNTYWIDE RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

March 7, 2016
MEETING NOTES

Present: Renee Katz, Paul Lofgren, Dave Magill, Mark Pharaoh, Chris Richardson, Felecia Wilson, Gabe Albornoz [Rec], Cynthia Bangali [MCPS], Jeff Bourne [Rec], Tony DeVaul [Park Police], Susan Hoffmann [Rec], Ron Maxson [CUPF-via phone], Mike Riley [Parks], Robin Riley [Rec]

Absent: Joy Barrow, Morton Davis, Wesley Japp, Vernard McBeth, John Nissel [Parks], Ingrid Pufahl, Michael Waters, Susan Hartung [Commission on Disabilities],

Guests: Adriane Clutter [Rec], Miles Magbie [Rec], Bill Tyler [Parks]

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

The Agenda and February meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Rec Update – Gabe Albornoz

- Gabe, Robin and Jeff recently took a hard hat tour of the North Potomac Community Recreation Center facility. It is beautiful and very much like White Oak. It includes a senior center, an organic synthetic surface field for field sports such as soccer and field hockey. The center also has a climbing wall. It is likely to deliver in April. Hiring will begin July 1, and open in September, with a ribbon-cutting in August/September.
- Regarding the renaming of the center to include the name of the late Councilmember Nancy Dacek, the reaction from the community has been overwhelmingly negative. People want the North Potomac name to help solidify the North Potomac identity. No decisions have been made at this time on the name. Board member Felecia Wilson is serving on the group that will advise the County Executive on the naming of the center.
- For the 4th of July fireworks, Einstein High School, long one of two locations used by Recreation, is not available. [UPDATE WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE APRIL MEETING].
- The synthetic ice rink issue in the Upcounty has been resolved by the County Executive with a plan to build a larger and more soundly constructed rink in Poolesville or Owens.
- Recreation will be moving our headquarters to the new office building in Wheaton, co-locating with Parks.
- The Housing Opportunities Commission [HOC] has formed a public/private partnership with Lee Development to redevelop Elizabeth House in downtown Silver Spring on Second Street. HOC mistakenly informed Park and Planning that Recreation would operation a small recreation center and indoor pool, to which Recreation had never agreed. Gabe met with HOC today. More to come.
- Jeff Bourne reported that the Westbard community wanted to see a freestanding senior center in the proposed development. The master plan did not recommend the additional center, but the community needs meeting space. Councilmember Roger Berliner has recommended a public charrette to allow community input.

- The County Executive budget will be released 3/15. Recreation's requests seem to be in good shape. In conversations with the employees' union, MCGEO, Rec may get some of its lost positions back.
- The proposed design of the Wheaton Recreation and Library Center is beautiful
- Jeff Bourne – CIP
 - Jeff distributed illustrations of the Wheaton Rec/Library plans and finishes for the Board to take a look at.
- Robin Riley
 - 3/18 - the final runway fashion show for Fashion Boot Camp.
 - Friday is the last night of futsal at Long Branch
 - Staff is working on the Summer Guides
 - 3/5 and 3/6 – the Lakeforest Camp Expo
 - We continue to struggle with ActiveMONTGOMERY, with ongoing hiccups as the product evolves.
 - In answer to a question about why pool maintenance is done during the summer, it was explained that it is difficult to find a good time other than in the summer

Parks Update– Mike Riley

- Regarding the Westbard development, the Planning Board makes decisions that put density near transit. There is huge community opposition, with the exception of the Willett Branch Stream restoration and the new park development.
- Almost all athletic fields will open on 3/15
- North Four Corners Park will be opening along University Boulevard
- Brookside will be reopening soon, adding more parking capacity as construction comes to an end.
- Woodlawn Barn in Sandy Spring is a bank barn that was run by Quakers and is worth a visit.
- Laytonia Park has a full size baseball diamond and two full size basketball courts. High end synthetic turf has been used.
- Countywide Park Trails Master Plan public hearing was very positive. The Planning Board is engaged in work sessions.

Safe Walk Home – Miles Magbie, Youth Development Team, Recreation – PowerPoint presentation

- Members of the community raised concerns that elementary schoolers were not going directly home, and no supervision was available during their walk home, making them more susceptible to bullying from older youth and other negative influences that put students at risk.
- The Watkins Mill High School RecZone students stepped up to create partnerships with teachers, counselors, sports teams, and more to provide role models as they accompany the youngsters to ensure they reach their homes safely.
- The goal is to use recreation to ensure young people are productive, healthy, and connected during out-of-school time. The high schoolers also receive SSL hours.

Updates provided on:

- Pesticides – Bill Tyler, Parks
- Recreation Budget and what Rec needs from Board

- Maintenance, especially in Aquatics
- Bring back lost positions
- Budget has added five locations
- Continued support for vulnerable populations: Youth Development and Seniors
- ActiveMONTGOMERY – Julie Allbrooks and Robin Riley
 - Ongoing and evolving issues
 - Parks – 10 camps are filled; spring break camp is half full; ice skating – sent four teams to nationals and all won; tennis lottery was successful for court time; trains and carousel work at spring break; marketing department is nearly up to full staff with eight
- Status of Employee Excellence Awards – Susan Hoffmann
 - Nomination forms have been distributed to Rec managers
 - Mike Riley will contact John Nissel to let him know that Parks will be participating in submitting nominations, as well. John will be in touch with Susan.
- Transportation discussion on the bike crosswalk issues – Mike Riley
 - In reference to the death of a pedestrian at Viers Mill Road and one of the many hiker/biker trails that cross the state, county and walking trails...there are 100s of crossings, Parks will be looking at best practices.

Local Board Reports

- Eastern County, Mark Pharaoh – no report
- Mid County, Paul Lofgren – no report
- Upper County, Vernard McBeth – absent

Ex Officio Reports

- Community Use of Public Facilities, Ron Maxson– he agreed with Julie’s report. The fields reservation went live on 2/16. There are issues, but they are quickly resolved. They are getting good feedback from the community.
- Commission on Aging – [VACANT]
- MCPS, Cynthia Bangali, Office of Community Engagement & Partnerships – the Board of Education has conditionally appointed Jack Smith as superintendent.
- Commission on People with Disabilities, Susan Hartung – absent
- M-NCPPC Police – Tony DeVaul – absent

Old/New Business – Chris Richardson

- Chris read a letter from Council President Nancy Floreen
- Chris will be meeting with the County Executive on 3/21

Meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

The May 2 Countywide Recreation Advisory Board meeting will be held at Brookside Gardens