

**Greenbelt City Council
Work Session**

Youth Sports

**Wednesday,
March 25, 2015
8:00 p.m.**

**Room 201
Greenbelt Community
Center**

Memo

To: Mike McLaughlin *MPM*
From: Andrew Phelan
Via: Julie McHale
CC: Greg Varda
Joe McNeal
Date: March 9, 2015
Re: Greenbelt Boys & Girls Club/Youth Sports

At their February meeting, the Greenbelt Boys & Girls Club appointed several new board members, bringing the total to eight out of a possible ten members. They are scheduled to assign club officer positions at their March meeting. Despite this recent development, the club's history over the past several years has proven that the greatest challenge facing the Greenbelt Boys & Girls Club has been a lack of volunteers, particularly on their board of directors. Orin Howard has continued to serve as the club's president, in addition to assuming the responsibilities of the other officer positions that have been vacant. There has been a clear reluctance among board members to accept any leadership positions. The lack of motivated volunteers has made it difficult for the club to conduct official business since the monthly board meetings often cannot garner a quorum. These factors have led Orin Howard to shoulder the responsibilities that are ideally shared by a board of directors.

Staff remains concerned about the conditions of the Greenbelt Boys & Girls Club's board of directors. Traditionally, their monthly board meetings have served as the primary source of communication between the City and the club. These meetings allow staff to relay information and receive updates on the club's operations. However, the continued infrequency of these meetings has limited the communications between the City and the Club. Staff is hopeful that, with the new board members, the frequency of the board meetings will increase. Staff is also questioning the leadership of the club beyond the current president, Orin Howard. As evident during last year's budget process, Orin appears to be the only member with a working knowledge of all aspects of the club's business. With no apparent plans for succession, staff is worried about the operations of the club if and when Orin relinquishes his responsibilities.

Despite the struggles on the Board side of operations, there have been no visible effects on the programs offered by the Club. There has been no expansion in their offerings, but their traditional programs (basketball, cheerleading, football, soccer and track & field) have continued to function without any significant issues. While the club has struggled at times to attract enough coaches to serve their growing membership, ultimately the coach search has

proven to be an easier task than attracting volunteers to serve on the board of directors. The club had 402 members in FY14 and has projected membership increases in subsequent years. Dating back to FY11, the club's membership was only at 360. Since it appears that the opportunities afforded to the youth of Greenbelt have not been seriously impacted, it is clear that the most pressing issue facing their club is maintaining consistency with their board of directors.

While the Club may continue to function, any improvements and the assurance of future success are reliant upon an influx of motivated volunteers prepared to lead the club and share the various responsibilities. While the club has struggled to keep individuals committed and serving on the board once they have been appointed, staff is hopeful that the new board members appointed in February will remain dedicated in a united effort to serve the club.

In an effort to improve the Greenbelt Boys & Girls Club and ensure that the new board is successful, staff is recommending assistance in volunteer recruitment and retainment. Staff will explore marketing opportunities to increase the exposure of not only the Greenbelt Boys & Girls Club, but all other contribution groups. For instance, placing ads in the Recreation Department quarterly brochure could attract both volunteers and participants to the various groups. Staff has also considered offering a new volunteer orientation, during which volunteers could receive targeted training. Finally, staff has discussed having youth sports volunteer appreciation nights to reward the countless volunteers for their invaluable time committed to serving the Greenbelt youth.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board have requested that staff explore taking over youth sports programming. If the Greenbelt Recreation Department became the direct provider of youth sports, the overall cost to the City would increase dramatically. The successful implementation and operation of a quality youth sports program would require an additional Recreation Coordinator (Grade 14). In the absence of a thorough cost analysis, staff estimates additional costs to be around \$100,000. As with most current programs offered by the department, income generated through registration fees would offset associated operating expenses. Even if the department coordinated all youth sports, staff would still rely heavily on the current volunteers in the youth sports organizations to avoid an additional increase in expenses.

Given that youth participation in the Greenbelt Boys & Girls Club appears to be growing and the club's programs continue to function, staff does not currently see a large enough need to justify the cost implications associated with the Recreation Department assuming additional responsibilities in the field of youth sports. Staff will continue to monitor and work closely with the Greenbelt Boys & Girls Club to ensure that the organization remains an asset to the City and, in particular, the Greenbelt youth.

Hays asks that they post at least one photo a day relating to their lives in Hyattsville.

"They can post anything, so long as it's positive. This isn't a venue for people to be negative," Hays said. "I've posted pics from the gym and from Vigilante Coffee, from my commute to Northern Virginia and other things in and around Hyattsville."

She said she could change the password and lock someone out if photos are

inappropriate. Each Friday, a new person will take over the handle. Hays said people have signed up to use the handle through May. She will continue the project as long as people are

interested.

Hays's friend Misty Carlyle, who also lives in Hyattsville, said she wasn't interested in Instagram until Hays told her about the project, so she signed up.

3/19/15

Boys and Girls Club president helps revitalize sports program

BY KIRSTEN PETERSEN
The Gazette

Sixteen children played football for the Kentland-Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club's only sports team in 2012. That number could have dropped to zero when the club's president left at the end of the season, but the team's coach, Walter D. Wilson, didn't let it happen.

Since taking over as president in 2013, Wilson, along with coaches and parent volunteers, has boosted football participation to 125 players, reintroduced basketball and brought renewed attention to the Landover program.

"You have people who are not from this area. They don't hear much about the good. They hear about the bad and stay away," Wilson said. "My vision is to raise the awareness of the good within this community."

Wilson, 51, of Landover has coached football for Kentland-Columbia Park since 1992. He watched the club rise and fall in popularity as children tried other recreational programs, such as Pop Warner football.

The club boasted eight teams in 2008, Wilson said, but participation dwindled, and his football team was the only one left in 2012. When the club's president left to start a boxing gym, Wilson said, the president and fellow coaches encouraged him to take on the new role.

The club focused on football first because it was the biggest draw for families, Wilson said. He and the football coaches "walked all over Landover" to pass out fliers and offered a free summer football clinic in July 2013, he said. That season, the club more than doubled, with 44 children participating.

After a successful fundraiser and

One of the photos posted to the @OurHyattsville Instagram community photo project shows Audrey Engdahl performing folk and children's music at Vigilante Coffee. "I love to see people's lives," said Lonna Hays, who started the project.

interested.

Hays's friend Misty Carlyle, who also lives in Hyattsville, said she wasn't interested in Instagram until Hays told her about the project, so she signed up.



QUINTIN MATTHEWS

Harold Heard, head basketball coach and commissioner for the Kentland-Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club, talks to players during a game. Club president Walter D. Wilson said he aims to "raise awareness of the good within this community."

donation drive for new uniforms and gear last year, the club suited up 125 players — 25 more than the target goal, Wilson said.

Recruiting volunteers and funding the club have been the biggest challenges. Wilson said the club is trying to keep

registration fees low, at \$100, so children can afford to "participate and have fun."

"If we can get families attracted and interested and get them to understand what we do here is more than football, we'll have a great opportunity to get other kids, but also increase our program with families," Wilson said.

Shannon Jackson, 43, of Landover Hills enjoyed seeing her two sons play football for Kentland-Columbia Park last year. The club took the teams seriously, with practice five nights a week, she said.

"The coaches, the atmosphere was just really wonderful through the end of the season," Jackson said.

The club brought back basketball this year, starting with a 12-and-younger boys team. Wilson said he hopes the club can add indoor track, girls softball and Special Olympics in coming years.

"Every year, it's more and more participation and it grows and grows," said Christopher Littleton, 30, of Landover, who coaches tackle football for 5- and 6-year-olds. "It's like a seed in the ground that's going to bloom into something pretty amazing soon."

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years ago, is looking forward to seeing what people post.

"I like to tell stories through the pictures I take, so I really wanted to be a part of this project," Fradin said. "We're all one community, but we all have different lives, and we come from different backgrounds, so I'm looking forward to seeing that."

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