

Countywide Recreation and Parks Advisory Board
Monday, April 14, 2025
2425 Reedie Drive, 10th Floor, Wheaton

Board members present: Ricci, Holeywell, Zarubin, Bentley, Hudson, Royster, Flores, Delgado, Hutton, Ryan, Goettsch, Krauze, Sparer, Tondo

Board members absent: Jacknis, Mullis, Banda

Staff present: Fasteau, Riley, Burnett, Fachet, Coppola

Ex-Officio members present: Ross

Guests: Kristin Cummings, Council Analyst
Nicole Rodriguez-Hernandez, Council Analyst

Michael Ricci called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. A quorum was established.

The group discussed the March 2025 minutes. Flores requested that the short discussion about a youth/student member be added to the April minutes.

Zarubin motioned to approve the April 2025 agenda and the March 2025 minutes, pending the addition Flores requested to the minutes. Hutton seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Ricci thanked those who testified in person or submitted testimony about the budget.

Riley provided a budget update. She said the first committee budget session is April 23 to discuss non departmental accounts embedded in the Recreation budget. Recreation's committee budget session is April 28, which also includes the Arts and Humanities Council. On April 29 the committee will discuss Recreation's school programs. Notably, AIM is advocating for two additional Excel Beyond the Bell sites for Recreation.

Burnett said Parks' first operating budget committee meeting is April 23.

The board discussed edits to the draft letter to the council.

Ricci moved that the board send the letter, pending the inclusion of the suggested edits. Bentley motioned to approve. Zarubin seconded. All board members present voted 'aye,' except for Krauze, who abstained.

Ricci provided an update on the board's communications with MCPS and stated he received a reply from MCPS Chief of Staff Essie McGuire. Recreation and Parks staff confirmed conversations with MCPS are productive.

Ross provided an updated on CUPF fees. The department is striving to make a more clear, simplified fee structure so that stakeholders understand what they're paying for. The structure will be phased in over three years, and Ross invited feedback.

Krauze sought clarification on CUPF's historical use policies. Burnett said Parks is cracking down on 'ghost' permits - when organizations reserve fields but don't use them, thereby preventing others from using those fields. Burnett explained existing policies make it challenging for newer, smaller leagues to become established because so many fields are constantly booked. Delgado recommended an ad-hoc group look at some of these issues.

Hutton asked about fee increases and urged a policy whereby the highest fees would apply to private, non-governmental use. Hutton recommended the next fee increase focus on commercial use and non-county residents.

Burnett offered his Parks update:

- He thanked board members who testified
- The new Wheaton carousel will open shortly and remain open through October.
- There's a new art installation at the Gene Lynch Urban Park
- An accessible viewing platform is opening at Brookside Gardens
- Sunday Serenade is continuing at Cabin John
- An Earth Day celebration is planned for Brookside Gardens
- Sligo Creek Fest is scheduled for May 3
- Brookside Gardens' butterfly experience has opened for the first time since the pandemic, and Burnett said he'd send the board tickets
- Parks is seeking a "gold medal" certification and is scheduled for a site visit next week
- The Wheaton ice rink will shut down through early October for upgrades

Riley offered her Recreation update:

- Board members are encouraged to join Parks and Recreation at the Pikes Peak race on April 27
- Recreation is preparing for the Memorial Day opening of its outdoor pools
- The MLK pool has had significant ADA work done, as well as a new water slide
- Fasteau shared the Montgomery County Sports Hall of Fame will have its induction ceremony May 4, featuring an "unsung sports heroes" award.
- Riley thanked board members for their budget testimony and said councilmembers told her it was the most they had ever heard from Recreation stakeholders at their budget hearings
- Riley announced her retirement, effective May 30.

Ricci thanked Riley for her service to the county. The next board meeting is scheduled for May 12.

Flores asked about updating the board's bylaws, which she says are out-of-date and not inclusive. Fasteau said he'd seek information on how to amend bylaws.

Holeywell motioned to adjourn, and Zarubin seconded. Approval was unanimous, and the board adjourned at 7:55 p.m.