

WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

June 10, 2020

The online/virtual meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:04 PM by Chairman John Fetters.

On a roll call, in attendance: Mike Adkins, Chris Bolich, Tiffanie Charles, Fetters, Director Shannon Sorrell, and Shannon Werner. Absent: Mike McQuate, Katie Quincel, and Mark Schieber. Guests: Matt Golden and Bob Straits.

Charles moved, seconded by Bolich, to excuse the absent member and the motion carried 4 – 0.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

Poll guests: Bob Straits, representing WYAA stated that her was there to learn more about re-opening plans for the parks.

Adkins moved, seconded by Charles, to approve the meeting minutes for May 13, 2020 and the motion carried 4 – 0.

The Commission reviewed the following items: Invoices, Trust Fund, budget, and income for May 2020.

Director's Report:

Project updates: The restored Big Walnut tributary is being re-seeded after the floods and is almost wrapped up. The COCF13 project is still moving forward. EMH&T will be conducting the required freshwater mussel inventory next week. Most construction issues at the YMCA are resolved and the final pay app to Corna will be processed soon. A screening unit for the rooftop HVAC still needs done and supports need to be added to the dumpster enclosure. The YMCA of Central Ohio is looking to separate fitness from childcare to meet new standards. Whitehall is planned to host summer camp (opening in next 10 days). It will start with 30 kids; 70 is the goal. This means fitness will not open as planned until the camp is functioning well and meeting new Covid-related requirements. WCP shelters will be reserved for the YMCA campers Monday through Friday. Sorrell recommends keeping gates closed until we see how summer camp is running, then discuss opening it back up.

Staff participated in a Franklin County Public Health call yesterday and the main takeaway is that restrictions are lifting substantially. Playgrounds opened today. Signage will be added indicating that people "use at their own risk" and equipment is not sanitized. Caution tape has been removed from the benches and the Community Garden is now open.

Because there are no plans to rehire park rangers, staff recommends keeping them closed (for rentals) for the remainder of the year. They will serve as open shade structures, but picnic tables will not be returned in order to discourage fights over use.

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Restrooms will remain closed, except to youth sports. Two portajohns each will be going into JBP, WCP, Lamby Lane Park. Staff will keep them clean as usual, but will not be attempting to clean them hourly.

The Whitehall Senior Center remains closed per the most current public health order.

The City is waiting on orders that address outdoor entertainment, and expect restriction to be eased/lifted on June 19. Sorrell recommends canceling the park parties, but hosting 2-3 MIP starting July 12.

Youth sports – baseball/softball is now allowed. USSSA tournament in JBP were canceled through June, just as the City canceled its events. Staff recommends hosting the scheduled 7/10 tournament (if WYAA can support the operation) and hosting the first Music in the Park concert that weekend.

Bob Straits said the WYAA board is meeting tomorrow to discuss opening the league prior to the tournament and assisting with the tournament. Straits agreed to contact Sorrell as soon as the league has made a decision.

Youth football league signups are to begin in JBP on Saturday. While contact sports are still shut down – WBFL is hoping restrictions will be lifted by the fall.

FCPH is now allowing Splashpads to open. Sorrell is working with the Mayor on a staffing plan to reopen the Splashpad July 11 with modified hours. The intent is to make this a true “parks reopening weekend” with the USSSA tournament, Music in the Park, and the Splashpad opening. Staff is exploring potential new operating procedures. Possible examples include online signups for families and guests, maybe a group up to 8, with 5 groups at a time, close and sanitize between groups. This will not be advertised until plans are final – and then we will see what happens and adjust operations as needed.

Adkins asked – if we increase staffing – will we rehire laid off employees before hiring new? Sorrell said, yes if at all possible.

There being no further business, Charles moved, seconded by Adkins, and the meeting adjourned at 6:31 PM.

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

Chairman John Feters

Prepared by:

Shannon Werner