

WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 14, 2016 – Special Meeting

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chairperson John Fetters. In attendance: Mike Adkins, Kyra Barnes, Tiffanie Charles, Fetters, Katie Quincel, Greg Thurman, Zach Wright, and Shannon Werner. Guests: HR Director Ann Lund and Councilman Wes Kantor.

Fetters requested a roll call on whether each member received a copy of the agenda. All members answered in the affirmative.

To begin the discussion of hiring a new Parks and Recreation Director, Fetters asked that each Commissioner share their thoughts as to what qualities/objectives they would like to see in a new hire. Fetters said he'd like someone who is family-geared and oriented. He'd like to see more emphasis on pocket parks and marketing.

Adkins also desires a director who is family-oriented. He wants to see someone who can get the job done and work well with numerous parties. He added that a director who is not so close to retirement age could stay with the department longer.

Charles would like a candidate who will be able to handle a strong workload as the department is in the midst of multiple projects. She would like to see a director who is approachable, open to different opinions, and committed to Whitehall.

Wright would foremost like to see someone who will stand up for the department and not be a "yes man" for city hall. He said that Carr has been caught under the bus twice now for standing up to city hall.

Wright emphasized that what happened at the September 7th meeting was unacceptable. He said it was the first time the group wouldn't make an effort to accommodate everyone's schedule to attend a special meeting. It was also obvious that 4 or 5 commissioners had discussed the matter in advance of the meeting while at least two Commissioners were deliberately left in the dark and had no idea what the meeting was about.

He said it was unacceptable the way Carr was treated. He found it unbelievable that not one person approached Carr with concerns or deadlines for the two projects that three members cited. Wright did not think it was right to push out a director without reason or speaking with him first. He added that the qualities mentioned by Adkins and Charles are qualities that the current director possesses.

Thurman said that he would add to Wright's remarks if he thought the other Commissioners cared or felt sorry about their treatment of Carr, but he did not.

Barnes said that, if possible, she would like the next director to live in the city of Whitehall. She would also like a director who will speak up and hold their ground.

Quincel said there was not a whole lot she'd change from the current job description that was provided by HR, although she did not think that two years of experience was very much. She also provided some examples of job profiles/descriptions she found online and highlighted many phrases she especially liked. Quincel said that Whitehall is unique because its city charter calls for a Parks and Recreation Commission, and that collaboration and cooperation were very important to the structure of the department. She would like a new director to contribute to a team effort and be highly vested in the community.

Next, Feters asked HR Director Ann Lund to explain the hiring process. Lund asked that the Commission consider what they want the overall department to look like and she would help the Commission find the very best person to fulfill that vision. She said the current job description was outdated and needs to be revised. Lund asked the Commissioners to provide feedback and she will help craft a lawful job description (the city cannot require residency), she will post the job, and collect the applications. There are many options as to how the Commission and/or HR can screen the initial applications. The first step is to reach a consensus on the job description.

Thurman asked Lund if she would inform the Commission if a specific candidate was put forth by the Mayor. Lund answered, yes.

Lund threw out some of her own ideas and asked that members contact her with their own ideas too. Wright said he believed they should decide collectively, face to face, and then present their ideas to Lund. Quincel said she didn't think that would be the most efficient process.

Quincel moved, seconded by Adkins, for the Commission to email Lund their ideas/comments regarding the Parks and Recreation job description, then Lund could use that feedback to craft a draft job description for the Commission to review and vote on at the next meeting. On a roll call vote: Quincel – yes; Adkins – yes; Barnes – no; Charles – yes; Feters – no; Thurman – no; Wright – no. The motion failed 3 – 4.

Charles urged the group to make the task an immediate priority, discuss, and come to an agreement tonight.

Through discussion, the group agreed to add/amend several points:

- Require four years of experience (versus two years)
- Experience in parks and recreation (versus experience in parks and/or recreation)
- Experience operating a recreation, multi-use, and/or aquatics facility
- Experience with construction projects

Lund pointed out areas of "fluff" and redundancy in the current job description that she could clean up so that the final description is clear and concise. She asked if it would be helpful for the members to see

other Parks and Rec. Director job descriptions from Franklin County. Lund agreed to email these examples the next day.

Quincel moved, seconded by Charles, for the Commission (after the additional descriptions were received) to communicate via group emails to finalize details of the job description, communicate this information to Lund, and receive a revised draft from Lund to vote on in one week. On a roll call vote: Quincel – yes; Charles – yes; Barnes – yes; Fetters – yes; Wright – no.

Werner mentioned to Fetters that such a group email may be a violation of Ohio's open Meetings Act. Fetters asked that Lund get an opinion from the city attorney before any email communications begin.

There being no further business, Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, and the meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.

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

Chairperson