

## WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

JANUARY 28, 2016

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:05 pm by Chairperson John Feters. In attendance: Kyra Barnes, Tiffanie Charles, Feters, Katie Quincel, Greg Thurman, Zach Wright, Director Steve Carr and Shannon Werner. Guests: Auditor Dan Miller, Councilman Wes Kantor, Ken Euman, Jerry Brooks, Julius Dobbins and Regina Colwell.

Carr opened the floor to nominations for chairperson. Charles nominated John Feters for chairperson, seconded by Thurman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed and a voice vote was taken. All members voted in the affirmative with Feters abstaining and John Feters was elected the chairperson of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission for 2016.

Next, Feters opened the floor to nominations for a vice-chairperson. Charles nominated Greg Thurman, seconded by Zach Wright. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed and a voice vote was taken. All members voted in the affirmative with Thurman abstaining and Greg Thurman was elected vice-chairperson of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission for 2016.

As the last item of reorganization, Quincel moved that the Commission continue to meet at 6 pm on the fourth Thursday of each month, seconded by Charles, and the motioned carried.

Next, guests were polled. First Ken Euman, president of the Whitehall T-Ball League, addressed the Commission. Euman said he had turned in the league's financial report, the same as in years past. However he is concerned over an ordinance change and being required to submit rosters, bank statements, etc. He considers this to be "an infringement on my business," as the Whitehall T-Ball League is a registered business in Ohio. The federal government only requires that he file a tax return, and the state doesn't require any kind of audit. He doesn't think the city has the authority to ask for these things and doesn't understand why the Commission wants to get into T-ball's business.

Then Julius Dobbins, president of Whitehall Youth Soccer Association, addressed the Commission. He questioned why the city/Commission needed this expanded financial information. He also questioned what legal right the city had to such information. He said the city could use that argument for any Whitehall business that uses any city service such as roads or water.

Carr responded that the city ordinance states that any organization that receives assistance (clarification pending) submit a financial statement via a system approved by the City Auditor. The reports the leagues are currently submitting are not auditable. The extra financial information that the city/Commission is requesting will make their financial reports verifiable. Carr said that if leagues do not ask for any assistance from the city, then the city won't ask them to provide any kind of information. He also said that the charter does not instruct the department to offer unlimited assistance.

Next Jerry Brooks, also with Whitehall Youth Soccer Association, addressed the Commission. He asked exactly what assistance soccer receives?

Carr answered that, in the case of soccer specifically, the city provides the fields, maintains the fields (mowing and striping), and is planning for the creation of three new fields.

Brooks said the league is, in fact, providing the Commission with a financial report.

Carr again attempted to explain that the financial reports that were submitted didn't provide enough information. He said that additional information (rosters, receipts, etc.) were necessary to verify how much revenue comes into to the league and how that revenue was spent.

Carr, in order to further explain, read from a draft letter (agenda item #11) to the youth sports leagues: "Because the general public associates the city's assistance as a tacit endorsement of your organization – the commission is rightfully concerned about your organization's failure to demonstrate a good faith effort to meet reporting requirements and apparent lack of transparency."

Quincel added that when her children and family were involved in youth sports, they followed the reporting requirements that are being asked today. At some point, over the years, the leagues had gotten way from those reporting standards.

Barnes stressed that there are indeed many parents of youth athletes who want to know how the leagues are spending their money and this has been the case for several years. She also said that reporting requirements should be the same across the board for all leagues. She understands that the league leadership is volunteering their time but the department is indeed helping them.

Thurman asked if the leagues thought it was ok for an organization to take in thousands of dollars and not be accountable for any of it. Did they see the value in transparency?

Euman answered that the city was overstepping its bounds.

Next, Regina Colwell, of the Whitehall Youth Basketball League, addressed the Commission. She is the new president and is receiving a crash course in youth sports. She says she can understand both sides and understands the leagues' frustrations because they are all volunteers (putting in many, many hours) and it is a very difficult job. She has faced challenges getting support from the schools, parents and board members. It is important that people remember that coaches and league officials are not in it for the money and she appreciates everyone who is doing it.

Fettters reiterated that the Commission was not personally attacking any one person or any one league. But the leagues are representing the city and the image of the city and the issue is simply transparency.

Auditor Dan Miller said he was happy to volunteer his time to any league that needs help to set up an accounting system.

Moving on, Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, to approve the December 10, 2015 and January 7, 2016 meeting minutes and the motion carried.

Quincel moved, seconded by Charles, to approve employees' wages/personal service for 11/27/15 through 1/21/16 and the motion carried.

Charles moved, seconded by Wright to approve bills and refunds through 12/31/15 and the motion carried.

The Commission reviewed the trust fund and budget through 12/31/15.

Director's Report:

Carr reviewed the report's attachments to make sure everyone had all ten. He also reported that the Whitehall Bantam Football Association responded to his request for additional information on their financial report. Carr said, with the exception of proof of liability insurance, WBFA fulfilled all requests. Their proof of insurance will be submitted before the start of the 2016 season.

Next, the Commission discussed the WCP Activity Center concept plan. Carr asked for approval of the concept plan in order to move ahead with schematic design and construction documents.

Wright said he thought it best that the center retains the movable stage in the great hall. Carr said if the stage is permanently raised it will provide another programmable space. Wright asked if the stage could be raised when programming called for it only. Carr said that it could, but as long as the stage stayed movable, he didn't believe it could structurally support a divider/Nana door.

At this time, the Commission moved into the great hall to inspect the movable stage.

As no consensus could be reached on the stage, the Commission agreed to approve the concept plan while holding off on a decision to permanently raise the stage. Thurman moved, seconded by Barnes, and the motion carried.

Quincel recommended an assessment of the movable stage to gauge its durability and/or availability of spare parts.

Staff recommended the hiring of Robert Johnson for the position of full-time maintenance worker. Mr. Johnson has been employed as a part-time maintenance worker since 2007 and was the 2015 City Employee of the Year in the service category.

Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, to approve the hiring of Robert Johnson to the position of full-time maintenance worker and the motion carried.

Next, Carr spoke regarding the proposed amendment to Codified Ordinance 121.03. The proposed amendment adds the language "in-kind services" to clarify what constitutes assistance to outside organizations. Currently the Ohio revised code does not recognize in-kind services as "moneys". It also asks that financial statements be submitted within sixty days of the end of an organization's season. This will allow the city more time to react before a league starts a spring season. The proposed amendment has been reviewed by the city attorney.

Charles moved, seconded by Barnes, to approve the amendment to Codified Ordinance 121.03 and the motion carried.

The Commissioners were provided a copy of a draft letter to the youth sports leagues. The letter would send notice of pending suspension of assistance to youth sports groups that remain non-compliant with the Commission's reporting policy. Each group would also receive a check list of reporting items that are missing or need further explanation.

Quincel moved, seconded by Charles, to send notice of pending suspension of assistance to youth groups that remain non-compliant with the Commission's reporting policy and the motion carried.

Next the Commission moved to old/new business. Carr informed the Commission that Mr. Earl Foit was nominated to the city's Walk of Fame along with a request that the athletic fields at John Bishop Park be renamed in his honor. The Commission was provided copies of both requests. Carr recommended that the matter be put on the February agenda for discussion.

Thurman mentioned that they could discuss an induction and building a monument as two separate issues. Fetters agreed that it may not be fiscally responsible to build a monument that they potentially plan to move or tear down, as the matter of building a "wall of fame" as part of a larger renovation of the amphitheater has been discussed numerous times.

Wright asked if the current monuments could be left as is, then continue to honor the next generation of inductees with a wall.

Audience member Leslie LaCorte and Wes Kantor both added they would be offended if the original monuments were removed. Fetters asked if would be offensive to simply move the monuments to another location, in order improve the amphitheater. Thurman added that he didn't think that the honorees would want to stop progress in the park. LaCorte and Kantor agreed that could be acceptable.

Quincel asked, under new business, if plans have been made to accommodate recreation classes during the summer. Carr said no plans have been made.

Jerry Brooks asked if the youth leagues were to disband, would the city pick it up. Carr said "potentially". Brooks also asked if the city/Commission tracked the Senior Center's finances too. Carr said, yes, the Senior Center submits a detailed monthly report.

Chris Bolich, of Whitehall Bantam Football Association, said he'd like to see overall better relations between the youth groups and the Commission. He said while he thought an overall youth sports board was a good idea, it may not be feasible. He suggested the Commission hold 3-4 special meetings throughout the year to communicate/address concerns with the leagues directly.

Next, Fetters suggested tabling agenda items 13 and 14 (executive session and approval of director's merit pay increase) in the interest of time. Quincel said that because this is the second time they've tabled the issue, perhaps they should schedule a special meeting to complete the task.

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Wright moved, seconded by Charles, to meet on February 16, 2016 for the purpose to discussing an employee performance evaluation and the motion carried.

There being no further business, Charles moved, seconded by Barnes, and the meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.

To the best of my knowledge these minutes are true and correct.

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Chairperson