

WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

March 23, 2017

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:09 PM by Vice-Chairman Mike Adkins. In attendance: Adkins, Chris Bolich, Tiffanie Charles, Katie Quincel, Director Shannon Sorrell, and Shannon Werner. Guest: Ken Stover. Absent: John Feters, Kyra Thorpe, and Zach Wright.

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

Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, to approve the minutes for the February 23, 2017 meeting and the motion carried 4 – 0.

The Commission reviewed the following items: employees' wages/ personal service for 2/17/17 through 3/16/17; bills and refunds through 2/28/17; and the Trust Fund, budget, and income through 2/28/17.

Quincel asked if the department could possibly use the C. Ray building for Yoga to avoid class cancellations due to school events. Also staff needs to look into a summer home for Yoga classes, too.

Sorrell mentioned too, that it may appear that we are going through our budget quickly, but in actuality the department is spending on budgeted line items and moving through planned projects. She does not intend to save the budget until the fall in case she needs to deal with unplanned costs.

Director's Report:

Sorrell proposed a Liability Waiver and Photo Release, the City Attorney made some changes, and that is what has been submitted to the Commission for approval. This waiver will be on the new MindBody software. Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, to approve the Liability Waiver and the motion carried 4 – 0.

Next, Sorrell discussed the updated Field Rental Policy. While pricing did not change, an organization's deposit will be retained for cancellations. Organizations will also be charged for additional portable restroom units as necessary, and the department will handle their rental. The department also retains all rights on concessions. The new policy further clarifies existing rules and has also been approved by the City Attorney.

Charles moved, seconded by Bolich, to approve the updated Athletic Field Rental Policy and the motion carried 4 – 0.

Bolich asked Sorrell to double check if youth leagues are covered by the city's umbrella policy.

Staff will be updating the city's website with the City Guide's new language. COSI Camp is finalized and will be held at the end of July. Bolich asked that compliant youth league information be updated too.

Job openings have been posted for the Park Coordinator, and splash pad staff. Sorrell expects to hire 12-15 part-time seasonal employees. Council approved the new positions without discussion, but we still need to amend the department's number of authorized positions.

Whitehall and Gahanna will be co-hosting a Certified Pool Operator's class. This will save the department money and all full time staff will be participating.

MindBody software is up and running. Staff will send the Commissioner's a link to try it out shortly. It may be possible to start registering families at the Little Rams Round Up. Sorrell asked Commissioners to sign up to work the event and encouraged the youth sports leagues to attend.

As the Commission has expressed a desire to be more visible in the community, Sorrell also encouraged Commissioners to introduce some of the bands for the Music in the Park and perhaps say a few words about the Parks and Recreation Commission. There will be food trucks at four concerts, and the Lions Club and Hawaiian Shaved Ice will be serving the other five. Charles suggested there be a Spanish translator for the intro to the Yumbambe concert.

Other items the department is working on: grant funding for a Norton Field playground, tree planting and pickle ball in John Bishop Park, and a safety fence at Whitehall Community Park.

Also, Sorrell is recommending that she and Werner relocate to the Armory (once the addition is finished) during the Activity Center renovation. This will allow Sorrell to be on-site with the entire staff (which is important for setting tone and culture) and be close to the Splashpad during its first year of operation.

Next, the Commission discussed the proposed hours, rates, and operating rules for the Splashpad. Two small changes since the last discussion are 1) Closing at 6pm on Sundays, to focus staff resources on Music in the Park and 2) Opening to non-residents at 2 PM (per the Administration's request).

Staff still recommends that 10 years old be the upper age limit allowed for Splashpad users. This is due to limited capacity (2000 SF and there are no longer "zones") and because 10 year olds (still elementary aged) play and interact better with toddlers than 11 and 12 year olds do. Sorrell brings this up because some members of City Council have voiced their displeasure with not allowing tweens.

Charles, based on her personal experience, agrees that 11 and 12 year olds do not play the same as younger kids. She believes a 10 and under ages limit will provide a safer environment for everyone.

Staff added that, if we are not seeing the expected crowds, it is certainly possible and preferable to expand the age limit later, or host "teen nights" where the budget allows.

Quincel agreed that 10 years old is the logical, natural cut-off, as most 10 year olds attend elementary school, and 11 and 12 year olds attend middle school.

Quincel moved, seconded by Charles, to approve the recommended Splashpad hours, rates, and operating rules and the motion carried 4 - 0.

Sorrell shared the flyer she designed, which includes Music in the Park, COSI Camp, Food Truck and July 4th festivals, Yoga, and Splashpad information. The flyers will be ready for the Little Rams Round Up and will go out to schools. Bolich asked if youth sports leagues info could be added to the flyer. Sorrell said she would try to make it work.

Charles asked if kiosks could be installed in the parks as another way to disseminate information.

Sorrell also reminded the Commission that an owner's rep (from EMH&T) has been managing the construction side of the Splashpad and he has been a huge asset. We are starting to get nervous about the contractor meeting their completion deadline due to contractor delays and change orders the city has made. It is possible the Splashpad will not be ready to open Memorial Day weekend.

Next, under old/new business, WBFL president Ken Stover addressed the Commission and presented the league's payment for their 2016 field light usage.

Bolich asked Werner to compile stats of field light usage for the last 2 – 3 years.

Stover also had several maintenance requests. He asked for more dirt to be added to the football field's crown and to be reseeded again. WBFL expects their season to run from July 5th to November 1st. He agreed to send the department a game schedule when he has one ready. He also pointed out that the press box needs painted, but the league does not have a safe way to do it. Sorrell said the department could certainly get that done, though it may not be until fall. Sorrell added that she'd like to have a future discussion about the placement/aesthetics of their storage unit.

Lastly, Stover said the league would like to discuss receiving assistance from the city to purchase a new score board. Adkins said he has some information about a program to purchase new lights and an LED scoreboard that he will pass along. Stover also asked if the league could pay zero toward their light usage, and he made a request to permanently move the goal posts.

Sorrell said the department is working on a long-term comprehensive project list that aligns with the city's strategic plans. She said his requests will be added to the list but can't promise how it will be prioritized, although the department will certainly look at knocking out smaller projects that can be covered by other cost-savings throughout the year.

Sorrell was also able to provide a small update regarding the YMCA progress. The city has met with the Y and Gro (the architectural design firm) and discussed what a full spectrum of offerings will look like and how the design of the Activity Center's remodel will serve those program needs. For example, the basement can be utilized for teen programming and installing movable walls in the ballroom.

She reminded the Commission that there is always room for the department to develop and maintain a programming niche. Presently, the department is using a portion of the 2017 instructor budget to fund an extension of the current YMCA program at the High School. This is a study table program and now they will be able to stay at the High School for organized recreation for an extra hour Monday through Thursday, thus fulfilling a need identified by WCS staff.

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Lastly, Sorrell asked the Commissioners if they would be open to rescheduling the regular May meeting to allow staff more time to focus on the Splashpad opening. The present members agreed to reschedule the regular May meeting for Monday May 15th, 2017.

There being no further business, Charles moved, seconded by Bolich and the meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.

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

Chairperson