

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

GREG HEITNER, CHAIRMAN

Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, January 11, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., at Oregon Ridge Park and Lodge. In attendance were Corey Johns, Vice Chairman; and board members Brooks Paternotte, Isaac Manjoe, Chuck Munzert, Dana Jackson, Phil Davis and Desiree Mundell-Collins. Recreation and Parks Department staff included Acting Director Bob Smith; Cortney Weinstock, Deputy Director of Administration; Ben Porter, Chief of Nature, Agricultural, Environmental and Programming Centers; and Annie Sanchez, Park Manager.

Also in attendance: Don Callihan, Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council.

Call to Order:

Vice Chairman Corey Johns called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Board Member Activities:

Chuck Munzert reported that he went to court on Wednesday regarding the Gray Charles Recreation Council theft, and shared details on what transpired. In addition, Mr. Munzert stated that Adam Lippe, Baltimore County State's Attorney Office, said he would come back again to address the Board and the recreation and nature councils. Mr. Munzert then went on to report council concerns regarding the Group Leadership Program, and referenced paying biweekly versus once a month to avoid being in the red. Acting Director Bob Smith replied, stating that Group Leadership is not to operate as a credit card; councils should never be operating in the red. He stated that councils should not operate a program that they don't have money in the account to cover. Mr. Smith reported that some councils deposit a lump sum into the account and once they get below a one month salary average they deposit another lump sum. Mr. Smith recommend that the account be front loaded and stated that accounting reports are going out regularly.

Brooks Paternotte stated that he has continued to work on recertification. He heard from Owings Mills Recreation and Parks Council this week, and reported that he was informed of the new president at Towson Recreation Council. In addition, Mr. Paternotte reported that he attended the Baltimore County Green Alliance meeting and relayed to board members that there was a lot of interest in Baltimore County parks, including conversation regarding the challenge of removing invasive species from parks. He recommended they contact nature centers since he is aware that some have Weed Warrior programs.

Phil Davis reported that he has been working on recertification.

Isaac Manjoe thanked Mr. Smith for bringing the Liberty Road Recreation and Parks Council issue to his attention. Mr. Manjoe reported that one of the Day Care program locations is closed due to a problem with the director. He has called and emailed the council president and they are not responding to him. Mr. Manjoe is trying to meet with him next Wednesday to get more information. Mr. Manjoe will send the information he has to Lisa Winters for distribution to board members. In addition, Mr. Manjoe received proposed revisions to the Liberty Road Recreation and Parks Council Constitution and Bylaws and asked Ms. Winters to forward to all

board members for review. He also asked for the current document to be distributed to board members as well. Mr. Manjoe stated that he would report back to board members on the Day Care issue at the next meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Manjoe moved to approve the December board meeting minutes; Dana Jackson seconded; and all were in favor.

Chairman's Report:

Mr. Johns reported that he had a lovely walk at Oregon Ridge Park with Ralph Brown and Keith Rosensteil, and saw the good and the bad of the trails. Folks are concerned about the trails and pushing this, and will give a guided tour to those who would like to see. Mr. Johns stated that it is really good to get out in the parks and see what we have. In addition, Mr. Johns reported that he spoke with Director Tony Hall, of the Soccer program at Towson Recreation Council. Mr. Hall approached him a couple of months ago, regarding a partnership with the State Fair, for more field space. He spoke with Roslyn Johnson and was told that the County does not get involved with third party negotiations. Mr. Johns was able to put him in touch with the State Fair and reported that they have had some really good discussions. He is happy to have made that connection for them.

Director's Comments:

Mr. Smith reported that an email went out last Friday to all council presidents that discussed plans for a listening tour with internal staff and external partners of the council. He stated that we plan to be out over the next couple of months to hear from councils and reengage a little bit. Mr. Smith assumes board members would like to be made aware and stated that we will do so. We will be meeting by region and with nature councils. Mr. Smith mentioned the upcoming Budget Town Hall Meetings and stated that we will share these dates with the Board and councils once finalized. These meetings will take place February through mid-March. The advocacy at these meeting has been vital to the success of the agency. Mr. Smith encouraged attendance and advocacy.

Regarding the letter to noncompliant delinquent councils, Mr. Smith reported that this has not been approved to go out, and since, the list of recipients has changed. Ms. Winters stated that at the conclusion of the last meeting there were three councils identified to receive this letter, and since, one of these councils has submitted recertification paperwork. This could change depending upon what board members report under "Old Business" as it pertains to the recertification agenda item.

Mr. Johns stated that the school Board just passed Policy 1300 and Rule 1300, both of which apply to the community (outside) use of school facilities. This includes a change in Policy 1300 that eludes to the importance of a robust relationship with Recreation and Parks, as well as a three year required reevaluation of the Joint Use Agreement (JUA). Mr. Smith gave kudos to Board of Education to include this wording and reported that he was asked to look at the document before it was approved. Mr. Smith reported that we have had a number of meetings with BCPS and are seeing more involvement. Brief discussion ensued. Desiree Mundell-Collins reported that the Arbutus Recreation and Parks Council had questions regarding the JUA and she asked for direction on how to report back to them. Mr. Smith replied, stating that they should report concerns to the local Community Supervisor, and in most cases it can be addressed.

New Business:

Ms. Winters distributed a listing of councils based on councilmanic districts and board member representation, according to the redistricting. Councils are not evenly distributed amongst board members. This is not a final document and is open for discussion. Mr. Johns stated that this is something to think about and next month this should be something we narrow down for determination of which members should be the liaison for each.

Old Business:

Board members reviewed the recertification spreadsheet distributed by Ms. Winters and provided updates on those councils within their area. Ms. Mundell-Collins reported that the Arbutus Recreation and Parks Council is moving in the right direction and she plans to follow up with them. Regarding Baltimore Highlands Recreation Council, Mr. Davis reported that he received and reviewed the recertification documents. Mr. Paternotte reported that Rodney Hayes reached out regarding the tax exempt status for Owings Mills Recreation and Parks Council, reporting that their tax exempt status is official again and retroactive. Mr. Brooks stated that he is hopeful they will submit the remaining required documents and plans to stay in touch with the council president. Mr. Brooks reported that there is now a new president at Towson Recreation Council. He is planning to contact the president and see where they stand regarding recertification. In addition, Mr. Brooks stated that he has attempted to contact the president of the Towsontowne Recreation Council numerous times and has not heard back. He would like them to get the letter board members have been discussing over the past several months, notifying them that due to noncompliance, all permits will be revoked effective February 1. All board members agreed on this date. Ms. Jackson reported that she has attempted to contact Bear Creek Recreation Council president several times and has not heard back. She would like them to also get the letter for noncompliant councils. Ms. Jackson announced that she received the recertification documents for Dundalk-Eastfield Recreation and Parks Council and has reviewed them. She also stated that she was made aware of a new president for Watersedge Recreation Council and reached out. She stated that she spoke with the president who asked her to contact the treasurer. She made contact with the treasurer and was told the Watersedge Recreation Council has hired an accountant. They reported that they are two years behind in filing their taxes and are trying to sort things out. Ms. Jackson reported that she feels confident that they are moving in the right direction and plans to remain in contact with them. As for Prettyboy Recreation Council, Eric van den Beemt reported at the December meeting that he has been in touch with the council president numerous times. He had stated that he would be willing to approve recertification once he received word that they submitted their 990. Mr. van den Beemt is no longer on the Board. Discussion ensued regarding the Prettyboy Recreation Council and next steps. Mr. Johns stated that they should have received a follow up by another member of the Board, in Mr. van den Beemt's absence, but they did not. Mr. Manjoe motioned to send the Prettyboy Recreation Council the letter for noncompliance; however, there was no second to this motion. Ms. Winters read aloud the email she sent to several members of the Board regarding her phone call with the council president and the status of the Prettyboy Recreation Council as it relates to recertification. Mr. Davis agreed to follow up with the council president.

Mr. Paternotte addressed the Board regarding nominations for chairman and vice chairman. Nominations are as follows: Mr. Johns was nominated for chairman (see item under "Action") and Mr. Munzert, Ms. Mundell-Collins, Mr. Davis and Mr. Paternotte were nominated for vice chairman. Ms. Mundell-Collins withdrew from the running. Mr. Munzert, Mr. Davis and Mr. Paternotte were nominated for vice chairman; Mr. Munzert received three votes, Mr. Davis received three votes and Mr. Paternotte received one vote. In a run-off vote, Mr. Davis received four votes and Mr. Munzert received three votes (see item under "Action").

Action:

Mr. Davis motioned to recertify the Baltimore Highlands Recreation Council; Mr. Munzert seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Mr. Paternotte motioned to send Towsontowne Recreation Council the letter to noncompliant delinquent councils; Mr. Davis seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Mr. Munzert motioned not to send Prettyboy Recreation Council the letter to noncompliant delinquent councils, Ms. Jackson seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Ms. Jackson motioned to send Bear Creek Recreation Council the letter to noncompliant delinquent councils; Mr. Paternotte seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Ms. Jackson motioned to recertify the Dundalk-Eastfield Recreation and Parks Council; Ms. Mundell-Collins seconded and all were in favor.

Mr. Johns was nominated to serve as chairman of the Board; and all were in favor. Mr. Munzert, Mr. Davis and Mr. Paternotte were nominated for vice chairman; Mr. Munzert received three votes, Mr. Davis received three votes and Mr. Paternotte received one vote. In a run-off vote, Mr. Davis received four votes and Mr. Munzert received three votes; Mr. Davis was elected to serve as vice chairman of the Board.

Comments By Individual Citizens:

Don Callihan addressed the Board, reporting that he is the vice president of Gunpowder Valley Conservancy and recently joined the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council. He referenced the Oregon Ridge Master Plan, which has been a long and involved process working with a consultant, and he stated that he understands they are only a few weeks away from announcing a proposal. Mr. Callihan mentioned the varying aspects of the site, and responsibility of maintaining such. He commented that it doesn't make a lot of sense to him that there are multiple agencies responsible for something integral to the park, and is interested in a more integrated program to care for the park. He stated that it makes sense to start looking at this as a more organic entity, and stated that the grounds around the facility should be maintained as natural as possible. Mr. Callihan reported that there are lots of volunteers very interested in assisting. He mentioned that there are lots of great programs for school-aged children, but there is not a lot of programming on how to respect the environment. He will be working on this with the Council. Ms. Jackson replied, referencing the Citizen Generated Project as a possible option. Mr. Smith said the Council has done these before. Mr. Smith further stated that all maintenance was under the Department and we are trying to find ways to hire a couple of maintenance staff. He understands some of the angst, and further stated that we can try to find ways to work together with other County agencies. Mr. Johns referenced the upcoming Budget Town Hall Meetings and encouraged Mr. Callihan to get folks together and attend all of these. He stated that this is a great space to bring up these concerns. The Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council will be notified of these meeting dates. Mr. Johns thanked Mr. Callihan for attending.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Paternotte moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Jackson seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Winters