

WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

AUGUST 4, 2016

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairperson John Fetters. In attendance: Mike Adkins, Kyra Barnes, Tiffanie Charles, Fetters, Katie Quincel, Director Steve Carr, and Shannon Werner. Absent: Greg Thurman and Zach Wright. Guests: Mayor Kim Maggard and Chris Bolich.

Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, to excuse the absent members and the motion carried 5 - 0. Zach Wright arrived at 6:04 pm.

Fetters polled the guests for questions or comments. Chris Bolich spoke on behalf of the Whitehall Bantam Football Association. He distributed a memo to the commissioners requesting improvements to John Bishop Park football facilities. Bolich said he'd also like to reaffirm the league's commitment to working with the department. He asked the commissioners to take their time to read and digest their requests as he knows some requests will be more palatable than others and they could be addressed at a future meeting.

Their biggest request is working with Rosemore Middle School regarding their ball diamonds encroaching on the football field. Carr said this is a shared space and compromises must be made. Bolich responded that, without grass, the shared space can become so muddy as to become a safety hazard.

Carr reminded him if they get rid of the goal posts, they can shift the field to the west before lining the field, thus improving the situation. Bolich said he would reach out to their new league, the Mini OCC, to see if that could be approved. Carr said it could be possible to move the goal posts in the future, but not in time for this season.

Charles inquired about their request for the purchase of a new scoreboard. She asked if they had already received some assistance from the high school. Bolich responded that the HS did lend the league a controller until they were able to get a new/rebuilt controller at the end of last season.

Carr asked if, out of the other leagues that Whitehall will be playing with this year, is Whitehall the only league to play under the lights. Bolich said yes, their away games will be played on Saturday mornings.

Next, Quincel moved, seconded by Charles, to approve the minutes for the June 23 regular meeting and the motion carried 6 - 0.

Charles moved, seconded by Adkins, to approve employee's wages/personal service for 6/10/16 through 7/21/16 and the motion carried 6 - 0.

Quincel asked if records regarding the department's income are available. Werner explained that she maintains a monthly income report and would be happy to include it in future packets for the commissioners to review.

Barnes said that people have been happy with Music in the Park and have expressed that they would like to see concerts in August too. If it is a budget issue, she suggested recruiting local bands that may possibly play free of charge in exchange for the experience and exposure.

Carr noted that between Music in Park, the Food Truck Festival, and July 4th, the city provided entertainment to community for 9 weeks this summer. He thinks that free bands would result in low attendance and it is important to maintain the integrity/reputation that the series has built. He would rather look for room in the budget to add one or two more concerts.

Mayor Maggard has heard suggestions that people would like to see some more diverse bands and that this could possibly help draw a younger crowd to the concerts.

Fetters suggested holding pre-concert activities that would attract more families too.

The Commission agreed to make expanding Music in the Park part of the 2017 budget discussions.

Quincel moved, seconded by Charles, to approve bills and refunds through 6/30/16.

The Commission reviewed the Trust Fund and budget through 6/30/16.

Director's Report:

Carr said the Wall of Fame induction on July 4th went well and the families seemed pleased.

Fundraising efforts for the COSI science camp were very successful. Quincel said that the curriculum was the same as last year. Werner said she will address that with COSI for the next summer, so as not to disappoint repeat campers.

Carr also discussed updates to the park projects. The splash pad is back on track. The new tentative schedule calls for construction to start on 9/19, allowing plenty of time for a 5/27/17 opening day.

On the Armory demolition/renovation, a bathroom must be added to meet the requirements for an occupancy permit. This is a minor addition which should be completed in about two weeks, followed by a 30 day plan review. The abatement and main building demolition may proceed during the plan review process.

The installation of the expanded disc golf course is on track to be completed before winter.

Carr provided estimates he received for the basketball courts at John Bishop Park. The estimate for one full court and two half courts comes to \$36,002. He will better be able to determine if this project can be completed with 2016 monies at the end of the summer. The 2017 budget can be looked at to see if security camera can be added to the courts.

Lastly, under old/new business, the Commission discussed Whitehall's youth sports. Carr pointed out that in the Mini OCC league, WBFL is the only league to play under lights and even the Junior High School doesn't play under the lights. Quincel said that if the league is charged a rate that is a more accurate reflection of the true cost, it may deter light usage.

The Commission discussed that having Kindergarten through second grade playing tackle football may also not be the best, safest practice.

Carr said he plans to have an in-depth review of WYAA's season and will do the same with WBFL once their season is completed too. However he feels that the current state of youth sports in Whitehall is inadequate.

Charles asked how the department can best enforce a drug-free policy that extends to the volunteer staff. Carr said currently it is up to each league's administration.

Noting that citizens have expressed a desire for more recreation in Whitehall, Carr thinks that perhaps the best thing the department could do for the city is take over its youth sports organizations. And if so, they should make hiring a youth sports coordinator a priority in the next budget.

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

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