

January 21, 2010

To: Bob King, Chairman, Mt. Airy Board of P&R
From: Patrick Ronan, Secretary

Subject: MINUTES OF JANUARY 21, 2010 MEETING OF THE MT. AIRY BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION HELD AT MT. AIRY TOWN HALL.

Attendance: Gary Nelson, Drew Heck, Patty Williamson, Pat Ronan, Tucker Lazarus, Bob King, Steve Mullinix

Absent: Larry Hushour, Steve Adams
Staff: Mary VanMetre
Press: Michelle Cook (Mt. Airy Messenger)

Guests: Chase Bonifant and his mother.

--Meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

--The minutes for the December 2009 meeting were approved as submitted.

Chase Bonifant reported on his Eagle Scout project installing benches and a storage unit at the basketball court at East West Park. He presented several photos of the finished project. The Board presented a letter of appreciation with regard to the project to Chase during the meeting. Board President Bob King signed Chase's Scout form confirming successful completion of the project.

Bob King reported that **Field Assignments** were not completed as the representatives of MAYAA and Four County Little League had not yet finalized the details of their proposal for 2010. The issue was tabled to be discussed and confirmed at the February meeting.

The Windy Ridge Master Plan Draft was discussed. The Board filled out a survey of the draft plan. We were satisfied with the plan overall and were specifically pleased with the flexibility of the plan for future uses. The Board also appreciated how the planners broke down the costs associated with each element. Gary Nelson reported that we have put in a request with Frederick County to have Rigler property, adjacent to the park, be designated as conservation, to prevent the property from having any residential development on it. Bob King said he would like to reserve 30 minutes in each of at least the next two meetings to discuss the Master Plan project. He would like us to make specific recommendations, from the Board, as to what changes we would like. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to eventually have some athletic fields put in the park.

Tucker Lazarus brought up the potential problems should it be discovered that an endangered species was residing in the park. It was agreed that the Board would seek the assistance of experts if we encountered special problems while developing certain areas of the park.

It was agreed that the Board members would all go through the Plan in general, but specifically as to each of the options for what we can do now, the next five years, and beyond.

The Master Plan Draft is now available on the Town website.

A guest addressed the Board complaining of the very muddy conditions in the path between the two gates and from the initial entrance area into the dog park. The area has apparently been torn up by the foot traffic. Steve Mullinix represented that the Town would put in some stone type materials to alleviate the mud problem. However, it may take some time to do it as the ground needs to be firmer to allow the necessary truck to get access to the area.

Pat Ronan and Steve Adams will come back next month with recommendations for movies and schedule for Movie Nights for 2010. It was also agreed that we need a larger banner to advertise the movie nights. Gary Nelson also suggested that the schedule be fairly regular in terms of when the Movie Nights occur. We could explore the Wii night possibility. We also need to check the length of the movies when considering what time of year they will be shown.

Councilman Nelson's report. The Town Council has not been involved in many areas that relate to the Board of Parks and Recreation. Monika Weierbach has been reaching out to landowners to get access for Rails to Trails. There has been some movement on that front and it appears we will soon be getting landowners to actually give such access. When we put in the maintenance building on Watkins Park, we took down some trees, so we need to put in replacement trees somewhere else to comply with the environmental regulations. He suggested putting in some trees acting as a buffer area between the park and Route 27. The State has a 100 foot right of way from the center of Route 27 into the park, which must be considered. It was also agreed that we need to make sure the trees do not completely block visibility from Route 27 for safety concerns.

Dog Park Update: The problem with the latches is being addressed by Larry Hushour as it is a warranty issue right now, but may be something we may have to deal with on an annual basis. Mary VanMetre noted problems with the selling of passes for 2010 in terms of proper charges, lack of receipts, poor recording, etc. PetSmart is apparently not using the list of streets that was provided to verify town residency. It was agreed that some "retraining" of the people at PetSmart would be necessary. Bob King will speak to Larry Hushour about that.

A petition came in recently requesting that the fees to the Skate Park be addressed, however, Gary Nelson pointed out that about 90% of the individuals who signed the petition were not Town residents.

Budget Report: There is no funding for 2010 for land acquisition, but there is \$30,000 proposed for 2011 and \$100,000 proposed for 2012. Gary Nelson said he would be strongly pushing again to hire a Recreation Coordinator, however the current budget for salaries for Parks and Recreation for 2010 is about \$20,000 less than originally adopted in May of 2009. Drew Heck suggested bringing up the topic of cutting the employees for

the Skate Park to save money. Mr. Nelson wants to increase the funding by about \$1,500 for Recreation and Culture.

Gary Nelson also said there is money available to us that could be set aside for specific Parks and Rec improvements, so he solicited ideas for future meetings as to what improvements we may wish to make. One such idea was a “quiet” generator to be used for the movie system, etc. It was also suggested to make some improvements at Prospect Park, or perhaps some improvements on the lighting on the basketball/tennis courts at Watkins Park.

Mr. Nelson will apply for a grant to improve the pavilion at Watkins Park. He will put in for other grants as well, but he said it would be a good idea to have some money put aside for such projects in case the grants do not come through.

Bob King noted that there has been a request to allow bmx bikers access to the skate park. The consensus was that the risk of injury was much greater with bmx bikers than with skaters. So, it was agreed to simply table this issue until 2011.

Camp Night date was proposed to be on a Saturday night at the request of Larry Hushour. This issue was tabled to the February meeting to discuss and agree on a date for Camp Night.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32.