

RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

March 22,2023 – 1:00 p.m.

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Tony Rosas, Gary Davis, Megan Vaughn (Vice-Chair), Dave Ferguson (Chair), Kristin Darby, Nadine Rosendale, Austin Johnstone

Members Excused: Michael Duffy, Donald Gerkin, Brad Rockwood, and Anita Taylor

Staff Present: Will Brozy, Becky Kishter, Seth Carlson, Holly Zimmerman, Lisa Carroll, Ashley Caltrider, Dawn Harry, Megan Erpenstein, Jamie Noel

Ex-Officio Member Present: Jeff Degitz

Commissioner’s Office Present: Roberta Windham

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met on March 22, 2023, at the Bear Branch Nature Center. The meeting was called to order at 1:01p.m. by Mr. Ferguson.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Mr. Ferguson thanked all in attendance and Hashawha/Bear Branch Nature Center for hosting.

Mr. Degitz, Board members and staff introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Darby moved to approve the February 22, 2023, meeting minutes; Ms. Vaughn seconded, all concurred and minutes were approved.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Ms. Windham shared regards sent on behalf of commissioners. She thanked the board and staff.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

1. **Staff Updates** – Maxine Bukowitz has submitted her resignation as Park Naturalist at Piney Run Park. The job is currently posted along with seasonal summer camp positions.
2. **Freedom Park Updates** – Commissioners recently approved bids for a replacement pavilion and paving of rear parking lot At Freedom Park.
3. **Gillis Falls Trail** – Project has been terminated due to unanticipated permitting complications and costs. Staff working with Management & Budget to reallocate funding towards other projects in plan.
4. **Springdale Preparatory School Usage** – Despite having a joint use agreement negotiated with previous head of school, West Carroll Recreation Council is no longer.

receiving usage of gym. This is already starting to result in requests from community for a replacement facility like Charles Carroll Community Center.

5. **Westminster Veterans Memorial Park Updates** – Bid currently posted for memorial garden walkways and hardscaping with tree planting and bench installations to follow.
6. **Northwest Rail Trail** – After years of positive communication between County and Genesee & Wyoming Railroad, subsidiary Maryland Midland communicated that they see potential future use in this line which has stalled communication.
7. **Fiber Internet Connection to Hap Baker Firearms Facility** – We are working with Department of Technology Services to establish fiber connection to shooting range. This will provide more reliable internet service to support credit card usage at facility and improved communication.
8. **Hashawha/Bear Branch Updates** – Bid approved for replacement walkways around Algonquin Building with work to be completed this spring; have run into delays with internal agency approval regarding replacement pavilion for Bear Branch which has already been delivered to site.
9. **Upcoming Youth Fishing Rodeos** – Sundays, April 30 at Westminster Community Pond, and May 21 at Krimgold Park., 8 am to noon. Contest open to ages 15 and under.
10. **100-Mile Challenge** – Self-paced challenge to walk, run, hike, pedal and/or paddle 100 miles before December 31, 2023, to win fun prizes. This event is co-sponsored by Department along with the Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County and Walk Carroll.

CONTINUED E-BIKE DISCUSSION:

Mr. Ferguson requested clarification on the next step or end goal of the discussion.

Mr. Degitz outlined that the existing regulation prohibits the use of e-bikes in all of Carroll County's Parks. The process to amend this, if the Advisory Board should wish to do so, has various steps. The next step is to take the new recommendation of the Advisory Board forward. The board would need to define what that is.

Additional considerations:

Even with current ordinance, should someone contact Recreation & Parks with an American Disability Act accommodation necessitating a Class 2 e-bike, it can be acknowledged.

Part of the Advisory Board amendment request may designate e-bike usage trails. Although bikes are allowed in all parks, the usage of bikes varies. A paved park with a child learning to ride a bike is not the same as the trails at Hashawha. The ability to regulate this will largely be self-enforcement and signage.

Mr. Rosas questioned the course of action for the parks with paved access to unpaved trails.

Mr. Brozy suggested Cape Horn Park may have that situation.

Mr. Degitz denied that. He stated Krimgold Park may have that challenge.

Mr. Davis questioned if the trails behind South Carroll High School would have that challenge.

Mr. Degitz advised that land is not inclusive in Carroll County Recreation and Parks ordinances. He emphasized that although the scenario is a technicality within the guidance, with safe practices, there is not causation to intervene with someone in that situation.

Mr. Rosas made a motion for the allowance of class one e-bikes in designated areas only.

Ms. Darby seconded the motion.

The vote was unanimous.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITTEE

Mr. Degitz shared that every three years, through a committee of volunteers from the advisory board and some staff, the strategic plan is re-evaluated and updated to best align with changes. The goal is to meet several times and do this with modifications, changes, and methodical updates. Example: in 2020 part of the plan was to put a building in at Krimgold Park, with a public and private partnership. That partnership did not evolve, and basketball courts are going into that space.

Mr. Ferguson made a request for volunteers.

Mr. Davis, Ms. Darby, and Mr. Johnstone volunteered.

Mr. Degitz stated that even if you are not part of the committee, there is opportunity for input from the board and staff.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Rosas raised a question on opportunities to elevate projects with the halt of two trail projects recently. He advocated for the funds to be reallocated to elevate other trail projects, such as at Hashawha.

Mr. Degitz advised that is the intention. He is to meet with the budgeting team to do that and allocate/reallocate funds in the budget for the next year or so. There will be updates on the progress of this at each meeting.

Mr. Ferguson stated that this has occurred before. The Recreation Councils have an opportunity to provide their input on Capital Budget Projects until April 15th.

Mr. Degitz affirmed this and shared that input would be shared with the Advisory Board in the May meeting; direction will be sought from them. There will then be related presentations in June. Regarding the funds from the terminated projects, there are additional variables to consider beyond the similarity in description. Example the amount of funds available and amount of funds needed.

Mr. Brozy advised that with the Gillis Falls projects, there were Federal Funds factored in. With the termination of that, those funds were returned. The complete dollar amount of that project is not what is able to be reallocated.

Mr. Degitz stated Salt Box may be a contender.

Mr. Davis inquired if the project to create a facility with the Charles Carroll Park has occurred.

Mr. Degitz updated that the facility is preparing for a ribbon cutting, there is a large gym and several rec rooms. A goal in the near future is for the Advisory Board to be able to see this.

Mr. Rosas inquired on the commitment to the naming of the facility. He cited a letter submitted to prior Commissioners and whether the Advisory Board would revisit this with new Commissioners.

Mr. Ferguson reiterated that the process is nearly at ribbon cutting, it's advanced since that was sent forth.

Mr. Degitz agreed that decisions have been made and signage has been purchased. There's a community connotation with the name and the site, due to the elementary school that was previously on the site. The Recreation Council President is strongly committed to maintaining the school's name with the location.

Mr. Rosas cited challenges with defining ownership between the facility, park, and recreation council due the aligned name. Mr. Rosas will be sharing the prior letter with the Advisory Board for reconsideration.

Mr. Ferguson inquired on the County's position and opportunity for providing Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) with parks and certain facilities.

Mr. Degitz stated that this subject also came up earlier this morning. He is requesting a meeting with Risk Management to find out more. It's advisable to keep them locked, maintain monthly inspections, and there may be challenges with this in unstaffed parks.

Mr. Ferguson is aware of programs in Freedom Area looking to purchase them running into challenges with sharing the device when the holder is to be absent, paying for service, and expectations for obtaining or maintaining certifications for use.

Mr. Degitz acknowledge that there are a lot of moving pieces to evaluate, visiting the subject with staffed parks is not the same as visiting the subject in unstaffed parks.

Mr. Ferguson is an AED owner. The service that he uses includes maintenance/ battery replacements. Currently, there are grants available to programs to purchase AEDs, and the cost has significantly declined with demand increase. There have been various highly publicized events highlighting the significance of the subject with athletic programs.

Ms. Carroll stated that Mid-Atlantic Recreation and Parks Sports Alliance (MARPSA) frequently has conversations on this. The outcome is consistent, current practice is for staffed parks to maintain AEDs, but not unstaffed parks.

Ms. Kishter stated that the AEDs at the Sports Complex were serviced and replaced this week.

Mr. Degitz shared that MARPSA is a vast and diverse pool for input.

Mr. Ferguson inquired on the availability of grants for AEDs to Recreation and Parks.

Currently, there's no knowledge of grants available to the Recreation and Parks Department.

Ms. Carroll provided another update from MARPSA. Three Carroll County Residents received awards:

Scott Walthour, Good Sports Administrator Award (Shooting Stars, Soccer program)

Jim Long, Good Sports Coach (Adaptive Lacrosse)

Linnea White, Good Sports Athlete (with Freedom Optimist Soccer and volunteer for Shooting Stars)

Local Awards for History Month:

Recognizes one high school and one middle school project, using this year's theme, that focuses on the historical significance of park development, conservation, or pursuit of leisure activities. The project must demonstrate how history has impacted our current appreciation for local or national services within Recreation & Parks.

Hayli Zartman (junior division)

The Ocean City Maryland Boardwalk

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting will be held in person on Wednesday, May 24th, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., location to be confirmed later. On a motion by Mr. Davis, Ms. Darby seconded, and concurred by all, the meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff R. Degitz

Jeff R. Degitz, Director

Ashley Caltrider

Ashley Caltrider, Secretary