

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE KENT COUNTY PARKS AND  
RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

January 10, 2011

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**Present:** Melinda Bookwalter, Melissa Cannon, Faye Little, Penny Usilton, Laura Karns, and Myra Butler

**Absent:** Joyce B. Moody, Bryan Williams, Ron Jordan, Rachel Williams, J. Buddy Elgin, and Commissioner William Pickrum

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ACTION ON MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm. The minutes of the November meeting were approved as written.

**II. SELECTION OF BOARD CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

- Ms. Cannon made a motion to nominate herself for appointment as Chair of the Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. Usilton, and passed by a majority of the Board.
- A motion was made by Ms. Usilton, seconded by Ms. Cannon, and passed by a majority of the Board to appoint Ms. Bookwalter as Vice-Chair.

**III. DEPARTMENT STAFF/ BOARD CHANGES**

- Ms. Butler informed that Laura Karns, former Parks and Recreation Office Manager, was approved by the Commissioners to fill the vacancy left by Jake Downey. With the approval of Ms. Little, Mrs. Karns (who resides in Galena) will now be the Advisory Board representative for Toal Park, and Mrs. Little will represent Worton Park.
- Ms. Butler introduced Denisha Brown as the new Office Manager, replacing Mrs. Karns. Ms. Brown began with Parks and Recreation on December 20.
- Ms. Butler commented that in the future she hopes to make the Advisory Board more active in Parks and Recreation Department decisions by having members provide greater input in policies and procedures, and fee structures.
- Ms. Bookwalter remarked that there are hardly ever more than three to five Board members in attendance at monthly meetings. She questioned if any thoughts have been given to increase board attendance. Ms. Butler responded that in the future, the Community Center Authority will be merging with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. However, there has been some delay to this merger because the Community Center Authority must first complete and present an annual report to the Board of County Commissioners. Ms.

Butler is hopeful that presentation of the annual report will be made at the end of this month, with a merger of the two boards to follow.

#### **IV. KENT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP**

- Ms. Butler advised that since the late 1960's Parks and Recreation has used Kent County Public Schools (KCPS) as recreation centers for the Afterschool Program, Youth Basketball, Adult Drop-in Basketball, etc. Parks and Recreation would pay the school system an annual flat fee of \$10,000 to assist with utility costs. However, due to the decrease in use of the schools by Parks and Recreation, the school system is now paid an annual flat fee of \$5,000. The fee has also been decreased in consideration of the school systems various uses of the Community Center (i.e. physical education classes, athletic team practices, and high school aged drop-ins).
- Recently, challenges have been experienced with the school system because new administrators were not made aware of standing verbal agreements between KCPS and Parks and Recreation for use of the school facilities. Such as the agreement that when no evening custodian is available, KCPR administrative staff will come to the school facility to accompany Facility Supervisors in closing the building.
- The school system has also recently began to advise of scheduling conflicts between Parks and Recreation and the school facilities. Ms. Butler noted that in the past these types of issues were communicated at the start of the school year.
- As a result of these communication issues, Ms. Butler met with Dexter Lockamy, Chief Operating Officer, Board of Education, to discuss concerns. Mr. Lockamy has been open and apologetic to the concerns of KCPR and is scheduled to discuss these concerns with the KCPS Superintendent. An additional follow up meeting between Ms. Butler and Mr. Lockamy could potentially take place relating to this matter. Mr. Lockamy has also extended invitation for Ms. Butler to attend the next KCPS Administrators and Supervisors meeting.
- Ms. Butler is hopeful that the concerns of the KCPR will be addressed and communication will be mended.

#### **V. PARK USER FEES/ RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Ms. Butler stated that park use was not thought out during the restructuring of the Parks and Recreation Maintenance Division to the Public Works Department. Revenue generated from park use comes to Parks and Recreation, despite the fact that expenses related to the park are the responsibility of Public Works. Ms. Butler plans to work with Public Works to redirect park revenues for the FY12 budget.

- Ms. Butler stated that costs for maintenance of the park fields are steadily increasing, including the costs of lime and paint. Fees for youth sport leagues are currently \$4 per player; however, Ms. Butler, and Wayne Morris, Director of Public Works, plan to recommend to the County Commissioners that the fee be increased to \$5.50 per player. Ms. Butler added, that even with the increase, the fee will not cover the costs to maintain the fields. Ms. Butler and Mr. Morris also plan to recommend that a separate \$75 fee be applied in order to play at Orem Field under the lights. In the past, two free games under the lights were granted per season to each team.
- Ms. Cannon questioned what is covered by the youth league fee. Ms. Butler responded that these fees contribute towards lining fields for baseball and softball, and painting fields for lacrosse, field hockey, and soccer. The fee is also used towards dirt for the fields.
- Ms. Cannon advised that she has spoken to a league official who is concerned that the youth leagues will have to line/lime their own fields. Ms. Butler stated that this rumor was a result of misinformation. She stated that leagues will be responsible for any re-lining of fields that is necessary after business hours (i.e. evening and weekends). It is also being discussed to potentially provide team managers with keys in order for teams to access the shed where the lime machines are stored, as well as for teams to regulate lights as needed.
- In response to comment made by Ms. Cannon that patrons feel that their tax dollars should be contributing towards Parks and Recreation fees, Ms. Butler will look into the percentage of County tax dollars that are actually distributed to Parks and Recreation.
- Ms. Butler tentatively plans to present the recommended changes to league fees and responsibilities to the Commissioners for approval at their January 25 meeting. Once approved, correspondence will be forwarded to all leagues to inform of the changes taking effect.
- In response to concern raised by Ms. Usilton regarding the condition of Edesville Park, Ms. Butler will look into whether there is budgetary funding for clean up of the Park. Ms. Usilton stated that the park is desperately needed for softball practices.

## **VI. NEW PROGRAMS UPDATE**

- Ms. Butler provided an update of new and existing Parks and Recreation programs, including: Adult Men's Lacrosse; Batting Cage with Pitching Machine (private rental); Indoor Tennis; Youth Martial Arts; Youth for Disabilities; Holiday Camps (Winter and Spring school breaks); Aerobics; Volleyball Clinics; Trojan Pride Clinics;

Ski Roundtop Trip; Tots of Fun; and Start Smart. Ms. Butler informed that due to low participation, Zumba is no longer offered.

## VII. REPORTS

Turner's Creek:	<i>Ms. Bookwalter reported that Turners Creek looked beautiful over the Christmas holiday.</i>
Worton Park:	<i>Nothing to Report</i>
Bayside/Ingleside:	<i>No Report</i>
Betterton Beach:	<i>No Report</i>
Millington Pool:	<i>In follow up to the November Board meeting, and Mrs. Cannon's concerns regarding a light out by the tennis courts, Ms. Butler informed that she has informed the Public Works Department of this outage; however, she has not followed up. Ms. Butler plans to request a time frame for repair of this light.</i>
Edesville Park:	<i>Nothing to Report</i>
Toal Park:	<i>Nothing to Report</i>
High School:	<i>No Report. Ms. Usilton questioned whether the Kent County High School has been contacted regarding potential board members. Ms. Butler responded that in addition to contacting the high school, she plans to piggy back on the efforts of the Local Management Board to solicit schools students. Ms. Butler will also solicit recommendations from school principals.</i>
County Commissioner:	<i>No Report</i>
Board of Education:	<i>No Report</i>

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- Ms. Butler advised of a Letter to the Editor she placed in the Kent County Newspaper in response to a patron's Letter to the Editor complaining of a lack of programming at the Community Center.
- Ms. Butler expressed her feelings that efforts made to "go green" by communicating information digitally, have hampered participation numbers at the Community Center. Therefore, Parks and Recreation will begin hardcopy distribution again. Flyers/newsletters will be distributed in schools, libraries, daycare centers, government buildings, etc. In response to question raised by Ms. Bookwalter, Ms. Butler informed that Parks and Recreation researched placing flyers in the local newspaper; however, the cost was too substantial.

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

- Ms. Butler made recommendation that the Board not hold a February meeting. She commented that some months it is difficult for her to

find content to fill the meeting agenda. She noted that several County Boards/Committees only meet as necessary, and continued that she feels that January, February, July, and December meetings may not be necessary for this Board. She encouraged the board to consider this suggestion, and table a decision until the March meeting.

- Ms. Cannon stated that she has no objection to meeting as needed. She questioned whether the meeting can be cancelled if there is no content for the agenda.
- Ms. Karns recommended requesting that Board members RSVP their attendance for each meeting. Ms. Bookwalter suggested requesting that Board members send regrets only.
- A motion was made by Ms. Cannon, seconded by Ms. Usilton, and passed by a majority of the Board not to hold a February meeting.
- The Board members agreed to consider the suggestions regarding the other months during the March meeting, when there will hopefully be additional information regarding the merger with the Community Center Authority.
- Ms. Butler provided copies of the Parks and Recreation Online survey for the Boards' information. The survey was developed at the recommendation of Community Center Authority member John Nunn, as a way to gather feedback from the public about the Community Center offerings. The online survey will tentatively run on the Parks and Recreation website from January 21- January 31.

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:40 pm, a motion was made by Ms. Usilton, seconded by Ms. Cannon, and passed by a majority of the Board to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denisha C. Brown, Office Manager