

## **WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**January 26, 2017**

Mayor Kim Maggard stepped forward and administered the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission Oath of Office to Commissioner Mike Adkins.

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:08 PM by Chairman John Feters. In attendance: Mike Adkins, Kyra Barnes, Chris Bolich, Tiffanie Charles, Feters, Katie Quincel, Director Shannon Sorrell, and Shannon Werner. Guests: Economic Development Director Zach Woodruff, and Councilman Wes Kantor. Absent: Zach Wright.

Charles moved, seconded by Bolich, to excuse Wright and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Sorrell opened the floor to nominations for chairperson. Charles nominated John Feters for chairperson, seconded by Adkins. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed and a voice vote was taken. All members answered in the affirmative with Feters abstaining and John Feters was re-elected the chairperson of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission for 2017.

Next, Feters opened the floor to nominations for a vice-chairperson. Barnes nominated Adkins, seconded by Charles. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed and a voice vote was taken. All members voted in the affirmative with Adkins abstaining and Mike Adkins was elected vice-chairperson of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission for 2017.

The Commission agreed to continue holding regular Commission meetings on the fourth Thursday of every month at 6 PM.

As the last item of reorganization, Werner explained that, in consultation with the City Attorney's office, it was not necessary to amend the rules of procedure in order to receive meeting materials via email. The present Commission members confirmed for staff that they would like to receive meeting materials via email until further notice.

There were no guests to poll for questions or comments.

Barnes moved, seconded by Charles, to approve the minutes for the December 8, 2016 regular meeting and the December 15, 2016 special meeting and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Next the Commission reviewed (and did not vote) on the following items: employees' wages/personal service for November 25, 2016 through January 19, 2017; bills and refunds through December 31, 2016; and the Trust Fund, budget, and income through December 31, 2016.

Economic Development Director Zach Woodruff began his presentation of project updates. He informed the members that the YMCA/Whitehall stakeholder meeting is scheduled for February 22 at the Activity Center. The Commissioners, WCS officials, business and city leaders, and community groups

are invited. The conversation will revolve around programming based on the extensive research that the Y has gathered.

EMH&T is still working on the plans for the drive and access road in Whitehall Community Park. The plan should be ready to bid at the end of March/beginning of April.

The Etna Rd. Project will be ready to bid mid-February. Woodruff discussed parts of the plan that have been refined since his last conversation with the Commission. The bioswales will be edged with stacked stone (for easy maintenance). From the top of the stone border to the top of the mulch in the basin will be 12-18 inches. This should discourage pedestrians from walking through the bioswales.

There will be push buttons to activate the LED-lit crosswalks. The landscaped medians will help funnel pedestrian traffic to two improved crosswalks.

The city has allowed the department to requisition \$5000 from the 2016 budget to plant trees within John Bishop Park. The trees will likely line the sidewalk that runs north/south in the southern portion of the park and will complement the overall project landscaping.

While the park's parking lots will not need to close, there will be a very real impact to Etna Rd. during the construction period this summer. The city will be conducting a public awareness campaign once there is a definite schedule. The project will take approximately 180 days to complete.

Bolich asked if the crosswalk signs could be modified to accommodate signage/banners for community announcements. Woodruff said they wouldn't want to make any modifications that could potentially distract a driver at a designated crosswalk. He suggested that extra poles on the street (like on Yearling Road) may be a better option.

As the Commission was just presented with the Whitehall Bantam Football League's annual report at the last meeting, a discussion of the report was made an agenda item for this January meeting. There were no questions or concerns. Bolich informed the Commission that his resignation from the league's leadership will be effective March 1, 2017.

#### Director's Report:

Sorrell, eight days into the job, reiterated to the Commission that she is available for one-on-one meetings with any of the Commissioners.

Sorrell asked for the Commission's support of the department's efforts to clean out unneeded items through disposal, auction, trade-in, or donation as City policy permits.

Sorrell then talked about her top 5 priorities for the department and their progress.

1. Splash Pad: Parks and Recreation has officially resumed responsibility for the project's execution. The contractor is three into weeks construction and Vortex is scheduled to install equipment in early February. Some significant change orders have been identified and Sorrell

has been in near constant communication with the contractors and the Mayor working towards solutions.

Additionally, the Commission needs to consider (perhaps in the form of a small working group) policies, procedures, emergency plans, suppliers, etc. Some staff members will need to obtain the necessary operator certifications. Sorrell said she is concerned the money that was budgeted to operate/staff the splash pad will not be sufficient and she will have a better picture of the operational needs by the next meeting.

Bolich asked Kantor he would be able to assist the department with additional funding if necessary. Kantor answered that Council is aware of the challenges and will work with Parks and Recreation.

Sorrell has also met with Bret Henninger, Whitehall's IT systems administrator, regarding security for the site. He will put together the best options over the next couple of weeks. Again, the \$10,000 that was budgeted for security cameras was meant as a place holder and may not be sufficient.

2. Whitehall Community Park: While the YMCA Stakeholder meeting is not scheduled until February 22, staff had an impromptu meeting with some of the Y's people when they came to take another look at the building. Sorrell was very encouraged by the model they are suggesting which is a lot of social equity programming focused on teens, pre-teens, and families, and not at all the traditional model. Because of this, The Activity Center and programming will not be a priority until after this meeting takes place. If the city does indeed forge a partnership with the Y, Sorrell will ask how we can partner over the next 12-18 months until the building launches.

Sorrell asked for support to remove the shelter and playground at the north end of WCP. These are both aged structure slated for removal/replacement. They will be cut off during the summer by the construction of the road improvement and pose as an attractive nuisance. They Commission agreed. Any parts of the playground that can be repurposed will be.

Sorrell will be meeting with Metro Parks to start a conversation about the best way to "re-meadow" portions of the lower level. Commissioners are welcome to attend also. She asked for clarification from the Commission if meadows are the direction they'd like to go. Quincel said she like to see all organized sports activities to be redirected to JBP or elsewhere. Bolich confirmed that DSCC softball league are integrating into Columbus' league this year. Another meeting with MORPC is being put on the books for March to discuss connectivity and the greenway trail through WCP. Any meadows, green turf space, and future greenway trails should all be planned at the same time.

3. Music in the Park: Sorrell, based on feedback from attendees and staff, would like to move the start time to 6 PM (from 7 PM) as this will end the event before sunset and make it more family-friendly. The Commission agreed. Sorrell has asked Class Acts to put together a diverse lineup

and include several perennial favorites. Sorrell will look into the possibility of extending the series for an extra week or two and adding some family-friendly activities.

4. Ranger Program: The original proposal called for rangers to use a green truck, but Sorrell would like to purchase a white truck (which can be identified as a ranger truck with magnets) so as to keep it completely versatile within the department's fleet. The Commission agreed. She will also explore cross training the rangers on the splash pad.
5. Armory: As of now, it is looking to be a 120-150 day project. The roof on the garage and a portion of the drill room (old kitchen) will be replaced during the construction period too.

On to old/new business, Barnes pointed out that kids are removing bolts from the backboards (presumably in an effort to steal the backboards). Matt Golden asked for permission to weld the bolts and the Commission agreed.

Sorrell also asked if, on the empty portion of the court, staff could line a pickle ball court. Pickle ball is the fastest growing sport in Ohio and played exclusively by adults and would put adults next to the basketball players.

Bolich noted that the concrete is bad on the east side of the main JBP shelter house. Golden said it was on his radar.

Lastly, Quincel extended her thanks to Feters, Werner, and Golden for maintaining the department for the last few months.

Bolich expressed concern that Council appropriated only a third of the department's requested utility budget. Sorrell said she would look into it.

Bolich suggested the Commission draft a letter, to be signed by its members, to the schools urging them to ask the Whitehall Tee Ball League to comply with the same financial requirements the department requests. Three members said they could not sign such a letter due to conflicts of interest. Sorrell agreed she would consult with the Mayor as a first step.

There being no further business, Quincel moved, seconded by Charles, and the meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

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

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Chairperson