

WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

JUNE 23, 2016

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:02 pm by Chairperson John Fetters. In attendance: Mike Adkins, Tiffanie Charles, Fetters, Katie Quincel, Greg Thurman, Zach Wright, Director Steve Carr, and Shannon Werner. Absent: Kyra Barnes. Guests: Cheryl Hefner and Kandice Alexander.

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

Fetters polled the guests for questions or comments. Cheryl Hefner spoke first. She addressed the Commission with her concern that there are not enough recreational opportunities for teens and pre-teens in Whitehall. She cited the new skate park in Dublin as an example of something that could be successful in Whitehall. Hefner also suggested tetherball courts, tennis courts, and re-opening basketball courts at John Bishop Park. Seating around these amenities would provide a place for more teens to hang out and socialize. She understands that there were problems in the past from teens at the courts and skate park at JBP, but doesn't want to see all kids punished for others' past actions. Hefner suggested surveillance cameras and "parent patrols" (as have been organized in cities like San Francisco and Chicago) as a way to mitigate potential bad behavior.

Next Kandice Alexander addressed the Commission. She would like to see a YMCA branch in Whitehall as a way to expand recreational opportunities for everyone, but especially teens and preteens. Alexander believes amenities that can be provided by a YMCA, such as a pool, tennis, and indoor gymnasium, could be very beneficial for the community. She pointed out that the YMCA offers discounted rates based on income.

Ms. Hefner also provided the Commission with printed information on safety programs and Dublin's skate park.

Fetters added that, personally, his inclination is toward a basketball court (versus a skate park) due to cost.

Next, Thurman moved, seconded by Quincel, to approve the minutes for the May 26 regular meeting and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Charles moved, seconded by Adkins, to approve employees' wages / personal service for 5/13/16 through 6/10/16 and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Charles moved, seconded by Adkins, to approve bills and refunds through 5/31/16 and the motion carried 6 – 0.

The Commission reviewed the trust fund and budget through 5/31/16.

Director's Report:

Carr said that, thus far, attendance for Music in the Park has been very good. Also fundraising efforts for Camp COSI are going well. The lock was changed on the field lights at JBP with a "do not copy" key to limit access. Two permanent part-time maintenance people have been hired and will start the following Monday. Plaques for the Walk of Fame inductees have been ordered, and invitations have been mailed to the families. The families were also informed that there will not be individual monuments built at this time.

Regarding project updates, Carr said the bid for the Armory demolition was awarded to Lowendick. The bid came in slightly under the (revised) estimate at \$373+K. The tentative schedule for the splash pad is to re-advertise and open bids on August 5, still allowing for a 2017 Memorial weekend opening.

Adkins and Carr discussed the apparent confusion regarding youth baseball's use of the field lights. Carr said the league has a new key and is allowed to use the lights. They also discussed mowing at JBP. Carr said he emailed the mowing company to discuss ways to mitigate the mowers shredding trash in the outfields.

Quincel asked if the rates for the field lights have been raised for the youth leagues. Carr said the Commission has not acted to raise the rates yet, but probably should in the future (after notice is given). Outside groups/tournaments will be charged the full amount of \$107/hour.

Charles asked for an update regarding the park ranger program. Carr said the next departmental hiring would be the rangers, as it was necessary to hire maintenance staff first. He would also like to meet with Metro Parks once more to learn more about their program and any potential assistance they can offer.

Charles also asked about a fish sculpture that was possibly being donated. Carr said it is a commissioned piece of sculpture (currently located near Easton) that will be given to the city. The mayor's office is assessing the cost to move the sculpture and it would likely be installed at WCP near the creek.

Next on the agenda, Carr discussed the memo from the School Resource Officer. WSC would like to designate the Whitehall Senior Citizen Center as the secondary evacuation site for C-R Williams. The current secondary site is Rose's department store. Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, to give permission to use the Senior Center as a secondary evacuation site and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, to approve an amount not to exceed \$480 from the Recreation Trust Fund for the purpose of funding Camp COSI and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Charles moved, seconded by Thurman, to reschedule the July regular meeting to August 4, 2016 and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Under old and new business, Carr asked the Commission how they would like to present the Walk of Fame honors. Thurman agreed to ask John Wolf to present for Phil Allen, and Dan Reid to present for Earl Foit. Carr will present for Gary Meidl. Presentations will be made alphabetically.

Next, Charles remarked that, while she didn't think basketball courts would necessarily help reduce neighborhood crime, the department should put up basketball goals (sans fence and resurfacing) as a low cost trial-run.

Adkins said he thought it was necessary to resurface to the old court. Carr said they may be able to get away with just a crack seal and coat. Carr will get an estimate for the asphalt repair and goals to present at the August meeting.

The Commission also agreed the best way to start would be with half-court basketball. If all goes well, there would be the potential to put in a full-court later.

Then, Thurman asked for any more information/clarification regarding an email Mayor Maggard sent to Carr, where she expressed an interest in a partnership with the YMCA to run recreational programming.

Carr said that he and the administration met with people from the YMCA. The YMCA currently runs a "boutique branch" out of Clark Hall in Gahanna. The Mayor feels there is the potential for a similar partnership between Whitehall and the YMCA to run the programs out of the renovated Activity Center, thus allowing the department to focus on park maintenance.

Quincel toured Clark Hall with the Mayor and feels that this is still in the very preliminary stages of discussion. She said most of the classes at Clark Hall are free for members but could be purchased by-the-class by anyone. Many are adult fitness classes but they also offer different youth and wellness classes too.

Wright said the Commission could discuss a potential proposal if/when the time comes.

Quincel asked Carr if there were any updates regarding the Activity Center renovation. He said he will need to meet with the Mayor as the project will likely be drawing from four different funding sources so they will need to coordinate the budget, after the splash pad project has been re-bid.

Thurman asked if there was any update on the Golf Dome. Carr answered that the matter is still in litigation and he believes they have scheduled a September trial date. The city has also sent them a cease and desist letter regarding non-golf activities. Carr said the city attorney seems confident the matter will be resolved in the city's favor.

There being no further business, Thurman moved, seconded by Charles, and the meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm.

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