

## WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

### MAY 12, 2016 – Special Meeting

The special meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:05 pm by Chairperson John Feters. In attendance: Tiffanie Charles, Feters, Katie Quincel, Greg Thurman, Zach Wright, Director Steve Carr, and Shannon Werner.

Quincel moved, seconded by Thurman, to excuse the absent members and the motion carried 5 – 0.

Carr began the discussion by confirming that everyone was in possession of four handouts. First he referred to the draft Youth Sports Philosophy and Guiding Principles. It reads as follows:

#### ***Philosophy***

*The commission has a responsibility for the proper control and oversight of all youth sports programs receiving city assistance, and a duty to hold everyone associated with these programs accountable for their behavior.*

*We believe children deserve quality youth sports programs that are organized and conducted in an appropriate manner that ensures their physical, emotional and social well-being, and provides safe, positive and enjoyable recreational experience.*

#### ***Guiding Principles***

*The commission should, in large part, adopt the National Alliance for Youth Sports' recommendations for communities and national standards.*

- *Appoint a professional youth sports administrator to ensure adherence to the commission's philosophy, guiding principles and policies and procedures.*
- *Determine the best organizational structure for the governance of youth sports (status quo, umbrella organization, city sponsored or hybrid.)*

*Youth Sports Organizations (YSOs) must adopt the commission's youth sports philosophy, adhere to our guiding principles and policies and procedures.*

- *Complete a facility use application.*
- *File organization's bylaws and any amendments.*
- *Provide proof of insurance.*
- *Administer screening and background checks for all program volunteers.*
- *Develop a safety/emergency plan.*
- *File an annual financial report.*
- *Prohibit family members from serving as the organization's president and treasurer at the same time.*

- *Require two board members who are not related to sign checks.*
- *Complete an orientation programs for administrators, coaches and parents.*
- *Require general and sports-specific training for coaches.*
- *Complete required concussion training.*
- *Adopt age-appropriate policies for:*
  - *Number/length of practices*
  - *Number of games*
  - *Game times*
  - *Pitch counts (baseball), amount of full contact (football) and headers (soccer)*
  - *Emphasis on competition (league standings, tournaments and all-star teams)*
  - *Age groups*

Carr said that the first two guiding principles pertain specifically to the Commission. He feels that, at some point, it will be necessary to appoint a staff member who enforces compliance of the guidelines. That could start with Carr himself or an intern, and then be a paid staffer. He also noted the Commission needs to decide on the best organizational structure for Whitehall youth sports, but that not until they receive more input from the leagues themselves. The Commission could also take a “wait and see” approach regarding such a/an (re)organization.

Fetters expressed his support for an umbrella organization.

Quincel thought the leagues seemed to be supportive of an umbrella organization. She asked if Whitehall Youth Basketball League could join such an organization. Carr said they could.

Charles thought it prudent, for the current/upcoming season, for the Commission to simply maintain a larger presence and act as a support system for the leagues rather than a “take-over”. Carr stated that if the Commission does decide to create an umbrella organization, it would still be a six to nine month transitional process.

Charles added that she hopes Parks and Rec. and youth sports will receive more support from WCS moving forward, especially considering that two members are school board recommendations. She feels that WCS’s support of the T-Ball league undermines the Commission’s decision to suspend city services. Quincel pointed out that the decision to support T-Ball was probably not made at the school board level. Charles thinks it’s important for WSC and the department to be “on the same page” after this season.

Carr next moved to the remaining guiding principles, which are intended for the YSOs to follow. First, leagues should complete an annual facility application. This application could contain a checklist of necessary items (i.e.: proof of insurance, bylaws, emergency pan, etc.).

Carr also mentioned that because requiring background checks, was potentially a new requirement, the department could help the leagues financially with this if needed.

Fettters mentioned that the term “family members” may need to be clarified (for example, members of the same household). Carr said that a list of the leagues’ bank-approved signators could be included in the financial report too.

Carr added that mandatory coach’s training may be a tough sell, but hopefully we can get cooperation from the high school coaches.

Quincel suggested adding a requirement for weather-related policies, such as heat/cold and lightening.

Charles suggested that players may need to prove their birthdates during the registration process.

Carr asked the Commissioners if they wanted to include all the draft suggestions in this proposal, but leave “coach training” and “age-appropriateness” a little more open ended in order to receive league input. All else could be deal-breakers. The Commission agreed.

Lastly, Carr added that the department is highly subsidizing the use of field lights for WBFA and the Commission may want to address this at some point, too. Currently, WBFA reimburses the department at the rate of \$15 per hour, which is well below the actual cost. Carr also said he wasn’t aware of any other youth football leagues that played under the lights every week.

Wright said he thought the night games (thus freeing weekends for players and parents) was the biggest draw for the league. He said that 20-some years ago, the Commission felt it was fair and reasonable to subsidize 50% of the light costs.

Carr agreed to further investigate to get a more accurate picture of the cost of lights per hour and report back at the next meeting.

There being no further business, Charles moved, seconded by Thurman, and the meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm.

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

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