

# Bel Air Community Park Meeting

June 13, 2019 at 6:00 pm

Bel Air Community Park Pavilion, Barton Boulevard, Bel Air, MD

- 26 community members attended the meeting
- 93 community members responded to an online survey
- Bill Chenso, Bel Air Citizen Committee President, began the meeting at 6:11 pm
- The purpose of the meeting is to provide the County staff & Citizen's Committee with a list of improvements to the Park

## Boat Ramp

- Siera Wigfield notified the community members that the County is looking to locate a boat launch between Black Oaks and the Fairgrounds, and if anyone knew landowners the County could look into acquire land from.
- John Barton, a local property owner in Bel Air, may sell an acre of land to the county to install the boat ramp. Next, access to a boat ramp may be granted by Billy Barton.
- Bill Barton allows the 956 Archeological Organization to excavate some of his property. Finally, properties located across from ATK may be an ideal location for a boat ramp because of the fairly low water level.

## Survey Results

- Siera Wigfield discussed the results from the online survey. The online survey asked people "What would you like to see at your community park?" 71% of community members want a walking track. 59% of community members want a dog park. Other popular items included batting cages and tennis court lighting. The same survey was presented at the meeting on June 13, 2019.
- People at the meeting were encouraged to "vote" for new amenities on the Board in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Survey Board from June 13, 2019 Meeting

## Baseball Field

- There was a discussion about converting the baseball field into a soccer field. The baseball field isn't used as much because the Hot Stove League uses the fields at the Fairgrounds. However, Calvary Christian Academy students occasionally use this field for practice.
- When the baseball field is in use, community members cannot use the track around the baseball field. If the field was converted, the walking track could still be used during soccer events.

## Dog Park

- Amelia Johnson proposed that a dog park be implemented into the community park. However, many community members were concerned about dog attacks and liability. Amelia stated that the owner is responsible if their dog attacks someone.
- Bill Chesno confirmed that the community park does have Parks and Recreation Insurance, and is getting a quote for the addition of a dog park.
  - The following clarified questions on operating a dog park:
  - The owner is responsible for cleaning up after their pets.
  - Signs should be installed in the dog park stating that it is the owner's responsibility to clean up after their dog. Waste must be disposed of by the owner.
- At the very least, dog parks should have a containment area at the entrance, and at least two sections for small dog and large dog sections of equal size. The equal size is important so they can be swapped for both large and small dogs to keep the grass in good condition. Larger dogs will dig up their section faster than the smaller dogs will.

## Tennis Courts

- There was a discussion about resurfacing the tennis courts which cracked shortly after the job was done. According to Bill Chesno, the tennis courts were resurfaced three years ago. However, the court appears to be worn again.
- Resurfacing and reconfiguring the courts to provide pickleball and tennis court may be expensive. they have different nets, and require different court sizes, and are not easily convertible.
- Bill Chesno received some quotes for as much as \$20,000.00 for the improvements
- If the tennis courts were resurfaced again, more community members may access the court.
- Improving the lighting for the tennis court was also discussed at the meeting. Members of the community would like to see coin operated lights for the tennis courts.

## Nature Niche Trail at Bel Air Elementary

- The nature niche was also discussed at this meeting, even though it is not technically part of the Community Park.
- Trail surface improvements, addition of benches and general up keep of the Nature Niche Trail was discussed.
- Siera Wigfield will keep this area in mind when volunteer opportunities arise.

## Community Clean-Up Day

- "Community Clean-Up Day" was suggested at the meeting. This "Community Clean-Up Day" would involve volunteers breaking up into groups and cleaning up the Bel Air Park and the surrounding areas. Many community members agreed that this "Community Clean-Up Day" would help maintain the park.
- Could some incentive like a Bel Air Pool Pass be given to volunteers? Rocky Gap has a clean up day and volunteers get a pass to all the State Parks for the season.

## Tree Planting Grant

- Siera Wigfield informed the Bel Air Citizens Committee that the DNR has funding twice a year to plant native trees on public property. Volunteers would have to plant and mulch trees. The trees are provided and delivered by DNR staff.

## Bel Air Pedestrian Bridge

- Siera Wigfield provided an update about the pedestrian bridge. The current design to make the pedestrian ADA accessible is over the granted amount. The project is being reviewed by SHA to determine if it must be ADA accessible, or if the design can be modified to non-ADA to be completed within the granted amount.

Park Improvement portion of the meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

## Bel-Air Community Park Inventory

- Hot Stove baseball
- Tennis courts (2)
- Softball field
- Asphalt court
- Walking track – gravel
- Pavilion /Bathrooms/Concessions
- Parking

## Bel Air Elementary School Inventory

- Playgrounds
  - 2001?
  - 2006?
  - 2018
- Nature trail
- Gazebo
- Raised Garden Beds

## Bel Air Community Park Improvements

- Signage
- Baseball field
  - Not used regularly
  - Convert to soccer field
  - Lighting
  - Batting Cages
- Pavilion
  - Facia replacement
  - LED retrofit lights
- Dog Park
  - Supported from survey
  - Concerns about maintenance and insurance
  - Dog park would keep dogs in their own area, not at another park features
- Tennis Courts
  - Need resurfaced
  - Coin operated lights
- Asphalt Court
  - Surface
  - Lights
- Nature Niche Trail (*south of Bel Air Elementary*)
  - Trail surface improvements
  - Benches
- Community Clean-Up Day
  - Help maintain park
  - DNR Tree Plantings

Minutes submitted by Siera Wigfield June 29, 2019