

# BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

COREY JOHNS, CHAIR

## Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., at Oregon Ridge Park and Lodge. In attendance were Corey Johns, Chair; and board members Brooks Paternotte, Pat Roddy, Chuck Munzert, Dana Jackson and Desiree Mundell-Collins. Recreation and Parks Department staff included Director Bob Smith; Cortney Weinstock, Deputy Director of Administration; and Annie Sanchez, Park Manager.

Other attendees: Eric Carson (Liberty Road Recreation and Parks Council), Jarod Picone (Carroll Manor Recreation Council), Patti and Bruce Schindler (Baltimore County Horse Council), Dan Callihan (Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council), and Michael Ruby (Country Chronicle).

### **Call to Order:**

Chair Corey Johns called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Johns requested one edit to the minutes to reflect that Paul Amirault requested sending meeting minutes to council presidents, not Pat Roddy. Mr. Roddy moved to approve the April board meeting minutes; Dana Jackson seconded; and all were in favor.

### **Board Member Activities:**

Ms. Jackson reported that she attended several council meetings, including Middle River Recreation and Parks Council (MRRPC), Bear Creek Recreation Council (BCRC), Colgate Recreation Council (CRC), Edgemere-Sparrows Point Recreation Council (ESPRC) and Gray Charles Recreation Council (GCRC). MRRPC reported having a lot of issues in Hawthorne with equipment being damaged and people acting inappropriately. Chuck Munzert advised them of the police officer in the area that they could contact. Ms. Jackson reported that BCRC is currently dealing with an issue regarding inappropriate conduct by a soccer coach. She asked about contact made with the parent of the child involved and advised the president to get in touch with them. In addition, Ms. Jackson referenced concern over \$5,000 that was sitting in the BCRC account and it was unknown to whom it belonged. It was determined that this money belonged to the Southeast Area Softball League. Ms. Jackson spoke with Ada Freyer to get in touch with them to transfer the money where it needs to be. ESPRC is very upset because programs have grown tremendously, but club teams are coming in. She told ESPRC that the Board has been discussing this and the definition of club team and council. She also reported on the issue with the Southeast Area Soccer League and asked if there was anything that could be done. Director Bob Smith replied, stating that we are looking at whether there is a role for the County to operate some of these leagues to standardize where wanted. He further stated that we have had some internal conversations at indoor regional facilities managed by the County. Ms. Jackson reported that CRC is having issues with permits. The council has grown and staff have reached out to a couple of areas for assistance with fields, but were denied. However, when visiting the fields it was discovered that they are not in use. Mr. Smith stated that we will have internal conversations to make sure fields sitting vacant, when they otherwise could be in play, aren't. Mr. Smith further stated that we know that we need to be better about ensuring they are not sitting vacant, and this is going to cause angst to some of these councils that take ownership of the fields and facilities in their area. Mr. Smith

stated that we will need help from the Board. Regarding CRC, Ms. Jackson stated that they have always been told there are boundaries and that you are not permitted to advertise beyond these boundaries. However, CRC is seeing a ton of other programs bringing signs within their boundaries. CRC is questioning whether there are still boundaries, and if so, what they can do to enforce this. Mr. Smith stated that boundaries are a function of the Board. Mr. Roddy commented that he did not read over anything that stated this. Ms. Jackson and Mr. Smith replied, stating that this was likely an unwritten, understood rule. Mr. Johns suggested bringing this up at the dinner meeting with Board of Education, to come up with a policy for advertising in schools. Board members and Department staff responded, stating that there is no policy to prohibit councils from advertising outside of their boundaries. Ms. Jackson also mentioned that parents in attendance at the CRC meeting brought up soccer issues and whether the County can ensure safety. Mr. Smith referenced the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Facility Rules of Behavior, which entails a suspension policy that can be invoked. Mr. Munzert referenced a situation where it seemed as though the County could or would not take action aside from County staff. Mr. Smith replied, stating that they could discuss the situation in detail. Ms. Jackson asked if it would be okay for her to talk to the MRRPC president about changing the culture. Mr. Munzert replied, stating that most problems occurred with CRC and GCRC. Ms. Jackson stated that she is seeing that this is an ongoing issue in this area and thinks the code of conduct needs to be reiterated. Ms. Jackson reported that she received a call from GCRC president at the time that paperwork she was trying to take care of was not adding up. Ms. Jackson and Mr. Munzert met with GCRC and advised them to start fresh and forget about the money stolen. GCRC was advised to get paperwork in order and were in the process of doing all of this, but called Ms. Jackson again and stated that things are not lining up. Ms. Jackson and Mr. Munzert called Desiree Mundell-Collins and the three of them went to the council meeting, which was a mess. Discussion ensued regarding the treasure serving s dual roles, the conflict with this and other issues surrounding this individual. Ms. Jackson reported that there are new people taking over again, and board members instructed them to get things together. She commented about the restitution money, stating that this is in an accountant. They sent Ms. Jackson a report on their taxes, and included unaccounted funds in the amount of \$3,872, and \$200 additional that didn't add up. They have everything broken down per program, and Ms. Jackson has emphasized the need to show the restitution money. Ms. Jackson asked GCRC what they would want the plan to be moving forward, and she asked board members what they should do moving forward. She stated that GCRC is working hard to fix the situation, and Mr. Munzert stated that he thinks we owe them the opportunity to do so. Ms. Jackson stated that she plans to attend all of their meetings. GCRC is aware that taxes will need to be turned in again since they are behind on filing. Mr. Munzert stated that he thinks they have been a good council even though they have had money issues the past four years.

Ms. Mundell-Collins reported that she was at a meeting with Councilman Pat Young on May 2 and had the opportunity to speak with him regarding his appointment to the Board. Councilman Young told Ms. Mundell-Collins that he is in the process of interviewing and hoped someone would be appointed soon. In addition, Ms. Mundell-Collins reported that she attended the Arbutus Recreation and Parks Council (ARPC) meeting on April 24. ARPC had questions regarding personal liability insurance for board members, as they found themselves in a situation where someone said they were going to sue them personally. Mr. Johns replied, stating that it depends on the situation – the County would defend a volunteer acting within the role of a volunteer. Mr. Smith replied, stating that the County does not defend the board members; they would need D&O insurance. This is stated in best practices outlined by the Board.

Mr. Roddy and Mr. Johns attended the Perry Hall Recreation Council (PHRC) meeting. Mr. Roddy stated that they are a very active council with lots of good programs. However, they did have an issue with the Board of Education policy allowing scholastic teams 12 hours of practice off season. Perry Hall HS has now reserved time from 3-8 pm in June and July, for football and lacrosse, during time when recreation council programs would normally be using the fields. Mr. Roddy stated that he thinks this is a larger issue that can be brought up with the County. Mr. Smith stated that this is a new development in the state; MPSSAA used to prevent high school activities outside certain dates, and has just changed this. Mr. Smith stated that we can push back some. Mr. Roddy asked for some perspective as to how this is going to work countywide. Mr. Johns reported that the Board does not meet with Board of Education until September and asked Mr. Roddy to send him topics for

discussion. Mr. Roddy stated that this also affects the use of the gym. Mr. Johns stated that they do not need to wait until September to address this issue. Mr. Roddy reported on another issue regarding a damaged net at a sand volleyball court. People are being told that the County will not replace the net, even though they maintain other aspects. Mr. Roddy asked for clarification on County responsibility. He stated that apparently the net was a donation, which is now in tatters. He stated that the broader issue is identifying the policy. Mr. Smith replied, stating that the general rule is if it is used in the scope of a council program then it is the council's responsibility. Mr. Smith stated that this is something we are going to work out moving through the MOU process. With this new change to practice hours, Ms. Jackson asked if they would now be able to use MS or ES. Mr. Smith replied, stating that they probably could.

Brooks Paternotte reported that he will be attending the Owings Mills Recreation and Parks Council meeting tomorrow evening, and is also going to try to attend Lake Roland Nature Council's next meeting. He announced that he has been in touch with Greater Pikesville Recreation Council (GPRC), and referenced the discussion regarding code of conduct. He suggested when developing the MOU with the councils, to include something universal in terms of code of conduct and how to enforce this. Mr. Smith referenced a recent issue that occurred where GPRC made the determination regarding suspension from their activities, not County property.

### **Chairman's Report:**

Mr. Johns started his report by congratulating Mr. Smith! He attended both the Baltimore County Council Work Session where Mr. Smith was publicly interviewed by the Council, and the Legislative Session where he was officially approved by the Council. Mr. Johns stated that he can honestly say he has tremendous confidence in Mr. Smith serving Baltimore County as the Director of Recreation and Parks and he looks forward to continuing to work with him as a partner to support Recreation and Parks.

In addition to Mr. Smith being approved as Director, the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) was approved by the Council. The LPPRP serves as the advisory master plan for the Department and outlines the County's recreation, parks and open space policies, goals, and objectives. Mr. Johns reported that he also sat in on the budget hearing. Mr. Smith will give a presentation on the budget in his report, and board members will discuss some action taken regarding the budget during the committee reports.

The past month has truly been a celebration and showcase of the commitment the Department has to providing something for everyone in Baltimore County. Mr. Johns reported that he attended public input and information sessions about Oregon Ridge Nature Center, Disc Golf and Mountain Biking. All three of these meetings were very positive and well attended, and showed the communities appreciation that the County is listening to them and accepting their input. Mr. Johns reported that he was unable to attend the Belfast Road Property input meeting and would be curious to know if there was a recording and/or minutes available.

In addition to the County having input sessions on different recreational opportunities, Mr. Johns reported that he attended a ribbon cutting yesterday for a new boat ramp and soft water launch site at Merritt Point Park. These are great passive recreation sites for anybody who wants to go out on the water and have fun. Mr. Johns commented that it is great to see older parks like Merritt Point Park be re-invested in.

Mr. Johns also attended meetings with both the Baltimore County Skateboard Council (BCSC) and the Baltimore County Horse Council (BCHC), further showing the great diversity of activities available here. The BCSC is very excited about the Hazelwood Skate Park project still in the works and expected to break ground in October. They have had some difficulty getting in touch with the Cockeysville Community Center supervisor to schedule meetings there and had to switch to the library. The Council would like to speak with somebody about the fence at the Hannah More Skate Park, and reported that they are very happy that the fence at the Lansdowne Skate Park was taken down. They commented that it makes the park feel more open and inviting rather than locked away and separated.

The BCHC is working on great events. This past Friday they had their monthly Friday Night Lights event and had a demonstration of both polo and polocrosse. Mr. Johns commented that it was great to learn and see new sports. Their next event is June 2, and it is in partnership with Pathfinders for Autism. At their meeting on Monday, the BCHC asked about possibly getting one of those wooden signs that are often outside recreation council sites, and who to talk to about getting one outside the Ag Center. Mr. Johns stated that he spoke with Drew Emmer yesterday and he mentioned that the Department was going to look at upgrading signs around the County. There are councils looking into signage. Mr. Johns asked board members to continue to communicate with the councils in their area so their projects are not done in conflict of what the Department is working on. Mr. Smith replied, stating that he did not think we had council signs but rather school and recreation office signs. Mr. Johns stated that Prettyboy Recreation Council (PRC) has this sign. Mr. Smith stated that PRC would have paid for this sign.

Mr. Johns was invited to a meeting, by Delegate Carl Jackson and Councilman Mike Ertel, with the director of basketball for the Overlea-Fullerton Recreation Council (OFRC) to discuss playing space and the recreation facility. Ms. Harrison was advocating for her program and the OFRC. She was very pleased to see Mr. Johns in attendance and said to the Delegate and Councilman that he put her at ease because he worked with her before at the OFRC meetings. With her big request of facility space, Mr. Johns promoted that the Department is looking to move to CivicRec, the central registry, and it can certainly be used to show which councils need space. She was very excited about that and hopes to push OFRC to be one of the groups using it right away.

Mr. Johns attended and spoke at a public input meeting about Golden Ring MS. As an individual board member, not on behalf of the entire Board, he shared that should the Board of Education close Golden Ring MS, there is definitely a need and desire to have the site be used for Recreation and Parks. The Board of Education members seemed very receptive of that as a future use.

In addition, Mr. Johns attended many other recreation and nature council meetings as well. The Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council (ORNCC) celebrated and honored long-time volunteers and board members Ann and Noot Canoles before their last meeting. Ms. Canoles is retiring as the treasurer after over 47 years of volunteer service. The ORNCC has some very cool events coming up, like Music in the Woods on June 3, and the BSO will be playing at Oregon Ridge on July 3. ORNCC is also looking forward to a Master Plan meeting on May 24.

Alongside Ms. Jackson and Mr. Munzert, Mr. Johns attended the MRRC meeting. They did bring up an issue about kids on their softball team being bullied at one of the school sites by some other kids in the neighborhood. It has escalated to police being called and they are considering no longer using the field for safety concerns. It is a situation being monitored and discussed with the school. Their baseball team did ask about the possibility of moving one of the backstops back into the lit area of a field. There are lights at Middle River MS, but it doesn't actually light the baseball field. Mr. Smith replied, stating that as we get through lighting conversions they will have enough candle wattage.

Councilman Ertel also mentioned to Mr. Johns, a bullying issue with the OFRC at Overlea HS. The kids using the track are being bullied by an outside group and may have to move their practice site because this other group that doesn't have permits to be there refuses to leave and is starting fights with the recreation team there. Again, this is an issue being monitored and discussed with the school. Mr. Smith reported that we have not heard from this program.

Mr. Johns attended the White Marsh Recreation Council (WMRC) meeting. The big meeting topic here was about a soccer coach who collapsed. Luckily, there was a cardiologist at the game who ran to an AED machine close by and saved his life. The man is doing well but it brought up a topic to be discussed more under "New Business" when we get to resource guide. WMRC also asked about what steps to take to get Cowenton Field considered for turf. Mr. Johns told them those steps to advocate for this.

He attended, with Mr. Roddy, the PHRC meeting. They had a discussion with PHRC about background checks, and spoke about the Joint Use Agreement (JUA) that is being worked on. With regards to background checks, they did ask a good question about one-time drop-in volunteer coaches. For example, if the Calvert Hall lacrosse coach wanted to pop in one day and guest coach, they asked whether he would have to be background checked. They historically have planned something with retired Orioles players dropping in to do a guest coaching session and they are curious how those types of volunteers fit in. Mr. Smith replied, stating that they would need to complete the background check, and stated if working with outside groups, councils should be asking for insurance. He also stated that special rate employees go through a CJIS background check via the County. They are not operating in a volunteer capacity, but rather a paid employee. PHRC also had a question about Angel Park. He and Mr. Smith already spoke about this and Mr. Johns will relay this information.

Mr. Johns joined the Towson Recreation Council (TRC) for their first meeting as a new, reconstructed board. Councilman Ertel was there as well. Mr. Johns will discuss their recertification under “Old Business”. TRC is looking to create partnerships with Towson University and the same question about drop-in volunteer coaches is likely applicable.

Last night, Mr. Johns and Mr. Munzert attended the PRC meeting. They will discuss that more under “New Business”.

Lastly, earlier today Mr. Johns spoke with Isaac Manjoe. Mr. Johns asked that another board member cover the councils in Mr. Manjoe’s area while he is recuperating. In Mr. Manjoe’s absence, Mr. Johns asked Mr. Paternotte to serve as chair of the Bylaws Committee, temporarily, Mr. Roddy to fill in on this committee, and Ms. Mundell-Collins to switch from the Governance Committee to the Financial Review Committee, permanently. Mr. Johns reported that Mr. Manjoe greatly appreciated the flower Ms. Mundell-Collins sent on behalf of the Board, stating that she did a great job picking this out and he felt the love from them.

### **Director’s Comments:**

Mr. Smith reported that the Belfast Road Property public meeting was held last week. He stated that this meeting was well attended, with many good questions raised. He relayed that we are looking at some options and hoping to move the project forward.

The Park Finder web application press release is coming out soon. Explore over 360 parks and school recreation centers in Baltimore County in an interactive map. Search for parks by address or name, and filter results by available amenities. This application is scheduled to go live the end of this month. Mr. Roddy asked to have a demonstration of the application at one of the next board meetings, so members can familiarize themselves with the application and be ambassadors.

The Merritt Point Park Boat Ramp and Soft Launch Ribbon Cutting, held on May 9, was fantastic. Mr. Smith announced that the Department is looking to do this at a couple other waterfront parks. Join Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Kayak Share program and enjoy paddling at Loch Raven Fishing Center, Marshy Point Nature Center, Rocky Point Park and Miami Beach Park. Membership includes use of a kayak, paddle, life vest and seasonal admission to Rocky Point Park and Miami Beach Park. The cost is \$200 for ages 18 and over.

Mr. Smith conducted a budget presentation for board members and others in attendance, stating that the information we have publicly at this point is not final. Each agency will have a budget hearing with the County Council to answer all questions. Mr. Smith reported that there could be changes made.

### **Old Business:**

Eric Carson is here representing the Liberty Road Recreation and Parks Council (LRRPC), to answer any questions regarding the proposed bylaws submitted to the Board. Mr. Johns stated that he did not receive any questions from board members, and motioned to approve the bylaws. Mr. Roddy seconded the motion, further stating that he did not vote for this at the last board meeting as he and others had not had a chance to read over the document. Ms. Mundell-Collins referenced using inclusive verbiage. Mr. Carson addressed board members, stating that some of the bylaws had not been changed in many years and they revamped them with lead taken by the LRRPC Bylaws Committee. Mr. Roddy thanked Mr. Carson for his volunteer service as council president. Ms. Jackson had a couple of suggestions and questions. Regarding election of officers, she suggested instead of doing all elections on the same year, to scatter so you do not risk losing your entire board at once. She also asked about the hiring of an HR manager and asked if this is a board member position. Mr. Smith replied, stating that the LRRPC day care program is staffed by LRRPC employees and they have a position to oversee this. There was reference made to a legal meeting and to be careful about giving petty cash. Ms. Jackson also noted there is nothing in the bylaws about background checks as a County policy. Mr. Paternotte stated that he is happy to meet with the LRRPC Bylaws Committee to go over more specifically, if they would like to further discuss board comments.

Regarding recertification, Ms. Jackson discussed Watersedge Recreation Council (WRC), stating that she emailed a few times for a status report. She reported that there is a whole new board, and the response received is that they have sent recertification forms but are missing taxes. She is hesitant on next steps, stating that they are trying to fix the issue and move forward. WRC has not filed taxes for the last three years; however, the fault does not lie with the current leadership. She is planning to attend the next council meeting to discuss the status of WRC, with the entire board. Ms. Jackson recommends extending certification and will report more after she attends their next meeting. Mr. Johns reported that the TRC has submitted all required documents. He and Mr. Paternotte worked with them and believe they are in good order. This is a new group of people. See item under "Action". Towsontowne Recreation Council has meeting on May 17 at 7:30 p.m., with the location to be determined. This meeting is required with board attendance as part of their probation.

### **Committee Reports**

Financial Review Committee: Mr. Munzert reported that the detective has informed him that they are close to filing charges with Edmondson-Westview. Mr. Munzert reported that they are also working on something related to GCRC, with a couple of other issues popping up as well. Mr. Johns asked about the status of the meeting with Adam Lippe. Mr. Munzert replied, stating that Mr. Lippe informed him that he is not able to do anything for at least a couple of months. Mr. Munzert is looking to get something scheduled with him.

Governance Committee: They are working on a financial review regarding PRC; however, Phil Davis is not in attendance this evening to further report.

Legislative Committee: Mr. Brooks reported that the letter was sent to County Council and the County Executive strongly encouraging moving forward with the budget as proposed. Mr. Johns added that he thought it was important to send this letter out prior to Friday when deliberations begin. Mr. Smith replied, stating that the Department appreciates the support. Mr. Roddy asked about a legislative report; Mr. Smith stated that he thought there would be a legislative report at conference but there was not. Mr. Smith reported that he has a lot of capital state bonds checklists, but we did not hear anything at conference. He did go on to discuss cannabis legalization and what this means for County parks. Mr. Smith reported that the County is looking into this, internally.

Bylaws Committee: Aside from the LRRPC, Mr. Paternotte stated he has nothing further to report. He will be in touch with them.

### **New Business:**

Mr. Munzert attended the PRC meeting. He stated that the recertification paperwork was not substantial, with no help from the treasurer who turned over a box of paperwork to the president to handle. The president was asking questions and getting a lot of heat for this. Board members feel they need to redo their recertification. A petition to throw out the current president was drafted and disseminated, with success. The former vice president is now the president until the next election. PRC did agree to complete the financial review part of their recertification. PRC did their taxes, but not a financial review, and agreed to do this again. Mr. Munzert stated that he does not believe there are any financial issues.

Mr. Johns brought up the idea of having a resource guide for councils that would include where AED's are located, and provide instruction on how to use. He also discussed providing first aid and CPR training. Mr. Smith replied, stating that we have a number of trainers on our staff and we are looking to expand. If we get enough trainers and could run enough trainings, we could do this, but the issue is the cost of the card – it is \$20 per person. Discussion ensued regarding staffing trainings and coming up with a registration and payment plan. There was also reference of school AED's, which are not always accessible. Some AED's had been placed at outside locations and they were stolen. Ms. Jackson discussed portable units, and asked about the County contract with the idea that councils could purchase from the vendor on their own. Mr. Smith stated that he is not sure if the councils could purchase on the County contract, but stated that we could likely provide specs. Mr. Roddy reported that he listened to a presentation from Adam Rosenberg, with the Center for Hope. He trains professionals in youth serving organizations, specifically looking at boards to see what they do to protect children. Mr. Roddy asked Mr. Johns if he could invite Mr. Rosenberg to one of the upcoming board meetings; Mr. Roddy reached out to him and reported that he is very excited about coming to talk to the Board and referenced the idea of collaborating with the Department. Mr. Smith replied, stating that he thinks the collaboration would be with the recreation and nature councils. Board members voiced their interest; Mr. Roddy will invite the organization to the October meeting.

Board members have discussed the idea of moving the meetings around to various locations within the County. Mr. Johns asked Mr. Smith if they should keep the meetings centralized. Mr. Smith recognized that the Board has traveled in the past and can assist in securing locations if this is what members would like to do. Mr. Roddy thinks it would be good to take meetings to other locations, stating that this would allow board members to see other sites and potentially broaden participation from other councils. Mr. Johns stated that he would work with the Department to identify other locations.

### **Action:**

Mr. Johns motioned to recertify TRC; Mr. Brooks seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Mr. Johns motioned to approve the LRRPC Bylaws; Mr. Roddy seconded the motion and all were in favor.

### **Comments By Individual Citizens:**

Jarod Picone addressed the Board and members of the Department of Recreation and Parks by requesting to fill the vacant administrative aid position in the Carroll Manor/Cockeysville Recreation Office, providing assistance to the community supervisor on site. Mr. Picone stated that Kevyn Allgeier is doing a great job but needs help. Mr. Picone commented that he runs the Carroll Manor softball program. They are called co-op not league, and may be what the County is looking at doing. Regarding the conversation about AED's, Mr. Picone stated that the unit at Carroll Manor ES was removed during a backstop and infield project, and the unit at Jacksonville ES was just put back in the box, but it had been hanging out and is in poor shape. The Carroll Manor Recreation Council (CMRC) uses Long Green Baptist Church for games. The pastor inquired with CMRC to install an outdoor AED at this site. The church stepped in and said they would do this. Mr. Picone referenced gaps in the AED program. He further stated that the CMRC board is going to turn over and may be reaching out to the Board of Recreation and Parks.

Mr. Carson referenced the JUA, and cleanliness and maintenance of rooms. He stated that getting someone to properly clean on a daily basis is a problem and the LRRPC is looking for help. He stated that the problem regarding the JUA is getting programs in the schools. Mr. Carson stated that permits do not get approved. Mr. Smith replied, stating that high schools are the culprit. He stated that our team has reviewed the JUA and drafted an updated version. He stated that one issue we have is maintenance of middle school courts and diamonds. He reported that BCPS focuses on high school diamonds and fields. Mr. Smith reported that we are having a conversation about absorbing those diamonds but would then need funding to maintain.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Mr. Munzert moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Roddy seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Winters