



## MONTGOMERY PARKS

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
2425 Reedie Drive | Wheaton, MD 20902  
MontgomeryParks.org

# April 2026 - Open session for the Black Baseball & Softball Community Heritage Project: Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** April 14, 2026, 7-8 pm

**Location:** Microsoft Teams Meeting

**Purpose:** Community input session on the developing Black Baseball & Softball Community Heritage initiative

**Next meeting date:** May 12, 7 pm on [Teams](#)

Topic – look at GIS in-progress map, project updates

## Meeting Summary

Parks staff was joined by six attendees representing individuals with family and community ties to Black baseball/softball and representatives of Bethesda Big Train.

Project updates included the upcoming **audience survey** (May–June 2026), **community outreach and tabling** at preservation and Juneteenth events, and progress on a **GIS-based map of sandlot field locations**.

The group prioritized candidates for **oral history interviews**, with consensus around elders and families with broad historical knowledge. The project will follow a tiered oral history approach with longer interviews by a professional oral historian, shorter focused recordings by Parks staff, and self-submitted community memories.

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## Detailed Meeting Notes

### 1. Mount Zion history (early discussion)

- Location of Mount Zion sandlot field identified near Riggs Road and Zion Road
- Team name confirmed as The Honeydrippers
- Players included many extended family members and neighbors
- Games were social events:
  - Large crowds and parked cars around fields
  - Food prepared and sold by women in the community

- Field likely stopped being used in the late 1970s, around the time homes were built nearby

## 2. Audience Survey & Outreach (project update)

- Digital audience survey scheduled
  - Launch: Early May
  - Close: End of June
- Distribution channels
  - Montgomery Parks social media
  - E-newsletters
  - League and partner networks
  - Outreach through community contacts
- Physical signage planned at:
  - High-use regional parks
  - Parks near known sandlot field locations (e.g., Mount Zion, Johnson's, Good Hope, etc.)

## 3. Community Events & Tabling

Planned outreach includes:

- May 16 – Prathertown Community Development Group Preservation Event (Gaithersburg Library)
  - Materials to be provided (Parks not attending in person)
- June 11 – Jazz at Josiah Henson Museum & Park
  - Parks attending with project materials
- June 19
  - Day: Scotland Juneteenth Festival at Cabin John Shopping Center
  - Evening: Pint Isreal Juneteenth Game hosted by Bethesda Big Train at Povich Field

## 4. Juneteenth Game & Heartbreakers T-Shirt Discussion

- Big Train plans:
  - Pre-game free picnic (starts at 5:00 PM) for legacy community members
  - Planned t-shirt giveaway highlighting women's softball history

## 5. Oral History Program

- Funding secured for:
  - a. Three professionally recorded, in-depth oral histories
- Proposed tiered collection approach:
  - a. Long-form oral histories (1–2 hours)
  - b. Short, focused interviews conducted by Parks staff

- c. Self-recorded community memories (phone or QR-based submission)
- Attendees discussed oral history candidates and prioritization. Connections noted between families underscored the depth of shared history and the importance of family-based storytelling.

#### 6. Mapping Sandlot Fields (Project Progress)

- Parks is building a GIS map of historic sandlot locations using:
    - Lincoln Park Historical Society's *Guide to African American Communities* (2001)
    - Bruce Adams' work from his 2021 Montgomery History conference presentation
    - Aerial imagery (historicaerials.com, 1957 is the earliest available)
    - Community input
  - We will look at this map during the May 12, 7 pm session
  - Notes:
    - County-wide historical context
    - Priority interpretive opportunities will be at Montgomery Parks near original sandlot sites (e.g., Johnson's Park, East Norbeck, Good Hope, etc.)
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#### Next Steps

- Launch and promote audience survey and self-recording option (may)
- Table at:
  - Josiah Henson Museum event (June 11)
  - Scotland Juneteenth Festival & Game (June 19)
- Schedule oral history recordings

#### Ongoing

- Continue work on sandlot field map
- Collect photographs, names, rosters, and documents from community members

\*NB – These meeting notes were originally created by Co-Pilot AI based on the meeting transcript. Staff then made edits, corrections, and additions. Additions from the Teams chat were also included in these notes.