

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

COREY JOHNS, CHAIR

Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., at Randallstown Community Center. In attendance were Corey Johns, Chair; and board members Danielle Bassett, Brooks Paternotte, Jon Marsalek, Isaac Manjoe, Pat Roddy, Chuck Munzert, Dana Jackson, and Desiree Mundell-Collins. Recreation and Parks Department staff included Director Bob Smith; Cortney Weinstock, Deputy Director; and Michelle Washington, Community Supervisor, Liberty Road Recreation Office.

Also in attendance: Donnie Brown, Charm City Youth Lacrosse; Ralph Brown, Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council; Eric Carson, Liberty Road Recreation and Parks Council (LRRPC); Rhonda Fox-Jones, LRRPC; Renwick Glenn, Turner Station (TS); Debra Green, TS; Donnell Green, TS; Michael Hancock, TS; Kim Harrison, Overlea-Fullerton Recreation Council (OFRC); Linwood Jackson, TS; Grace Nelson, Woodmoor/Zeta Phi Beta; Rebecca Reynolds, Bear Creek; Daymon Royster, LRRPC; Nefertill Sharp, LRRPC; Kelvin Taylor, LRRPC; Maurisha White, Turner Station Recreation and Parks Council (TSRPC).

Call to Order:

Chair Corey Johns called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Dana Jackson motioned to approve the March meeting minutes; Desiree Mundell-Collins seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Appeal Hearings:

Mr. Johns informed board members that Debra Green was suspended by the TSRPC for three months and claims she was not given due process for her appeal. Mr. Johns discussed the TSRPC appeal process and timeline of events, stating that at this point, Ms. Green's suspension is over. Mr. Johns worked with TSRPC President Maurisha White to get Ms. Green an absentee ballot for the recent election that was held. Ms. Green stated that being there in person, making a motion, and participating in the election was not possible because of her suspension. Ms. Green is here today to see what can be done to move forward. Pat Roddy questioned what the suspension consisted of. Ms. White stated that it was a 3-month suspension from TSRPC programs and meetings, which was enacted after several months of issues. Board members heard from both parties regarding the timeline of events related to the suspension.

Mr. Johns stated that he believes the appeal process was followed; however, he does not like this process and could work with the Bylaws Committee to assist the TSRPC on revisions to the process. He referenced the long timeline, which makes the appeal nearly impossible. Mr. Johns reported that the process needs to improve. He stated that he understands Ms. Green's frustration, but her suspension has concluded so whatever ruling the Board would make today would not make much of an impact. However, Mr. Johns stated that the Board does need to assist TSRPC with this process, to ensure a better process is in place moving forward. Ms. Mundell-Collins stated that the Board should not forget the conduct that brought them here in the first place, and stated

that this needs to be handled so it does not happen again. Mr. Johns asked Director Bob Smith to reiterate to staff that if they see anything that goes against the Code of Conduct to take appropriate action. Mr. Smith apologized for not having staff at two months of TSRPC meetings [due to trainings] and will make sure staff are in attendance. Mr. Johns stated that in terms of the appeal, the Board will work with the TSRPC to improve the process; making a motion to lift the suspension does not make sense as the suspension is already over.

Ms. Green asked what would be done regarding the election and her not being there. Mr. Roddy replied, stating that he thinks the election is another matter and if Ms. Green is going to contest the validity it should be brought before the Board separately. Further, Mr. Roddy stated that he agrees with Mr. Johns that the suspension is mute. Isaac Manjoe commented that he thinks the election issue should go before TSRPC and the appropriate Board representative; not the Board. Mr. Johns stated that he will follow up after the meeting with options regarding the election. Ms. Jackson asked for the next TSRPC meeting date and was told the meeting is scheduled for May 9. Mr. Johns thanked all for being here.

Mr. Johns reported that Rebecca Reynolds is also in attendance regarding a suspension from Bear Creek Recreation Council (BCRC). Prior to the Board meeting, Mr. Johns forwarded information to board members regarding the situation, but did not realize all members did not have access to the documents, to review in advance. Mr. Johns reported that he has mediated the situation, partially. He was trying to mediate outside of this meeting. Mr. Johns reported that BCRC admitted that Ms. Reynolds daughter did not do anything wrong. He read aloud a message from BCRC stating that they will allow Ms. Reynolds daughter to attend her friends' games, with her friends' parents; not Ms. Reynolds. Ms. Reynolds remains suspended. Ms. Reynolds stated that at this point she does not want to sign her daughter up with programs at BCRC. Ms. Reynolds was recently told that the BCRC cannot ban her from attending a soccer game, but could ban her from attending a recital. Again, Mr. Johns reported that BCRC agreed to lift the ban on Ms. Reynolds daughter, but not Ms. Reynolds.

Mr. Johns stated that he did not see any rule violations, but more so adult drama, and stated that the loser is an 8-year-old. Mr. Johns stated that he thinks the Board needs to lift the suspension due to no rule violations. If there is a violation then there needs to be documentation. Mr. Roddy stated that he does not feel he has sufficient information to vote on anything here today, as he has not had a chance to see documents presented. Mr. Johns stated that we can revisit this matter at the next meeting. Ms. Reynolds stated that she wants to be able to take her daughter to places where everyone else can go. She felt attacked the entire year, and still does. She stated that she was not allowed to join softball, but never told in writing [after asking several times] what she did wrong to result in a suspension. Ms. Reynolds stated that her suspension started January 2023, based on a text she received, and was told that based on rumors going around, it was determined that she makes people feel uncomfortable. Discussion ensued regarding events and timeline. Ms. Reynolds mentioned that the other party involved did not have any issue, and remains part of all activities and events. Mr. Johns stated that she forwarded Ms. Reynolds the information showing that her daughter's suspension was lifted. He further stated that if board members had time to review the documents prior to this meeting, there may have been a vote today. Ms. Jackson asked the Department for an updated copy of the Code of Conduct. Mr. Smith stated that his understanding is that the ban is from BCRC activities; they cannot ban her from a facility nor outdoors. Mr. Johns stated that BCRC chose not to attend today. Jon Marsalek motioned to table the appeal hearing for Ms. Reynolds, until the next board meeting. See item under "Action."

Board Member Activities:

Mr. Manjoe introduced Eric Carson, LRRPC President. He recognized Mr. Carson's wonderful leadership, and thanked all for hosting here. Mr. Carson introduced his team in attendance with him tonight, as well as BCRP staff member Michelle Washington. In addition, Mr. Manjoe stated that he received an email from Bob Frank, stating that Paul Carr has still not put together the committee, as discussed. Mr. Johns replied, stating that the

Board will follow up. Mr. Carson asked for clarification on Reimagining Recreation and Parks and Mr. Johns reported that this would be discussed under “Old Business.”

Mr. Roddy reported on his attendance at the OFRC meeting, and reported on an issue at Fullerton Community Center that needs to be addressed. He stated that many people are parking immediately at the entrance to the facility, which is causing a traffic jam. He requested that BCRP look into this matter, requesting to restrict parking in the travel lane, with the installation of “No Parking” signage.

Danielle Bassett thanked Mr. Johns for attending the Catonsville Recreation and Parks Council meeting, stating that he really helped with clarifying things related to Reimagining Recreation and Parks. Additionally, Ms. Bassett reported that the Halethorpe Civic League is planning a 100-year celebration of the Halethorpe Colored School for later this year.

Chairman’s Report:

Mr. Johns reported that he has met with 30 stakeholders regarding Reimagining Recreation and Parks. He has been meeting with lots of councils, trying to get to everyone. He apologized that he has not gotten to the nature councils as quickly as he should have, but referenced the upcoming meeting. He stated that he will continue to update board members on these meetings. Mr. Johns commented that he has been working on the appeals as well. In addition, he plans to follow up on the requested meeting with the Office of Law (OOL). He would like to get the meeting scheduled and stated that he has heard from board members regarding blackout dates. He will reach out to OOL with available dates. Chuck Munzert asked if this meeting could not be at the Historic Courthouse; Mr. Smith replied, stating that he believes this meeting will be held via WebEx. Mr. Johns replied, stating that he thinks virtual would be best.

Further, Mr. Johns reported that he attended an event held by the Department of Aging, some time ago, which focused on the Stop Isolating and Start Recreating initiative. He asked if board members would be interested in meeting with Aging’s board to see what they are looking for in terms of this initiative. He asked board members to email him if they would like to be part of this meeting.

Ms. Mundell-Collins asked about a reoccurring theme with meetings with the councils. Mr. Johns stated that there was a reoccurring theme and went on to discuss Reimagining Recreation and Parks under “Old Business.”

Old Business:

Regarding Reimagining Recreation and Parks, Mr. Johns reported that the most reoccurring theme is where the line is with travel, club and rec, and whether a group is in-house or an affiliate program. Discussion regarding this definition is ongoing, with great conversation. There has also been conversation regarding fees. The fee structure has not yet been set, but we are getting feedback. Mr. Johns state that he thinks all conversations amongst the councils seemed very similar, with universal concerns. Mr. Carson replied, stating that he is trying to get clarification on fees and such, associated with Reimagining Recreation and Parks. Mr. Smith reported that there is no new fees structure in effect for councils until January. The Department plans to release the fees structure to the public on June 1. Mr. Carson questioned whether councils are still submitting permits; Mr. Smith replied, stating that permits are being submitted through CivicRec. Mr. Johns reported that he has taken a lot of calls regarding invoices that were zeroed out, but they were still seeing fees. He stated that this took some explaining. Mr. Smith referenced that there will be much communication coming out in the next day--to recreation councils with updates from listening sessions and workgroups; to nature councils focused on legality pieces, and MOU’s to look at and comment/discuss; and to all councils and the Board regarding upcoming open house listening sessions. Mr. Smith reported that BCRP is planning to hold four sessions, with the public and councils, to address questions. The plan is to have tables set up on various topics, to allow people to obtain the

information they want. These sessions are scheduled to take place on May 1, 2, 6 and 7. In addition, Mr. Smith reported that BCRP has started quarterly meetings again with BCPS and plan to look at the Joint Use Agreement. He commented that the new superintendent has been extremely cooperative, which is encouraging.

Director's Comments:

Mr. Smith announced that 11 BCRP staff recently attended the MRPA Annual Conference, and three staff members graduated from Leadership Institute. In addition, there are a number of BCRP staff taking on leadership positions within MRPA.

Mr. Smith reported on the much-anticipated upcoming CAPAR visit, scheduled in May. This has been a goal the Department has been pursuing for the past two years. There are 204 accredited agencies in the country, with only six in the state of Maryland, and BCRP is looking to join these ranks. Deputy Director Cortney Weinstock has put an immense amount of work into this. We will know, informally, at the conclusion of the visit; however, we would not receive accreditation until the NRPA Conference in Atlanta, GA in October.

The budget was released last week and Mr. Smith reported that it looks pretty good for BCRP. Mr. Roddy asked for a presentation next month and Mr. Smith agreed. Mr. Smith stated that this is the largest budget for the agency, reporting on the ~\$25.5 million allocation. He discussed the agency needs, reporting on the \$4 million operational budget and the \$2 million one-time equipment allocation. Further, Mr. Smith reported on funding for the 90 new positions the agency will receive, stating that BCRP currently has 188 full time positions. This is a lot of positions for right sizing the agency across the board. Mr. Smith reminded board members that the budget is all at the approval of the County Council, which will conclude the end of May. The County Council can cut where they believe cuts need to be made. However, Mr. Smith is hopeful these cuts will not occur in BCRP. The agency is scheduled for a hearing with the County Council on May 14, with Mr. Smith stating that we will make adjustments if cuts are made. Mr. Smith stated that we are only at this point because of continued advocacy from recreation and nature councils, and residents, coming to the County Executive's Budget Town Hall Meetings and advocating for more funding for BCRP, combined with a County Executive that listens to these advocates and the support of the Administration in hearing us and taking into consideration our needs/requests. Mr. Johns replied, stating that traditionally, he as a board member, writes to the County Council requesting not to cut the BCRP budget, and will continue to do so. Mr. Johns also referenced the increase at the State's Attorney's Office (SAO), for two additional positions. He referenced the recent issue the Board had when going to the SAO and being told that they did not have anyone to handle this matter. Mr. Johns stated that the Board may want to get more information on this and write a letter in support of these positions as well. Mr. Johns stated that he would reach out for additional information. Mr. Smith commented, stating that also in the budget and related to talking about ways to improve, is the mow schedule that BCRP lobbied for, to include close to 60 sites for the Office of Property Management to receive funding for, to cut twice a week.

Mr. Johns opened up the conversation of Reimagining Recreation and Parks to all in attendance; there were no additional questions raised.

Mr. Smith announced that Randallstown Community Center is the largest recreation center in the County, with several components including an auditorium, double gymnasium with a walking track, retractable baskets and mondo flooring [which is also the flooring installed at new centers], swimming pool that is leased to the YMCA, computer lab, and meeting rooms.

Committee Reports

Financial Review Committee: The Committee has had several issues. They have worked extremely hard and provided the SAO with all pertinent information, and then told the SAO could not pursue the matter. The

Committee stated that they think the Board should take a stance on the budget increase of two positions for the SAO. Mr. Munzert commented that he had something pending. He reported that the restitution regarding the BCRC issue has ceased as the individual stopped making payments. He will provide a better report on this issue next month.

Governance Committee: The Committee did not meet; Vice Chair Phil Davis is not in attendance. Board members were asked if they were all in receipt of the letter regarding an extension for certification; all replied, stating they had. Jeffrey Budnitz asked if the Lake Roland Nature Council could still submit recertification paperwork on the former schedule and board members informed him that they are drafting a new recertification process.

Legislative Committee: Brooks Paternotte reported that the Committee is working on the letter to County Council.

Bylaws Committee: Mr. Manjoe reported that the Committee met about a week ago, and looking to hold standing committee meetings. The Committee is looking to develop a bylaws template, which will be sent to all board members for review. Mr. Johns reported that he has collected all council bylaws, with the goal of reviewing to see where they need to be updated. Further, Mr. Johns stated that he has an adjustment to announce to the Committee, stating that Mr. Roddy served while Mr. Manjoe was out; therefore, Mr. Roddy is now off the Committee and Mr. Marsalek will be added. Mr. Johns reported that he forwarded the proposed bylaws for Cromwell Valley Park Nature Council to all board members for review. See item under "Action."

Mr. Marsalek asked about the MOU Committee and stated that he is here, ready to serve when BCRP is ready.

New Business:

Mr. Johns reported that he reviewed all council boundaries when looking at council bylaws, and found problems with overlaps and gaps. He stated that he thinks this is something the Board needs to look at. In addition, he also looked at various amenities within each council boundary and stated that this also needs to be reviewed. Mr. Roddy asked if the Board could get a GIS to generate a map based on council bylaws. Mr. Johns replied, stating that he has already mapped this.

Comments By Individual Citizens:

Grace Nelson, with Woodmoor/Zeta Phi Beta addressed the Board, and stated that the sorority partners with the Woodmoor RAC. She stated that a few years ago she reached out to Councilman Julian Jones about the change from PAL to RAC, and stated that since the change the center has become run down. The RAC has gone from 75 chairs to less than 50. She stated that she reached out to Jessica Cook-Thomas, and reported that she has never responded to communication. Once the redistricting occurred, she then pleaded with Councilman Izzy Patoka and was told to come here today. She was told that the chair issue would be addressed in July. She said this should have been addressed two years ago, stating that the chairs are the least of the issues; the RAC has turned into an after-care center. She stated that the group has tried to do as much as they can. They want to try and help the RAC be a little better. Mr. Smith asked for her contact information.

Donnie Brown, Director, Charm City Youth Lacrosse, introduced himself and addressed the Board, stating that he is also a lacrosse coach for Lutherville-Timonium Recreation Council (LTRC). He stated that he recently had a conversation with LTRC, reporting on the number of participants in club, which is very expensive. He stated that when you leave Lutherville, there is not another recreation program close by. He stated that he wants to start a lacrosse program. He has done the leg work, had the insurance and equipment, but needed a place to play, the uniforms, and league fees. He has reached out to many, and further stated that he wants to start a

tutoring program and a mentoring program. Mr. Smith replied, stating that BCRP will talk to him, and that the agency would work with him. Mr. Manjoe asked if Mr. Brown had spoken with LRRPC president; he stated that he had not. Mr. Brown replied, stating that he was told to come to the Board. Mr. Manjoe stated that LRRPC has good leadership and should be the beginning of his conversation. Mr. Smith replied, stating that the agency is capable to work with the organization that is not associated with a council. Mr. Budnitz stated that he can vouch for Mr. Brown's program as he and his wife have supported some of the kids that have gone through his program.

Darnell Green, with the TSRPC, applauded the decision this evening, but had a question. He stated that he thinks they should have addressed the matter with the general council, before coming to the Board. He brought up the process/timeline and referenced due process. Mr. Johns stated that the process is long, and the Board will work with the TSRPC on this. Both parties did what they were supposed to do according to the process.

Ms. Green stated that she is confused about the comment that if she has to contest the election that she has to come to the Board. Mr. Johns stated that he would follow up with her via email with this information.

Ralph Brown reported on the wonderful talk at Oregon Ridge last Sunday, presented by someone with the Catocin Mountains. They talked about what they are doing to protect their woods to make sure they will be around for years to come. Mr. Smith attended and gave a brief budget presentation, mentioning the naturalist positions and natural resource managers, which nature councils desperately need. He stated that he was nervous when saw the article stating that Councilman Patoka is going to go through the budget to look for places that can be cut, and encouraged board members to emphasize in the note to council members not to cut positions.

Mr. Carson asked about the appeal process that board members heard today, questioning whether this is public record since this could very well be happening in other areas. Mr. Johns replied, stating that the appeal process is in council bylaws, and may be different from one council to another. Overall, if a council has an issue, Mr. Johns encouraged them to reach out to the Board. Members work hard to try and mediate/resolve issues, and are here to be a resource to councils. The Board is not trying to streamline all councils to follow one set of bylaws, but rather to make sure some sort of updated document exists for councils to follow.

Mr. Roddy thanked Ms. Weinstock for sending board members the Code of Conduct and asked to receive updated policy when finalized. Mr. Smith replied, stating that the Department is looking to post all online.

Action:

Mr. Marsalek motioned to table the appeal hearing for Ms. Reynolds, until the next board meeting; Mr. Munzert seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Mr. Manjoe motioned to approve the CVP Bylaws; Mr. Roddy seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Roddy moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Bassett seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Winters