

**RECREATION AND PARKS BOARD
OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
Meeting of Thursday, June 1, 2006**

MINUTES

Board members present: Andrew Roper, Chairperson, Robert Richardson, Vice-Chairperson, Sam Brown, Patrick Dugan, Dorothy Gass, Coleman Hillman and Jody Payne.

Board members absent: Robert Harper and Lisa Wainger-Rush.

Recreation, Parks and Community Services staff and others present: Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation, Parks & Community Services (RP&CS); Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager; members of the Gymnastics Booster Club and St. Mary's Gymnastics Center participants; and Kathy Bailey, Recorder.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order by Andrew Roper, Chairperson, at 5:35 p.m. in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Patrick Dugan motioned, second by Sam Brown, to approve the minutes of May 4, 2006 and April 6, 2006. Motion carried with all in favor.

Coleman Hillman motioned, seconded by Sam Brown, to approve the Executive Session minutes of April 6, 2006. Motion carried with all in favor.

PROJECT UPDATES

- Three Notch Trail – Director Phil Rollins reminded the Board that the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Phase I of the trail will be held on Saturday, June 3, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. near the entrance of the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. Phase II, from the Veterans Home to Deborah Drive, just beyond the County line, should be out to bid this summer and under construction later this summer or fall.
- Wicomico Shores Tennis Courts – This project is now underway and will replace the four old deteriorated courts with two new courts. Also, staff and the Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board will present the draft concept plan for the renovation and expansion of the Wicomico Shores Golf Course Clubhouse to the BOCC on June 6, 2006.
- St. Clement's Shores Park – The BOCC and the Department will be hosting a Ribbon Cutting ceremony for the new playground at St. Clement's Shores on Tuesday, June 13 at 3:30 p.m.
- Charlotte Hall Property Master Plan – Staff from RP&CS, Department of Aging and the Housing Authority continues to meet with representatives from Whitney, Bailey, Cox and Magnani on developing a master plan for the Charlotte Hall property. The senior housing portion of the plan and related sewer requirements have been a significant challenge. The Department has asked the Veteran's Home to consider the possibility of tying the senior housing sewer into the Veteran's Home system.
- Seventh District Park - The playground portion of the project is complete and a Ribbon Cutting ceremony for the playground will be held later this spring or in early summer, possibly combined with the Chaptico Park playground ceremony. Construction on the remainder of the project will be underway later this year and completed by spring 2007. Other improvements include a restroom building, basketball court and additional parking.
- Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch – The project was approved for funding in FY06 in the amount of \$25,000 to provide a walkway to the stream and a step-down platform to the water for canoe and kayak launching. Staff is hopeful that permits will soon be approved for the project.

- FY07 RP&CS Operating Budget – Mr. Rollins highlighted several items in the approved FY07 budget. The budget includes the addition of a sports coordinator position, teen court coordinator position, a parks maintenance position and some additional parks maintenance equipment including a tractor, two trucks and a trailer.
- FY07 Capital Improvements Budget – The budget includes FY07 funding for several projects including Piney Point Lighthouse Phase II and shore erosion, Three Notch Trail, WSGC Clubhouse renovation, Tennis Court replacement, Central County Park, Leonard Hall Recreation Center air-circulation improvements, Lancaster Park pathway and dog park, and Parks ADA improvements.

Mr. Rollins thanked Board members Coleman Hillman and Patrick Dugan for attending the Forest Landing Ribbon cutting ceremony held on May 16, 2006. He also thanked Andy Roper and Mr. Hillman for attending the BOCC proclamation ceremony on May 30, 2006 for National Trails Day.

ST. MARY'S GYMNASTICS CENTER

Arthur Shepherd, Recreation Division Manager, provided an overview of the gymnastics program operation. One of the program's main challenges is recruiting and retaining qualified coaching staff. Participation is averaging over 400 participants per session; the center hosts approximately 36 classes per session. Staff considers the program a great success, but there is more work to be done.

Gary Reed, Program Coordinator, recognized the talented staff at the Gymnastics Center. He introduced coaches Kim Collins, Katie Nutter and Emma Ruiz and Sue Lynch the Program Director at the Center. Youth that were recognized included:

Mason Dixon Championship Meet Results

- Kelsey Trifone, level C, second place all-around, 13 and up;
- Justine Hoerning, level D, first place on bars, 16 and up;
- Kyla Gill, third place all around in the Regional Meet (qualified for National meet);
- Sarah Adler, level A, first place on bars, eleven year olds;
- Rachael Riser, level B champion, first place all-around, eleven year olds;
- Karina Marks, level B champion, first place all-around, twelve year olds;
- Tara Ruiz, level B, first place on floor, thirteen and up;
- Emily Lynch, level C champion, first place all around, thirteen and up.

The Mason Dixon meet is a Regional Championship and includes participants from MD, VA, DE and PA. Two St. Mary's teams won trophies as the result of having 3 all-around scores on each team. The St. Mary's Mason Dixon level B team won first place and the level C team won third place.

USAG Maryland State Championship Meet Results

- Katie Chan – level 4 state champion, 11 year olds;
- Shelby Gardiner – level 7, first place on floor, 12 year olds;
- Alison Slaughter – level 7 state champion, 13 and up;
- Jordan Rich - level 9, second place all around, 16 and up.

Other Awards

- Jordan Rich – level 9, third place on floor at the Level 9 Regional Meet;
- Kyla Gill – level 9 qualifier for regionals at the Level 9 State Meet;
- Lydia Jewel – first place on vault at Capital Cup Meet;
- Alex Nutter – first place on beam at Terrapin International Meet

He explained that the Competitive Team is made up of compulsory levels four through six and optional levels of seven through ten. The higher the level, the more skill is required for competition; level ten gymnasts are considered elite. The Mason Dixon League gives gymnasts the opportunity to compete on their highest level with a less rigorous schedule. This year was a great team season with three state champions on three levels, second and third place finishers at regional meets, and several of the level five and six team members placed in the Capital Cup meet.

Mr. David Rich, President, St. Mary's Gymnastics Booster Club, thanked the R&P Board for honoring some of the program's outstanding gymnasts. He stated that gymnastics is a unique sport that requires long hours of year-round training in order for youth to excel and compete. They are proud to represent St. Mary's County and are especially happy to host meets at their own Center. He reiterated that it is a challenge to find qualified coaching staff and the program has experienced some decline in registration because of that. He asked that the Board, Department and Booster Club work together to develop a plan to attract and retain qualified coaches.

RAISING COMMUNITY STANDARDS IN YOUTH SPORTS

Mr. Rollins reminded the Board and the viewing public that the BOCC approved the Raising Community Standards in Youth Sports initiative in March 2006. The initiative is based on changing the culture of youth sports through reform, education and accountability.

Mr. Shepherd outlined the following standards that will be implemented in fall 2006.

- Two youth sports league administrators must be certified in the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) Administrator program;
- Head coaches and assistant coaches (2 per team) serving as coaches in a youth sports program must have background checks and participate in a coaches training program;
- All parents must sign a Parental Pledge (code of ethics) prior to their child participating;
- Smoking will be limited to beyond 150' of playing fields.

These are minimum standards; leagues can adopt stricter standards if they wish. Southeastern Security Consultants (SSC) will be doing the background checks for RP&CS. If a background check comes back with a disqualifier, it will be reported to the coach and the league; individuals may appeal directly to the SSC. This is the same company which processes the background checks for County Government. Pigskin Football League has proposed that they conduct their own background checks and that RP&CS review their background checks. Staff is not supporting that recommendation.

Patrick Dugan asked about security measures in place with regard to personnel information and background checks. Mr. Shepherd stated the information will be kept with RP&CS in a secure location; the employee selected for the new Sports Coordinator position will have direct oversight of the Raising Community Standards program.

He provided a handout with a list of disqualifying offenses that was developed based on the NAYS recommendations and was reviewed by youth sports leagues. A person will be disqualified and prohibited from serving as a volunteer if he or she has been found guilty or pleaded no contest to the offenses listed below.

- All sex offenses, regardless of the amount of time since offense.
- All felony violence, regardless of the amount of time since offense.
- All crimes against children, regardless of the amount of time since offense.
- All felony offenses other than violence or sex within the past 10 years.
- All misdemeanor violence within the past 7 years.
- All misdemeanor drug and alcohol offenses within the past 5 years or multiple offenses in the past 10 years.
- Any other misdemeanor within the past 5 years that would be considered a potential danger to children or is directly related to the functions of that volunteer.
- Open charges – Persons with any open charges for disqualifying offenses shall be restricted from volunteering until the active case is brought to resolution or the charges are dropped.

Mr. Rollins stated that we will need to address the issue of other volunteers serving as assistant coaches; the current standard states that only one head coach and one assistant coach needs to go through the training and background checks. Dorothy Gass suggested a training data base to let parents know which volunteers have had the proper training.

League Administrators and Coaches - Kenny Sothoron, Sports Coordinator, will conduct the training for league administrators and coaches. He will schedule training dates and recertification dates each season. Leagues can request to use other training in place of the NAYS training if they obtain prior approval from the Department.

Parents and Spectators - Parents of participants will be required to sign a Parental Pledge each season. Those involved in negative behavior will be asked to leave the spectator area immediately. A step-by-step Crisis Intervention Plan has

been developed to assist league administrators in dealing with unruly parents and spectators.

Annual Reporting – Leagues should complete an annual application prior to the beginning of each season. A copy of the field use request will be forwarded to the Parks Coordinator. The appropriate Coordinator will meet with leagues each year to review park use guidelines and any other necessary information.

Smoking Policy – Mr. Shepherd stated that signs will be posted letting people know that there is no smoking within 150 feet of athletic fields. Chairman Roper stated that St. Mary's County Public Schools has adopted a policy of no smoking inside school facilities or on school grounds, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Mr. Rollins stated that the BOCC approved \$15,000 for a scholarship program for those who may not be able to afford full registration fees. After talking with the Leagues, it has become apparent that the leagues would rather use the funds for the background checks since many have scholarship programs in place.

OTHER BUSINESS

Jody Payne motioned, seconded by Bob Richardson, to authorize the Chairman to sign a letter of support on behalf of the Board for the National Recreational Trails grant for the Three Notch Trail.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Board of St. Mary's County will be held on Thursday, July 6, 2006, at 5:30 p.m., in Room 14 of the Governmental Center in Leonardtown.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder

Minutes approved by the Recreation and Parks Board on July 6, 2006.