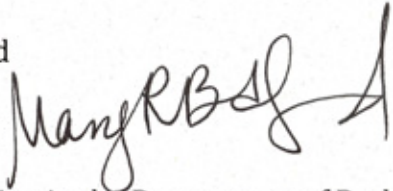




MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB: 07/30/2009
Agenda Item #

DATE: July 23, 2009
TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
FROM: Mary R. Bradford, Director of Parks 
SUBJECT: Briefing on Recreational Programming in the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation

BACKGROUND:

In April 2009, members of the County Council's PHED Committee requested the Directors of the Department of Parks and the Department of Recreation to return to County Council by October 1, 2009, with recommendations and efficiencies for improving the delivery of recreation programming to the citizens of Montgomery County.

This briefing provides an overall scope of work and is a status report on that effort and timeline of major milestones to complete the report. We will distribute a draft report to the Board in August for review and comment. We will return to the Board to discuss the draft and seek guidance on September 17th. The final report will be delivered to the County Council by October 1, 2009.

PROGRESS TO DATE:

The top management teams of our two agencies have met several times to review the scope of work, set out priorities for analysis, and develop a schedule of deliverables to present to the Board and County Council. The Leadership of both departments formed a joint steering committee to guide the process. Results Leadership Group, LLC, has been retained as the lead consultant to help facilitate this work. After setting up a list of areas to review, the committee grouped topics into four areas, and created workgroups to develop recommendations. The workgroups are made up of staff members of both departments and corresponding County agencies (Office of Management and Budget, Finance Department, etc.). The four work groups, their charters and subject areas are as follows:

1) Marketing and Public Relations Work Group Charter

The goal of the Marketing and PR work group is to recommend the best method of coordinating the promotion of both departments' programs, activities and services.

To achieve this goal, the work group will:

- Examine each department's existing marketing program and how projects are created, implemented, staffed, and funded
- Explore and analyze all possible options for the promotion of the departments' programs, including but not limited to publications (such as the Guide), media and websites, with an emphasis on "green marketing"
- Identify opportunities for collaborative marketing efforts in other areas and increased cross-promotion
- Establish communications standards for joint publications and efforts
- Develop common approach, methodology and tools for customer research and evaluation (in coordination with programming and facilities work groups, as appropriate)
- Generate ideas for collaborative events (to share with programming work group)
- Develop work plan for select efforts to include timing, staffing, responsibilities, and funding sources
- Coordinate efforts as appropriate with CountyStat (specifically as it relates to green marketing and customer research)

2) Technology/Registration/Payments Work Group Charter

The goal of the Technology/Registration/Payments work group is to recommend the best method of providing customers with a seamless, "one-stop shopping" experience for Department of Recreation and Department of Parks program registration and facility rentals.

To achieve this goal, the work group will:

- Examine the current systems employed by each department, how they're structured, managed, staffed, and funded
- Explore and analyze all available CLASS-based options for a single portal, single entry system, including one- and two-database solutions
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of each option, and address relevant issues for each, including but not limited to:
 - Required CLASS functions outside of regular registration and rental functions (single database issue only)
 - Identify management
 - Software/licensing
 - Accounting/revenue allocation/cash collection and reconciliation
 - Data entry/administrative standards
 - PCI compliance
 - Registration processes (how, where, who, when)
 - Administrative policies (fee assistance, refunds, security deposits, late fees, etc.)
 - Hardware/IT support/Help Desk support

- Staffing/customer service
- Standardization vs. centralization
- Promotional/marketing impacts
- Short-term vs. long-term costs/efficiencies
- Coordinate efforts as appropriate with CUPF, ERP and 311
- Produce a final set of recommendations detailing the “what, how, who & when” regarding implementation

3) Programming and Pricing Work Group Charter

The goal of the Programming and Pricing Review workgroup is to conduct an in-depth analysis of programming overlap, the establishment of an inventory of programs, and evaluation of staffing, pricing, etc.

To achieve this goal the workgroup will:

- Establish inventory of programming to include unique programs and identify possible overlap
- Review pricing mandates and formulas including any legal requirements
- Examine staffing allocations and workload
- Look at areas to collaborate on programming
- Develop an ongoing mechanism to manage joint decision making on programming
- Give recommendations on how to handle overlap
- Develop criteria on cost recovery percentages
- Develop a consistent policy or standard for cost recovery
- Examine capacity to handle demand and not sacrifice quality
- Compare and examine instructor contracts
- Establish collaboration and agreements
- Review models of other comparable government jurisdictions

4) Facility Work Group Charter

The goal of the Facility Review workgroup is to conduct a comprehensive review and inventory of both Departments’ identified facilities to develop recommendations for efficiencies, and customer service.

To achieve this goal the workgroup will:

- Inventory facilities – itemizing details, debt service, utilities, operational costs, demographics of use, programming, CIP implications
- Include a Revenue Authority discussion
- Examine internal efficiencies
- Determine impact if recommended for transfer – savings, program customer service, staffing, legal, budget impacts, etc.
- Recommend timelines, community outreach

The Facility Work Group developed two sub-groups to examine Park Activity Buildings and Athletic Fields.

In addition to the regular steering committee meetings and work group meetings, the Departments jointly conducted two community outreach sessions in June to listen to our various user groups and constituencies. The meetings were held at Seneca Lodge and Gwendolyn E. Coffield Community Recreation Center. Feedback from the community outreach meetings will be included in the final report. We have also provided updates to the County Council via memoranda and meetings with members of the PHED Committee. Council staff members Craig Howard or Richard Romer have attended most of the steering committee meetings and have provided feedback during the process.

As a side note, we met with professional consultants in the park and recreation field as another option to examine these areas in more depth, but determined that we would not proceed with a contract with outside consultants at this time in order to save costs and time. We may, however, seek such further assistance in the future if Council determines that additional study will be necessary to accurately gauge demand or to conduct a recreational needs assessment of the County.

STATUS:

The four work groups and two sub-groups have submitted preliminary recommendations. The recommendations are currently under review by the steering committee members and will be discussed at the next committee meeting on July 31st. The steering committee will spend the next few weeks refining the recommendations and developing an internal draft for the Board and internal offices within both agencies.

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION OF THE REPORT

- July 31st – Next steering committee meeting to review and discuss work group reports
- August 17th – Second internal draft report to inform and solicit initial feedback
- August 28th – Internal feedback due
- August 31st – Steering committee meeting to review feedback and resolve issues
- Week of September 7th – First draft public report complete, sent to Board and posted for public review
- September 17th - Planning Board meeting
- September 15th-22nd – Public Meeting(s) TBD
- October 1st – Final report delivered to PHED Committee

SUMMARY:

This process has been a collaborative effort by the staff and leadership of both the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation. Staff will speak to the preliminary recommendations of the work groups at the July 30th Planning Board meeting. The draft report will be electronically transmitted to the Board members in August for review and ultimately discussed with the Board in public session on September 17th.

MRB:MEV

Attachment: April 2, 2009 Memorandum from Council staff to Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee outlining charge of study

MEMORANDUM

April 2, 2009

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee

FROM: Marlene Michaelson, ^{70A} Senior Legislative Analyst
Craig Howard, ^{6K} Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: **Follow-up on OLO Report 2009-7: *Organization of Recreation Programs across the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation***

Today, the PHED Committee will continue its discussion on the management and structure of recreation programs within County Government and the Montgomery County portion of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC).

As indicated at Monday's worksession, Councilmember Elrich has developed a recommended plan of action on restructuring the management of recreation programming. His memo that sets forth recommendations for Committee consideration is at ©1-3.

Elements of Councilmember Elrich's proposed two-step approach include:

- A first step that provides the Department of Recreation and Department of Parks with the opportunity, by June 1, 2009, to jointly develop a Restructuring Plan. The Restructuring Plan would identify which recreation programs and facilities should be shifted between departments (or to the Revenue Authority) to achieve programmatic and/or economic efficiencies. This first step does not presume an outcome, but relies on the departments to propose a jointly-agreed upon structure that achieves efficiencies and cost savings.
- Once a Restructuring Plan has been approved by the Council, the second step is to ask the departments to develop an Implementation Plan that details how the restructuring will be implemented. The Implementation Plan should be submitted to the Council by October 1, 2009, to allow the changes to be reflected in FY11 operating budget submissions.

Councilmember Elrich's memorandum also suggests that:

- The Committee consider whether the process of developing the Restructuring Plan would benefit from a neutral facilitator; and
- The Council should hold a public hearing at an appropriate point after receipt of the Restructuring Plan.

MEMORANDUM

April 1, 2009

TO: PHED Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich, Councilmember

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Plan of Action on Restructuring the Management of Recreation Programming

Throughout the Committee's recent discussions on the organization of recreation programs across the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the County Government Department of Recreation, both agencies have expressed a desire to improve and streamline the structure of County-funded recreation programs.

I recommend the PHED Committee endorse a plan of action to explore an improved structure for managing recreation programs. The Committee's discussions on this issue suggest that consolidation of some or all recreation programming will deliver tangible benefits to the community, including:

- A streamlined and user-friendly system of recreation programs;
- Consistent pricing and cost recovery practices; and
- Administrative and staffing efficiencies that result in cost savings.

Recommendation for PHED Committee Consideration

In order to achieve these benefits, I recommend the Committee endorse a two-step approach. The first step is the development of a Restructuring Plan (i.e. what programs/facilities should be transferred from one department to another), and the second step is an Implementation Plan (i.e. the details of how programs/facilities will be moved). The types of recreation programs and facilities under consideration should include:

- Summer camps;
- Classes and activities;
- Recreational trips and excursions;
- Recreational amenities;
- Event centers and park activity buildings;
- Sports programs and facilities;
- Special events; and
- Athletic field permitting and maintenance.

My suggested plan of action for the PHED Committee to endorse is outlined below.

Step 1. Develop a Restructuring Plan

The first step is to direct the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation to recommend a Restructuring Plan that identifies which recreation programs and facilities should be shifted between the departments. This Restructuring Plan should:

- Recommend consolidating specific programs and/or facilities into the Department of Recreation or into the Department of Parks if it would achieve programmatic and/or economic benefits;
- Explore the role, if any, for the Revenue Authority in providing management assistance for any Enterprise Facilities; and
- Recommend a consolidated permitting structure that could be operational by FY11.

The Restructuring Plan should be submitted to the Committee by **June 1, 2009**.

The Committee should indicate its expectation that the Restructuring Plan be designed to achieve the optimal efficiencies and cost savings through elimination of duplicative programs, overlapping staff, and duplicative administrative structures.

The Department of Parks has indicated to the Committee that a bi-agency team is "already being assembled to review existing programs and reallocate as appropriate." The Committee should consider whether this process would benefit from a neutral facilitator to ensure that progress is sustained on the objectives and resolve any areas of conflict.

Default Restructuring Recommendation. If the departments are unable to come up with a restructuring plan that achieves the identified objectives and delivers the tangible benefits to the community as listed above, the Committee should endorse a Restructuring Plan that transfers the responsibility for managing the following recreation programs and related facilities from the Department of Parks to the Department of Recreation:

- **Summer camps** (excluding pure nature interpretive programs);
- **Classes and activities** (excluding pure nature interpretive programs);
- **Recreational trips and excursions;**
- **Recreational amenities**, including managing and operating the Mini-Golf park, Splash Park, boating facilities, and trains/carousel;
- **Event centers and park activity buildings;** and
- **Sports programs**, including the facility management and activities at the ice arenas and tennis facilities.

Under this scenario, the Committee would undertake further review of athletic field permitting and maintenance (including Community-Use of Public Facilities and Montgomery County Public Schools) with a final decision on the optimal consolidation structure to be determined in the coming months.

Review and Approval of Restructuring Plan. I recommend that after review and endorsement by the PHED Committee, the Restructuring Plan should be forwarded to the full Council for final approval.

Step 2. Develop an Implementation Plan

Once a Restructuring Plan has been endorsed by the Council, the second step is for the departments to report back to the Council by **October 1, 2009** with a specific plan for implementing the transition of recreation programming. Specifically, the Implementation Plan would:

- Identify the expenditures, related funding (including fee-related programs), and related workforce for each program and/or facility that will transfer between departments;
- Identify any changes required to State or County law to facilitate or authorize the transfer;
- Recommend changes to benefit plans as necessary to facilitate the transfer of employees;
- Complete an analysis of the of the cost savings from the Restructuring Plan;
- Identify needed modifications to existing Information Technology Systems; and
- Recommend other specific programmatic, fiscal, human resources, administrative, or operational changes needed to effectuate the transfer.

The Council should request adherence to the following guiding principles in developing the Implementation Plan:

- The net cost of the transition should be cost neutral across the two agencies in FY10, with savings from administrative efficiencies to begin in FY11; and
- The Implementation Plan should place priority on not adversely affecting the pay and benefits of any employees affected by the restructuring of responsibilities between the two agencies.

Public Hearing

I recommend that, at an appropriate point after receipt of the Restructuring Plan, the Council hold a public hearing on this issue.