

WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MAY 26, 2016

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:04 pm by Chairperson John Feters. In attendance: Kyra Barnes, Tiffanie Charles, Feters, Katie Quincel, Greg Thurman, Zach Wright, Director Steve Carr, and Shannon Werner. Absent: Mike Adkins. Guest: Ryan Andrews of EMH&T.

Charles moved, seconded by Thurman, to excuse Adkins and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Thurman moved, seconded by Quincel, to approve the minutes for the April 28 regular meeting and the May 12 special meeting and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Quincel moved, seconded by Charles, to approve employees' wages/personal service for 4/15/16 to 5/12/16 and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Wright moved, seconded by Charles, to approve bills and refunds through 4/30/16 and the motion carried 6 – 0.

The Commission reviewed the trust fund and budget through 4/30/16.

Next, Ryan Andrews of EMH&T made a brief presentation regarding the new entrance to Whitehall Community Park. Andrews showed three similar designs and highlighted features he liked best. The connection to Hamilton Road will have 2 outbound lanes and one inbound lane (grant funding will pay for a portion of this.) The oval drive was changed to a (one-way) circle, which allows for the preservation of more trees but is still large enough to accommodate fire trucks, school buses, etc. It has a 160 ft. diameter and would also contain a rain garden. Traffic would branch off from the circle (to the bank, existing parking lot, and lower level access road). There is also limited parking closer to the Activity Center. Andrews noted that there will be a bike path added as part of the Hamilton Road project. A sidewalk can be added to allow direct pedestrian access from Hamilton Road to the Activity Center.

Carr asked if Andrews had looked into moving the lower level access road closer to and/or use the existing path. Andrew said that he hasn't yet. Right now finalizing the road entrance is the first priority as it is part of the overall Hamilton Road project.

Carr also mentioned that Heartland Bank and their design firm, Moody Nolan, were willing to replicate features such as lighting, rain garden planting, stone accents, etc. in order to promote an overall continuity of design throughout the park.

Andrews agreed to disseminate digital copies of the three designs to the Commissioners and asked for feedback within the next two weeks.

Director's Report:

Carr highlighted several items. Interviews for the permanent part-time position will begin in about two weeks. Two seasonal workers have already started. Carr toured two new Metro Parks. Park maintenance staff erected backstop safety netting on diamonds two and three at John Bishop Park. And the Music in the Park series begins June 5.

Next, Carr reviewed the 2015 electric/field lights bills for John Bishop Park. He demonstrated that the actual cost to run the field lights was approximately \$107 per hour. WBFA is charged \$15 per hour. This resulted in a \$5501.15 city subsidy in 2015. This figure is in addition to \$500 per year it costs to maintain the lights.

Charles asked if a more efficient/updated system could be investigated. Carr said that the last time he looked into it, which was several years ago, the cost was over \$35k. The energy savings are probably not worth the capital costs.

It was also noted that softball/baseball tournaments are also charged \$15 per hour to use the field lights. Charles felt outside groups should be paying the full \$107 per hour.

Carr said they should let the leagues know about any change in policy sooner rather than later because this will certainly affect them.

Quincel asked what the DSCC leagues pay. Carr answered that they do not use field lights. Also the department raised the fee (to \$375 per team), and made other changes to the program so that it is probably profitable now.

Quincel also inquired about summer recreational classes. Carr and Werner answered that Yoga classes will be held at Whitehall United Methodist Church for the summer months. The department also emailed 38 past and present ballet participants to gauge interest in a summer session. The response was too low to justify holding an offsite summer session so the intent is resume ballet classes in the fall.

Charles moved, seconded by Barnes, to spend an amount not to exceed \$750 from the Recreation Trust Fund for July 4th parade candy, t-shirts, and magnetic signs and the motion carried 6 – 0.

The Commission agreed to reschedule the regular July 28th meeting at the June regular meeting.

Next the Commission discussed the adoption of a youth sports philosophy and guiding principles. From the initial draft, Carr said the only changes are the addition of #6 (YSOs must adopt a conduct code and disciplinary procedures) and #7 (YSOs must adopt a drug, tobacco, alcohol, and PED – free environment policy.) Also, he still wants, as noted in the proposal, input from the YSOs on items #8 – #10. Carr said he would initiate this conversation and report back.

Charles moved, seconded by Barnes, to adopt the youth sports philosophy and guiding principles and the motion carried 6 – 0.

As old/new business, Quincel asked for an update on the splash pad. Carr said Vortex submitted two options (both turnkey operations) today. Option two featured the tidal pool and is significantly costlier. He will be discussing it with MSA the next day, but Carr said it was unlikely that option will be affordable. However, he still thinks it can be completed this winter.

Barnes asked for an Armory update. Carr said they looked into the option of replacing the drill room with a pole barn and found it to be significantly more expensive. When the mayor was informed of this, she said she would find the additional funding and to rebid the project with the original plans. They do intend to increase the construction period from 90 to 150 days. The next bid opening will be June 17th.

Regarding the disc golf course, Carr said a survey of the six acres being purchased by Heartland Bank is being conducted. Once the survey and the entrance design are completed, we will confirm/tweak the expanded disc golf course and proceed with those plans.

Charles asked for thoughts regarding the Whitehall Youth Soccer league, especially if the current leadership leaves the program.

Carr said his thoughts were that the department would work with any new leadership who adopted and followed the youth sports philosophy and guidelines. If that didn't happen, it would be very difficult for the city to take over the program for the fall season, but could do it for the 2017 spring season.

Thurman and Charles feel that new leadership isn't necessary, but a new attitude and adoption of the philosophy and guidelines are.

Carr agreed to notify the soccer and tee ball leagues of the proposal and keep the lines of communication open. He will include youth basketball in those communications, as well.

There being no further business, Thurman moved, seconded by Charles, and the meeting adjourned at 7:22 pm.

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