

WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

February 23, 2017

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:08 PM by Chairperson John Feters. In attendance: Tiffanie Charles, Feters, Katie Quincel, Zach Wright, Director Shannon Sorrell, and Shannon Werner. Guest: Councilperson Wes Kantor. Absent: Mike Adkins, Chris Bolich, and Kyra Thorpe.

Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, to excuse the absent members and the motion carried 4 – 0. Bolich arrived to the meeting at 6:11 PM.

There being no guests to poll, Quincel moved, seconded by Charles, to approve the minutes for the January 26, 2017 regular meeting and the motion carried 4 – 0.

The Commission reviewed the following items: employees' wages/personal service for 1/20/17 through 2/16/17; bills and refunds through 1/31/17; and the Trust Fund, budget, and income through 1/31/17.

Director's Report:

Sorrell briefly highlighted several items:

- The department will promote WYAA as soon as the league provides their season's information.
- Armory demo/reno project: waiting on the City of Columbus to approve the water service plans. The Whitehall Historical Society will be taking pictures ahead of the demolition (which should take about 2 weeks).
- Etna Rd. project is expected to go to bid in 4 – 6 weeks. The WCP roadway project is expected to go to bid at the end of April or May.
- Staff is exploring options for recreational software, specifically MindBody, which is currently used by the YMCA.
- Music in the Park: a contract for 9 dates, of a diverse lineup, is expected at any time.
- All are invited to attend the State of the Community address on March 22, 2017.
- Staff met with officials from Gahanna and Columbus regarding the (north/south) Big Walnut Trail which could potentially connect the entire Eastside corridor. The first step in the process is to conduct a feasibility study to build the trail between Pizarro Park and East Main Street. A feasibility study would also allow the cities to take advantage of the ample grant/funding opportunities for trail construction. Columbus proposed that the 3 cities jointly fund such a study. Columbus staff would take the lead and bear the greatest portion of the cost, as well.
- Staff will be completing an application for a Nature Works grant to build new play structures at Whitehall Community Park.
- We will be adding Matt Golden and Shannon Werner to the department's OPRA membership.
- The northern edge of WCP, near the railroad bridge, needs a new safety fence which is ideally sited about 20 feet back from its present location.

- In 1998, lead remediation was completed on the lower level of WCP due to an old shooting range. Staff will confirm the remediation is appropriate for trail building.
- The remaining shelter on WCP's upper level has been removed. The play structure will stay until there are firm plans for its replacement.
- Staff will be applying for a KaBOOM grant. This will be for a 1-day community build of a new play structure at Norton Field Park.
- The department found a great deal on a new truck and will take possession next week.
- Charles will organize the purchase of some nice polo shirts for the Commission for July 4th parade and other city events.
- The department will be participating in the WCS Little Rams Roundup on April 6th. Commissioners may need to help staff the event.

Next, Sorrell led a longer discussion on the splashpad. While the project is moving forward and on schedule, there have been some problems managing the various contracts and problems as they arise. As a result, the City has hired a Project Manager to fill this need. This allows Sorrell to get to the business of developing procedures, policies, hiring, etc.

Sorrell made the Commission aware of several issues that have arisen with the project:

- The project was bid without a water service plan. There is a change order pending for this.
- The bid specs for the shade sails were unclear due to error/omission.
- The fence that was spec'd in the bid was a residential, not commercial, fence.
- The lockers in the bid specs are for indoor use only.
- The dome pack is sited right at the entry, which necessitates moving the fence to improve the flow and aesthetics of the entry.
- The holes that were needed to install all the mechanicals were not part of anyone's contract. The service department ultimately dug the holes.

Security cameras: To do this project well, the cost will be approximately \$18k. There will be 7 cameras (can be expanded to 16) that cover the splashpad and the basketball courts. The live feed will go through the PD and recordings will be held for 30 days on the server.

Sorrell said the current recommendation for the splashpad's name is, "The John Bishop Park Water Park." She asked for members to email her further suggestions, but the Commission agreed that "The Splashpad" was a preferable name that allowed for sponsorship opportunities/naming rights in the future.

Sorrell submitted a staffing proposal that would:

1. Allow daycares to visit twice a week (pre-registered, pre-paid at \$3-\$5 per child, and during special morning hours).
2. Open gates to residents at Noon, fee = \$0 per resident.
3. Open gates to non-residents at 1 PM, fee = \$4 - \$5 per non-resident.

This proposal takes it through Labor Day, and that is based on the current budget. An extended season can be re-evaluated in August.

No one voiced opposition to the proposal.

This proposal is in response to the City's desire to serve residents first and at no cost. This may cause crowding issues and a maximum capacity will need to be observed at all times. While we will develop some system to check residency, it will still depend partly on the "honor system". Also, only children/users will be charged, adults are admitted free. The suggested age of users is 10 and under.

Further staffing plans include:

1. Sending all current full-time staff to certify as CPO (Certified Pool Operator). (This is an expense not currently in the budget.)
2. Hire hybrid Ranger/splashpad CPO part-time year round positions to support opening, closing, and emergencies at splashpad. This position will act as an overall park manager on evenings and weekends.
3. Train attendants to run gate and monitor space. Lifeguard certified workers will be paid a higher rate.

Bolich inquired about an AED on site. Sorrell said, while this was also not in the budget, staff would find a way to make this work. It was also discussed that, with a Ranger on duty, it was worth trying to keep the flush restrooms open.

Sorrell explained that ideally the department would have the presence of a full-time staff person on evenings and weekends to support these new operations. And while a new hire is not in the 2017 budget, the need still persists. She recommends that we implement rotating on-call shifts. This seems preferable to mandating that a 3-person staff start covering evenings and weekends when that has never been the expectation.

All members verbalized their support to implement rotating on-call shifts. If this plan proves not viable, the Commission and staff can revisit other options. The department can certainly request another full-time position in the 2018 budget.

Sorrell also reviewed revised pay rates for parks maintenance and seasonal positions, all of which can be covered in the current budget.

Lastly, Sorrell presented a plan for a new City of Columbus Park. It would be a linear corridor park that borders Columbus on one side and Whitehall on the other. This park will reach 17,000 residents in a much underserved geographical area. Columbus is seeking Whitehall's support in their acquisition and development plans (which will come at no cost to Whitehall).

Bolich moved, seconded by Charles, to support Columbus Rec. and Parks and their Eastmore Green Line Project and the motion carried 5 – 0.

There being no further business, Charles moved, seconded by Bolich, and the meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.

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

Chairperson