

# The Capital

## County held secret meeting

A south county environmental group claims the county broke the state open meetings law by not giving proper notice of a park panel's meetings and preventing a local radio station from recording one of the gatherings.

South Arundel Citizens for Responsible Development, in a complaint filed last week with the state Open Meetings Compliance Board, charges three meetings of the Franklin Point/Shady Side Parks Master Planning Committee failed to give reasonable advance notice of the sessions. The county has 30 days to respond.

"We've gotten a number of calls from people wanting to know what is happening with these meetings. When are they? Where are they?" SACReD President Amanda Spake said. "These meetings have to be open, and well publicized."

The committee is developing a master plan for five parks in Shady Side, including 447-acre Franklin Point Park that SACReD fought to save from development in the late 90s.

The organization also claimed that the panel met without notice to tour the parks in a van, breaking rules requiring adequate space.

But what got the organization's ire up was a county official's refusal to let radio station WRYR, run by SACReD, record a June 17 meeting for broadcast. Ms. Spake called the incident "another egregious violation of the act."

Jack Keene, recreation and parks planning and construction chief, said the Office of Law is looking into the open meetings complaint and whether the county will allow recording for broadcast. He added that the committee is an ad-hoc advisory body and not an officially constituted board and that members of the public had

attended all the meetings held so far.

The panel's next meeting is July 15 at 7 p.m. at Discovery Village in Shady Side.

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