

PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 2011

Present: Betty Sonneveldt, Kelly Ivy, Les Whitmer, Marc Siegel, Chris Husker

Staff: Julie McHale, Recreation Director
Debbie Coulter, Administrative Coordinator
Leta Mach, Council Liaison
Emmett Jordan, Councilmember

Excused: Lola Skolnik, Ken Blue

Absent: Jay Shah, Michael Lee, John Winfrey

Give a current PRAB roster to pool for pool pass discount.

- Meeting called to order at 7:40pm. It was stated that PRAB members could not approve previous meeting minutes and/or vote on anything of significance due to lack of a quorum.
- Councilmember Leta Mach Updates -
 - Leta reported that -
 - **Mile markers** have been placed at the lake, many people have inquired about them. So far we haven't had to use them.
 - **Greenbelt** has been declared a **Playful City** for the 5th year in a row. It was listed in USA Today. Of the 31 original charter Playful Cities 5 years ago, only 19 have continued to be Playful Cities.
 - Out of 31 cities only 19 were chosen.
 - Julie stated that every year more requirements are added to meet the guidelines for qualification.
 - Leta said the 1st year the City received a \$5000 Grant for playgrounds. There will be more Grant opportunities to come.
 - Leta stated that the A memo was presented to them by the City Manager which gave four different options and City Council will have a work session on this before a decision is made; however, a date has NOT been set. She reiterated that there are several different ways to approach the **Reorganizational study**
 - Kelly Ivy inquired whether the study will be open to the public. Most Cities allow management and Department heads to reorganize themselves, they are the ones who are aware of what is going on. Questioning why City is throwing money into a study when we are in these tough economic times
 - Marc agreed with Kelly that the reorganization should be something that the City manager should be able to do and also questioned why isn't Council allowing the Department Heads and City Manager do what they are getting paid to do.
 - Council member, Emmett Jordan responded and said a study like this hasn't been done for a long time, and Council hasn't even figured out the scope of it, but does feel it needs to be done. You need to be really careful of the questions asked in the study in order for it to truly be effective.

- Kelly said that he has had experience with reorganizational studies, they are ineffective, they cause work to slow down, and things end up going back to the way they were.
 - Mark feels the money should be used for better uses, such as street repairs, etc. Believes it's just a waste of money to have an unknown agency in-
 - Council member, Mach said that the study could maybe question/evaluate the division of parks/playgrounds, etc.
 - Kelly feels strongly that- These are all questions that the Recreation Director and City Manager should be able to answer. The Recreation Director has the experience; you do not get a true study when you go outside. Feels it is wasting a lot of money and the Department is the one answering the questions about the study because an outside company doesn't know the answers. From my experience, this is wasting a lot of money and it usually ends up back at square one. Kelly wanted to know who asked for the study to be done in the first place
 - Leta responded that it was suggested by Ed Putens but all of Council agreed that this was a good idea.
 - Kelly - asked Julie directly and wanted to know Joe's function in the Department? Is he actually involved in any programming for Recreation?
 - Julie - answered that since the two Assistant Directors were created however many years ago, Joe does not get involved in the day-to-day programming aspect; his job is more geared towards operations of the facility. Joe is currently working on overseeing three capital projects - tennis court lighting and paving, the pool ledge, and renovations at Springhill Lake and working with the Greenbelt Middle School Task Force and the Gala for the 75th. All these projects consume his time.
 - Kelly - stated that the position in Public Works was filled without a study. With Joe's current responsibilities, it seems like Joe should be working for the Planning Department instead of Recreation. This would make the position in Recreation competitive.
 - Betty - said that she is very adamant that the City should always hire in-house whenever possible. People who have dedicated many years to the City should always get priority to jobs if they are qualified.
 - Leta - stated that the study is not a done deal and encouraged everyone to attend the work session.
 - Marc - thanked Council for participating in the 911 Stair Climb.
 - Betty - said that people interested in the organization study should attend the City Council work session. She asked if reorganization is ever brought up between the Department Heads, and asked if the Department Heads meet.
 - Julie - answered that the Department Heads meet every week.
 - Kelly - it doesn't make sense to have an Assistant Director who is not involved in the recreation programs.
 - Julie - The Recreation Department is basically working short-handed (Coordinator on leave and Asst. Director of Programming vacant) and answered that Joe is tied up in capital-projects along with GMSTF but everyone is helping with the extra work.
 - Betty - said that we cannot expect staff to continue at this pace. At some point the quality of our services will decline.
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- Kelly - inquired if Joe is capable of doing programs, and stated that he may be a better fit for the Planning Dept.
- Julie - said that Joe started at the Youth Center as a coordinator and of facilities/programming and also did programming when he was at the Community Center. It wasn't until the programs were taken out of the CC budget and he moved to the Youth Center as Asst. Director of Facilities that his position was consumed primarily by operations and facilities which now include capital projects.

Greenbelt Community Development Corporation request for Recognition Group Status. Barbara Simon, Chair

- Julie - stated that the application was submitted in June; however, PRAB was unable to review until now since we don't meet over the summer and apologized for the delay in the review.
 - Betty - asked what exactly will this organization do?
 - Barbara - replied that that they have done research for about a year and checked with the City of Hyattsville, which has had a CDC for 10 years, and checked with Riverdale Park. It is basically the same concept and mission. What could this mean for Greenbelt? Bring people from all walks of life together to a strongly defined piece of government. You must define from the beginning Greenbelt. Anything that could benefit the community that the CDC that would like to tackle. The CDC will have funding for projects.
 - Betty - asked Barbara to name one thing that would promote an activity.
 - Barbara - said that the difference is the CDC does everything. The CDC is much stronger, and can partner with any of the groups trying to bring groups together from different areas. One of the steering committee members is interested in environmental concepts. I am an arts person on the steering committee. Everyone has different areas of interest.
 - Chris - asked if they have targeted any specific areas yet
 - Barbara - said yes, the Roosevelt Center but the CDC decided not to do this.
 - Marc - asked again, what idea do you have?
 - Barbara - said that one idea is that every year they can get a community business to get involved in the community.
 - Simon said that the Community Foundation does non-profit, and is eligible for funding from government and is much more activity oriented than they would like to do.
 - Kelly - asked if this group is all volunteer based.
 - Barbara - answered 90% of it is but most CDCs after so many years, someone becomes salaried.
 - Kelly asked what the group wants from the City.
 - Barbara replied just meeting space
 - Julie - questioned who else was on the Steering Committee
 - Barbara - replied Ruth Kastner, Ed James, Gwen Vacarro, and Peter May
 - Betty - said as long as it stays volunteer, it shouldn't be a problem; it should never become a paid position.
 - Kelly asked Julie if Recreation had meeting space.
 - Julie - responded that a lot of these people (mentioned above) are already on committees and already receiving meeting space.
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- Betty - concluded that we do not have a quorum and will need to be voted on next month.

Greenstems, Inc. Recognition Group Application - George Boyce, Eva Fallon

- Betty - asked what they would like to do.
- George - gave us his background, he is the head mentor for Robotics Club at Eleanor Roosevelt High School (ERHS), helping with the programming, starting programming club at NASA, putting together projects at different levels of complexity. He has micro-controllers just sitting in a closet that ERHS cannot use. ERHS does not have any classroom material to teach the material and are asking Mr. Boyce to assist in developing curriculum/program. The Technology students can then develop a program for kids after school or teach this program on a community level.
- Kelly - asked what the group needs from Recreation.
- George - replied they would like a room to teach a class, because there is a possible threat of dropping the robotics program at ERHS, and they did lose it completely for two years and as of now it is a Club for students but it is no longer a part of ERHS curriculum. Would like to see this develop into a community class. The group is basically looking for meeting space and storage. The group has built 200 pound robots to perform in national competitions. Would like to introduce kids to robotics.
- PRAB members were very impressed with the group, and will relay the information to the other PRAB members and will be able to vote at the next meeting.

Director's Report - Julie McHale

- Recreation Department updates:
 - New pool paks have been installed at pool
 - Springhill Lake Recreation Center renovations have begun (siding on the outside is complete and they have started on the bathrooms).
 - Ledge at the GAFC has been completed.
 - New lights will be underway soon at the Braden Field tennis courts
 - Wall of Fame over Labor Day at the Youth Center 50th anniversary celebration was a huge success. Greg Varda was the mastermind behind it.
 - 20th Anniversary at the pool will occur this Saturday (fliers were given to committee members)
 - Recognitions Received:
 - KaBoom, Inc. Playful City (fifth year in a row)
 - Top 40 Healthiest Employers by Washington Business Journal
 - Taping of Circus show by MSNBC
 - Summer camp revenues/numbers came in higher than expected
 - The City was invited to do "Interviews with Ingrid" show in June along with M-NCPPC
 - Despite tight economic times, M-NCPPC contracts were submitted and we will continue to receive same amount as this past year
 - National Kids to Park Day was recognized in May and Recreation had a program at Buddy Attick and also Schrom Hills Park
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- Healthier Maryland Day in February-Julie and the Wellness committee went to Annapolis, met the Governor and received a Governor's Citation in recognition of the City's participation
- Julie - explained how the background checks work and the affidavit process for Contribution/Recognition groups; a few have come back negative.
- Julie announced that Fall Fest will be held October 15.
- Kelly - announced that the roller skating at the youth center on Labor Day weekend was a big hit. He said that people are hoping it will return every year.

Under new business:

- Kelly suggested that the Recreation Department utilize the movie theatre since the City owns it. He suggested Saturday matinees for kids, and movies on Schools Out days, winter camp etc. He inquired whether it could also be used for meeting space. These types of programs could bring in revenue for the City and didn't understand why we were not using it for programming as mentioned above.
- Julie - stated that Recreation has tried to work with Movie Theater several times with no avail, but will check into it to see if this is a possibility. PRAB will discuss again at next meeting.
- Betty - Advisory Board invitation went out for October 9. Kelly Ivy, Betty Sonneveldt, and Chris Husker will NOT attend. Les Whitmer WILL attend and Marc Siegel is not sure.

Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm

Next meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2011.

Respectfully submitted by: Debbie Coulter on 9/26
and edited by: Julie McHale