

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS

ERIC VAN DEN BEEMT, CHAIRMAN

Meeting Minutes

July 13, 2016

The regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Board was held on Wednesday, July 13, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. at the Department of Recreation and Parks administrative offices, Cockeysville, Maryland. In attendance were Eric van den Beemt, chairman; board members Leslie Monfred, Isaac Manjoe, Brian Weir and Chip Hiebler. Recreation and Parks department staff included Barry F. Williams, director; Beahta Davis, chief of recreation services; Chris McCollum, executive director, Agriculture, Nature & Special Facilities; Michael Schneider, community outreach liaison and Kara Burman, regional coordinator, Region 1. Also in attendance were Lexi Lieberman and Rob Palmisano. Media included Michael Ruby, Country Chronicle and Alison Knezevich, The Baltimore Sun.

Call to Order:

Chairman Eric van den Beemt called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Chairman's Report:

Mr. van den Beemt briefly discussed the recent article in The Baltimore Sun, regarding embezzlement, as each board member reviewed a copy.

Approval of Minutes:

Isaac Manjoe motioned to approve the June board meeting minutes, Chip Hiebler seconded, and all were in favor.

Board Member Activities:

Mr. Hiebler reported that he and Leslie Monfred attended the last Lansdowne-Riverview Recreation Council meeting. He stated that he has suggestions, which he will discuss later this evening.

Brian Weir announced that he spoke with someone from the Special Olympics who plans to contact Beahta Davis or Michael Schneider. In addition, he stated that he had a conversation with Councilman Crandell regarding the process for requesting the use of stages.

Director's Comments:

Director Barry F. Williams announced that Angel Park is coming along very well. He spent a couple of hours there yesterday afternoon, assisting with the build. Ms. Davis is planning to attend on Friday. Mr. Williams encouraged board members, interested in participating, to do so.

Mr. Williams informed board members that there are plans for two artificial turf fields, at the following sites: Milford Mill HS and Dundalk HS.

Mr. Williams reported that he recently found out that Colgate Recreation Council has a \$12,000 tax bill. He reminded everyone that the president of the council recently passed away; she had run the council for the last ~20 years. Mr. Williams stated that they are investigating this matter.

Mr. Williams informed board members of a possible appeal coming their way. The Overlea-Fullerton Recreation Council cheerleading program took an out-of-state trip, and during which, inappropriate activity took place. The program was suspended from taking any out-of-state trips for the next year. The program has already appealed their suspension to the executive board, who upheld the suspension. The board will review the appeal letter.

Old Business:

Mr. van den Beemt reported on a recent article, in the New York Times, regarding a 6-figure embezzlement within a council. He stated that the board has talked – over the last several meetings – about an extended background check for those dealing with funds. The biannual recertification is coming up this year, and Mr. van den Beemt drafted a letter noting the addition to the recertification form, regarding the extensive background check for those dealing with funds. He stated that the board needs to investigate what the extensive background check should entail. Mr. Hiebler replied stating that the board should mandate that, at the very least, the treasurer is bonded. Mrs. Monfred stated that she doesn't think the current background check criteria is strict enough. It was stated that there are roughly 2-3 people within a council that are involved with finances. Mrs. Monfred made a motion and after lengthy discussion amongst board members, and multiple amendments added, a vote was taken. See item under "Action." Board members then discussed enforcement of this mandate. Mr. Manjoe told Mr. van den Beemt he would send him a copy of the Dishonesty Bond application. Discussion ensued regarding bonding and whether or not background checks are conducted as part of this. Mr. Williams stated that he would work with Mr. Schneider, the Law Office and Adam Lippe, to ensure that all are on the same page. He suggested to hold off until September for this. They will discuss this and decide which procedures they will have. Mr. Williams stated that the implementation plan and exact course of action should be discussed at the September meeting. Mr. van den Beemt then stated that the hope would be that this would take effect October 1 and/or immediately.

Mr. Hiebler stated that he and Mrs. Monfred attended the last Lansdowne-Riverview Recreation Council meeting. The council was out of control and the most disorganized he has ever seen. Mr. Hiebler stated that there are contentious relationships amongst council members, and a motion was made to impeach Donte White. This council has been on probation for a year and has had significant financial issues, with no improvement. Mr. Hiebler stated that he does not believe that impeaching Mr. White is the solution. He and Mrs. Monfred recommend decertifying the council. Kara Burman replied stating that the meeting is typical for this council. She stated that she thinks decertification of the council would leave many participants and volunteers out there with no direction; however, she agrees with what has been said. Ms. Burman stated that she received proposed constitution and by-laws from Damon Bridgeforth, who is ready to step in; however, Mr. Hiebler and Mrs. Monfred stated they are not sure if this is the answer. Ms. Davis replied stating that she and Ms. Burman have been dealing with this for the last three years. A motion was made to decertify the council. See item under "Action." Mr. van den Beemt stated that he would write a letter to Mr. White, regarding the boards' decision. Discussion ensued regarding the football program, which is planning to start on August 1. Ms. Davis stated that staff will work with this program to find another council to join.

Regarding Back River, Mr. Weir reported that he spoke with Colleen Baugher and stated that she has no concerns. In addition, the board has not heard anything more from the horseshoe club. This item should be removed from the agenda.

Chris McCollum addressed the board regarding issues surrounding the Friends of Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum. He stated the situation as having a president that refuses to work with staff, and a board that does not function. In addition, there are issues surrounding the gift shop, contention amongst board members, issues with proposed by-law revisions, financial issues and poor record keeping. Mr. van den Beemt stated that this situation appears to be getting worse. Mr. McCollum reported that there is another organization they have been working with, which was formed by a previous volunteer that could not work with the current president.

There are currently ten remaining board members – all of which were selected by the president – and everyone else left. Mr. van den Beemt will draft a letter to send to the council, but before sending, he will have Mr. McCollum review for feedback. See item under “Action.”

New Business:

Ms. Davis distributed copies of the email she received, from Steve Heinbach, regarding the suspension appeal surrounding the Overlea-Fullerton Recreation Council cheerleading program. Discussion ensued amongst those in attendance. The individual has already appealed the suspension to the executive board. Mr. Manjoe stated that there was a violation made and punishment served. See item under “Action.”

Mr. Hiebler will review the proposed revisions to the Cromwell Valley Park Council Constitution and By- Laws and report back to the board.

Action:

Mrs. Monfred motioned to certify that all councils have a procedure in place for ensuring that all volunteers have completed a background check, and all council members with access to funds undergo an additional financial background check, and be bonded annually. Mr. Hiebler added to this motion that they maintain bonding annually. Mrs. Monfred then added that this be part of the annual recertification process. Mr. Manjoe seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Mr. Hiebler motioned to decertify the Lansdowne-Riverview Recreation Council, based on their performance over the last year they had been on probation. Mr. Weir seconded the motion, Mrs. Monfred abstained from voting, and all others were in favor.

Mr. Hiebler motioned that Mr. van den Beemt draft a letter to be sent to the Friends of Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum, regarding their operation as a council. Mrs. Monfred seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Mr. Manjoe motioned to deny the Overlea-Fullerton Recreation Council cheerleading program suspension appeal. Mr. van den Beemt turned the gavel over to Mrs. Monfred and seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Weir moved to adjourn the meeting, Mrs. Monfred seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Winters