

WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

September 2, 2020

The online/virtual meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:02 PM by Chairman John Fetters.

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

Quincel moved, seconded by Adkins, to excuse the absent members and the motion carried 6 – 0.

There were no guests to poll.

Quincel moved, seconded by Adkins, to approve the meeting minutes for August 12, 2020 and the motion carried 5– 0 with Schieber abstaining.

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

Director's Report:

The City's revised 2020 revenue projections are better than expected. While major projects (like the dog park) are still on hold, small projects are moving forward. These include: a new concession roof, porta john building in WCP, creek projects, partial JBP survey, and Lamby Lane Park paving. The department does not have plans to add staff at this time. As such, there are no plans to unlock the gates to the lower level of WCP because, without diligent monitoring, the area becomes an "attractive nuisance" due to its seclusion. For residents who have made direct inquiries, the offer has been made to accommodate pre-arranged access by request.

Staff will be conducting thorough walk-throughs of all the parks to make project lists and prepare the 2021 budget request. Staff will also begin working on 5 and 10-year capital improvement plans. The 2021 budget request will contain fewer events and programs than in the past. The Teen Employment initiative will be on hold for another year, but other programs, concerts, 1-2 events, and Norton Crossing programs will be included. Sorrell asked that commissioners please message her with priorities for the 2021 budget.

Splashpad attendance and operations have been good. Staff may recommend a similar opening hours for 2021, and maybe even scheduling time slots again. Bolich agreed that if Covid-19 is still an issue next summer, then an abbreviated schedule would be fine, otherwise he would like to see the facility open full time.

Parks and Recreation submitted the most recent article in the City's column of the Whitehall News.

Commission members can also expect to see legislation introduced soon for the required deed restriction on the Creek Access Project.

The WYYA season has concluded and it went very well. Bob Straits and the WYAA board did a great job quickly putting on a free program for the City's ball players. Youth football is getting up and running now, too. The department has emphasized to the league the need to follow Covid-related regulations and to ask for help when they need it.

The state has recently released the guidelines for the reopening of Senior Centers (which will be allowed as of September 21). The restrictions are very, very stringent and it has been determined that the Senior Club will not be able to run their traditional programming during this initial re-opening phase. A call with the area's Parks and Recreation departments and FCPH is scheduled for 9/17 for clarification on several points.

The department has recently received clarification from FCPH regarding public basketball courts – and the City is cleared to reopen them. The courts would be unmonitored, and it is also not feasible to enforce social distancing or face coverings. Sorrell recommends trying to reopen them, with the addition of new signage (ie: no pick-up games, play with your household). Fetters suggested that the signs include a warning that hoops could come back down if social distancing rules are ignored. There were no objections. Sorrell pointed out that this is not much different than reopening the playgrounds – it just serves a different age group. Sorrell will loop the PD and the Mayor in on the decision and work on signage.

Sorrell informed the group that Marlon "Q" Nelson, the local youth advocate who organized the basketball tournament in 2018, passed away recently.

Matt Golden said the waterline replacement at WCP is complete and solves a 27-year old problem; it will save many headaches for the crew.

FSWCD filmed mussel survey in the Big Walnut Creek last week and WYHS had their cross country meet last weekend, too.

Lastly Sorrell mentioned that the administration has been flexible with working parents of school-age at this time. The department is exploring fall programming options, to be led by Cory Ollie. The Rockwell North American bench will be installed in WCP soon. The project organizer wants a dedication ceremony – but due to current restrictions on gathering sizes, we may do an online ceremony.

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There being no further business, Bolich moved, seconded by Fetters, and the meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM.

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

Chairman John Fetters

Prepared by:

Shannon Werner