

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
March 22, 2017**

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Judy Baker, Mike Rodgers, Carolyn Garber, Derek Ludlow, Tony Rosas, Tom Long, Sue Ruppert, John Marks, and Bill Bramble

Members Excused: Dave Dolch

Staff Present: Candy Sharrer, Ric Buchanan, Lisa Carroll, Brad Rogers, Dawn Harry, Matt Purkins, and Bruce Dutterer

Ex-Officio Member Present: Jeff Degitz

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met on March 22, 2017 at Bear Branch Nature Center. The meeting was called to order at 1:25 p.m. by board chair Derek Ludlow.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

John Marks moved to approve the February 22, 2017 meeting minutes, Tony Rosas seconded, all concurred and minutes were approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- **Piney Run Park** – Gazebo, benches and new birding scopes that were funded by a \$30,000 donation gift have been installed. Interpretive signage is coming soon and will complete the project.
- **Westminster Community Pond Trail Extension** – A public meeting was held on March 2 and approximately 22 people attended. Some concerns were expressed by 2 or 3 immediate neighbors as well as some very positive comments from other residents. The design plan is being submitted to the Development Review process and then Planning Commission.
- **Westminster Veterans Memorial Park** – Public meeting was held on February 23 and a revised park development plan was presented. This plan includes only passive elements but reserves areas for future athletic fields if needed and only after existing traffic and site distance issues have been addressed as Public Works projects.
- **Closed Schools Update** – Discussions regarding continued public usage of Charles Carroll and North Carroll school sites are continuing as part of the County budget process. This discussion includes operating costs as well as capital costs for any renovations/replacement. Any renovations or replacement of Charles Carroll would result in limited or no indoor gym usage for 1 ½ to 2 years, but result in an improved facility moving forward. Loss of that gym without replacement would result in moving programs to Runnymede Elementary which would negatively impact West Carroll Rec. Council's basketball programs which serves Taneytown, Union Bridge & New Windsor. We have had very positive conversations with the president of the new Springdale Preparatory School which is looking to open this fall in the former New Windsor Middle to discuss shared usage moving forward. However, as that school grows in future years, gym and field usage would likely decrease due to a competitive school sports program.
- **Advisory Board Vacancy** – We currently have one vacancy on the Board and after posting on Facebook and issuing a press release, we now have twelve new individuals who have expressed an interest and applied to serve on the Board, the most ever.

CAPITAL PROJECTS PRESENTATION:

Jeff Degitz shared a power point presentation reviewing projects worked on in the past year. Last year, the Board of County Commissioners approved an additional \$200,000 for FY 17 and an additional \$50,000 for FY 18 through FY22 to Park Restoration to address park infrastructure. During the past year, Recreation and Parks has administered over 60 capital improvement and self-help projects. Generally speaking the capital projects fall into three categories: New Capital Projects, Park Restoration Projects, Projects funded by the Park Legacy Fund.

CONVERSATION WITH THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Weaver started by thanking the advisory board for their service and commended the department on having a great team. The hard work by all does not go unnoticed. The commissioners will continue the next sixty days working on the capital budget prioritizing allocations to individual projects/departments.

Commissioner Rothschild shared how businesses have changed over the years. 30 years ago there were more specialty stores where as today there are all-in-one stores. He asked that the department think about adding “entertainment” to the parks and recreation wording whether it be in the department name and/or in the mission. Broadening what people think of when they consider recreation and parks.

Commissioner Wantz thanked all the members on the advisory board for their service. He commended the department staff for taking interest in the county and for their work on all of the in house projects which save the county money every year. He shared his vision to one day have recreation opportunities available in all areas of the county for the community. Commissioner Wantz also commented on how well this county works together and applauded the department for their part.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR:

John Marks on behalf of the nominating committee, nominated Tony Rosas as Vice Chair. Derek Ludlow seconded and motion was carried by unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mike Rodgers shared his interest in the department looking into expanding their open space to more areas of the county; creating open fields and/or more parks like Piney Run/Hashawha. Discussion went around the table about the subject including funds for such initiatives and different areas of the county that would benefit.

Bill Bramble shared his interest in forming a group of volunteers to help clean up the trash along the trail at Westminster Community Pond. Jeff Degitz shared that the department works with local church groups, scout groups, outdoor school and more on volunteer efforts for the parks. He encouraged Bill’s enthusiasm and welcomed his efforts to work together cleaning up the trails.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Tom Long and concurred by all, the meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff R. Degitz

Candy Sharrer

Jeff R. Degitz, Director

Candy Sharrer, Secretary