

Montgomery County, MD
COUNTYWIDE RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Monday, January 11, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present Board: Carl Blake, Karen Kincer, Chris Richardson, Felecia Wilson, Mark Pharaoh, Melanie Stickle, Safiatou Barry, Michael Ma **Ex-Officio:** Benjamin DuGoff, Ramona Bell-Pearson, Jeff Sullivan, **Marsha Weber, Myriam Paul** **Staff:** Robin Riley, John Nissel, Adriane Clutter, Doug Ludwig, Traci Anderson, Melanie Sasse, Trish Walsh, and Sandra Samuel

Guest- Marcus Coleman, Helaine Resnick, Alison Gillespie, Donald Hawkins, Otto Gonzalez

Meeting started at 6:33 pm,

Welcome and Announcements – Chair

- Karen Kincer welcomed the board
- Several new members (5) should be approved tomorrow
- Must take mandatory parliamentary procedure online class
- Request for additional Picnic in Parks Locations – Melanie's neighborhood is interested
 - Melanie will send John an email with food truck ideas and what parks need better picnic tables

Review of January Agenda

- Motion made by Mark Pharaoh and Carl Blake seconded. Approved.

Review and December Minutes

- Motion made by Mark Pharaoh and Melanie Stickle seconded. Approved.

Reports

Officers and Committee Reports

Ex Officio Reports

Community Use of Public Facilities – Ramona Bell Pearson, Director of CUPF

- Currently focusing on outdoor opportunities (MCPS meets tomorrow)
- Mostly Field Sports (Spring and Summer)
- Cares Fund Act funding expanded to December 2021
- Staff currently helping other agencies
- Ron Maxson (CUPF), Cliff Driver (Parks), MCPS, and MCRD meet regularly to continue an open line of communication
- Thanked Parks for a strong partnership with CUPF

Commission on Aging – Marcia Weber

- Created a task force on social isolation

Community Action Board – Myriam Paul

- No Report

Montgomery County Public Schools – Jeff Sullivan

- Board assessing current metrics tomorrow

- Echoed Ramona's remarks regarding the partnership with Parks, MCPS and MCRD
- Athletics – Winter sports officially canceled
- Hope in-person sports sometime in 2nd semester
- No commonly use of H.S. fields, needed for H.S. sports
- No indoor facility uses thru April 30th (Community Use)

Commission on People with Disabilities – Benjamin DuGoff

- No report

MCRD – Robin Riley

- Staff supporting vaccines along w/all other HHS support during COVID and Board of Elections
- Countywide Program team continuing with online classes
- Spring Guide is in production and almost ready to go
- MCRD has a new program, "Rec Your Way."
 - Create a recreation program for your community, family, and friends
 - Currently offer virtual and outdoor opportunities
- Planning Summer Camps. Meeting with Health and Human Services and Emergency Management
- Two after school Programs at JoAnn Leleck and South Lakes
 - Five days/week, 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm
- Montgomery County continues to offer meals at ten senior program location around the County
- Senior programs are now being offered online using Zoom, up to 160 participants
- Signing a contract with a new provider, switching to a new platform
 - Will still be called Active Montgomery
 - Staff working hard collectively with Parks and CUPF to make it smooth transition
- Current software platform, Active,
- Pools are continuing to run safely
- Hope to start opening some rec centers by appointments around February 1st
- Running two homeless shelters at Coffield and Long Branch Community Centers
 - Coat Drive with Maryland Legal Aid and partnership with Macy's with donations of 300 coats
- Kicked off RecAssist Program to make financial assistance available to County residents who receive public aid.
- Working on items allowed by the federal government to chargeback work to FEMA for reimbursement

Parks Report - John Nissel

- Over the last several months, 90 Parks COVID cases/quarantines
- Abbreviated work schedule for labor staff
 - Every week 1/3 – 2/3 staffing assessment w/MCGEO COVID MOU
- Working on a 6% Saving Plan
- Parks career staff are on mandatory telework
- Starting MCGEO negotiations in the first week of February
- Montgomery Parks Foundation bringing on five new board members starting in February
 - Our fundraiser efforts have increased; \$500,000 donation to Brookside Gardens to install a new rose garden

- Suggest a presentation from Katie Rictor, Executive Director of Montgomery Parks Foundation
- Park Police Chief Darryl McSwain was inducted in Montgomery County Human Rights Hall of Fame
- Maryland-National Capital Park Police participated in the 59th Presidential Inauguration Ceremony
- Montgomery Parks Amenities and Programs named a “Best of Bethesda 2021” winner in the January/February 2021 issue of Bethesda Magazine.
 - Editors’ Picks – Best Car-Free Exercise Outing – Montgomery Parks Open Parkways initiative, Best Bike Adventure – The Nature surface pump track at South Germantown Recreational Park, Great Place to Find Calm – Little Seneca Lake at Black Hill Regional Park, and the labyrinth at Brookside Gardens, and Best Picnic Innovation – Picnic in the Park
 - Readers Picks – Best Dog Park – Cabin John Regional Park (Winner), Olney Manor Recreational Park, and Ellsworth Urban Park (Runner Up)
- M-NCPPC recently joined the ranks of elite park and recreation agencies across the country by earning our 4th CAPRA accreditation.
- Offering Rent Abatement; currently have 115 tenants on Parks property
- Working around Covid- protocols for skating, tennis, and park activation
- Karen: How long will Parks keep the rent abatement going?
 - Answer: The Property Management unit under Facilities Management is an Enterprise function that is a non-tax supported function. That is a future discussion.

Discussion

What should we advocate for?

- Tangible vs. policy
- Karen asked the board to focus on priority areas for advocacy.
- Melanie expressed the community is asking for more summer camps
- Karen added summer camps prices should remain the same as 2019, and space is also an issue
- Melanie stated the bathroom is a challenge, also suggested private vendors purchase pop-up tents to provide a private place for the kids to change clothes, etc.
- Outdoor hand washing station
- John stated with over 420 parks, the port-a-john contract with Parks is necessary to maintain sanitary maintenance due to high visitations to parks. The port-a-johns will be placed back in Parks in the Spring.
- Doug stated most of the divisions with facilities with staff and public visits had purchased Electrostatic Sprayers that provides a precise application of disinfectants and complete coverage top and bottom, daily routine applications during the busy season and weekly during the winter months
- Mark expressed concerns with school policy and statistics, public vs. private sector
- Mark stated more advocacy efforts towards opening schools’ gyms and rec. centers
- Carl disagreed expressed to finish the reminder months and keep the policy in place.

7:57 motion adjourn Mark Pharaoh and seconded Michael Ma. Approved.