

**Open Work Session  
Draft Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan  
September 19, 2017**

Mr. Steve Miller, Director of Recreation, Parks and Tourism, and Mr. Keith Hall, Director of Planning, Zoning and Community Development, came before Council. Mr. Miller said they are before Council today to talk about the final draft of the Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan, which is the LPPRP. He said, as Council knows, this is a Plan that is updated every five years as a requirement by the State of Maryland in order to be eligible for Program Open Space funding. He said it serves also as a planning tool for his department as they consider capital recommendations for Recreations and Parks, and Open Space. Mr. Miller said, with Council's permission, he would like to give just a very brief update on where they are in the process. He said they came to Council last December. He said, basically, after they met in December to present the first draft, they received feedback from the State in terms of formal comments. He said over the last six months they have worked very closely with Mr. Hall, and DNR, on those comments to make the requested revisions in order to meet the new State guidelines that have been established. He said it has been a transition year, not just for this County, but for many counties, with the new guidelines. He said they have worked very closely with them, and they have satisfied, as far as the State is concerned, those edits. He said, he would like to point out, the revisions they were requested to make were not substantive revisions, primarily formatting and presentation, and he thinks what they ended up with is a much better Plan, and a much simpler Plan. He said a lot of charts and different things that were there in the past have been removed. He said, as far as the State is concerned, they have gotten to the point where they are satisfied with the work that has been done. He said he has a few other comments with regards to the Plan, and then he will be happy to answer any questions. He said, in terms of the Plan itself and the recommendations in the Plan, he will remind Council this does not obligate the County, this Council, or any future Council, to any particular project or recommendation in the plan. He said, as stated before, it is simply a planning tool they use when they consider capital recommendations for Parks and Recreation and Open Space. He said he will also point out, and he thinks many of Council will be pleased to hear, that they believe what they have produced here is a very conservative Plan. He said when comparing this Plan to the Plan that was adopted in 2013, the capital programming recommendations went from \$20 million to \$10 million, so that has been cut in half. He said the acquisition has been cut tremendously from 78 acres to 7 acres, and the total number of projects from 44 to 31. He said they have tried to present what they feel is a very conservative, realistic Plan, which they can use in the future with recommendations. He said, just so Council is aware, about 43 percent of the Capital Recommendations, which is the final chapter of the Plan, have to do with rehab of existing parks and facilities the County has. He said Council all knows this County has a fantastic park system, but it is getting older. Many of the parks were built in the 1980s and 1990s, and now are reaching the point where they just need a lot of attention. He said the bulk of this plan is addressing the current facilities the County has. Mr. Miller said his last comment is that they have worked very closely with not just the State of Maryland, but with the Recreation and Parks Commission. He said they have been part of this process for the last year, and they have endorsed the Plan that was brought forward to Council. He said they have also worked with local Recreation Councils based in the towns, they have done public surveys, and the Plan has been on the website. He said this has been vetted in a number of different venues and avenues as far as the public goes with feedback they have received, and that feedback is included in the Plan. He wants Council to be aware of that, and he would be happy to answer any questions or concerns Council may have regarding the Plan.

Mr. Keith Hall said Mr. Miller summed it all up. Mr. Hall said he thinks the highlights, again, were that they are meeting new State guidelines. He said the adoption assures the allocation of POS funding, as well as provides the County with flexibility of how it uses that money, where other percentages if you do not get it adopted might go towards acquisition. He said they were trying to afford the County, that being the Executive and the Council, the most flexibility with capital programming considerations. He said this is called a skinny programming tool. He said this is just for planning purposes, and it does not commit the County, that again being the Executive and the Council, sitting and future bodies, to any commitment for capital improvement projects. However, it does provide a roadmap of where they are today, and where they are looking to be in the next five to ten years to make sure they are meeting the recreation and park needs of our citizens, as well as our tourists who come and visit. Mr. Matt Holloway asked if Open Space funding seems pretty stable. Mr. Miller said it has, and, in fact, they restored much of the funding that was pulled away, so their amount this year was significantly higher than last year. From what he has heard, it is stabilized. Mr. Hall said, just out of curiosity to get Council's pulse on this, as Mr. Miller had mentioned, they had been in front of Council in November discussing Chapters 1-4, and back in front of Council in December discussing Chapters 5-7, and they have gone over the capital recommendations. He said, while at a very high level, they are looking to see if there is any consensus of Council at this time to move this item to public hearing, possibly as soon as October 3, to get public input both from opponents and proponents. He said it has been well vetted through the various communities, as well as groups that Mr. Miller staffs, and the Natural Resources Conservation Advisory Committee, and they would like to get the pulse of Council to see if there is consensus there. Mr. Cannon said he thinks Council is okay with moving forward for a public hearing. Mrs. Laura Hurley said that could be scheduled for October 3. Mr. Cannon said they will put it on the agenda for October 3. There was no further discussion.

  
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John T. Cannon, President

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Larry W. Dodd, Vice President, District 3


  
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Ernest F. Davis, District 1

  
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Marc Kilmer, District 2

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Absent  
John B. Hall, District 4

  
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Joe Holloway, District 5

  
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Matthew Holloway, At-Large

  
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Laura Hurley, Council Administrator