

WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

April 25, 2020

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 4:11 PM by Chairman John Feters.

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

Charles moved, seconded by Bolich, to excuse the absent member and the motion passed 6-0. Schieber subsequently joined the meeting at 4:20 PM.

At 4:12 Quincel moved, seconded by Adkins, to adjourn to executive session pursuant ORC 121.22 (G)(1) to discuss the employment of a public employee, and the motion carried 6 -0.

At 4:28 PM, Feters said, "We are now back on the record."

Citing the present economic stressors on the City and the department, Bolich moved, seconded by Schieber, to suspend Commission members' meeting stipends until such a time as the pandemic passes and/or financial certainty is restored to the City. The motion carried 7-0.

Sorrell then when on to provide departmental updates, all made necessary given the current state-wide COVID-19-related restrictions, coupled with new budgetary limitations. All Park and Recreation programs, including T.E.A.M., are canceled through June. July and August activities are still on the books although it seems highly unlikely events and programs will be allowed in July or August. However, she explained it is still easier to cancel a few weeks out, rather than re-book if circumstances do change.

The first May softball tournament has been cancelled, and the department has declined to schedule additional tournaments for the end of the summer. It also seems unlikely that there will be a little league (WYAA) season for 2020, and the City has informed the league they will continue to follow the Governor's recommendations.

Sorrell is looking into purchasing, or renting, and electro-static cleaner to disinfect parks facilities and supplies. At this time, the department is having trouble finding a supplier.

Sorrell and Werner, with the assistance of several other City employees, will be conducting wellness check on all the Senior Center members via phone.

Sorrell also plans to ask the OPWC to defer the City's COCF Round 13 award (to build 2 pedestrian access points on the Big Walnut Creek in Whitehall Community Park) until 2021.

McQuate inquired about the state of the Whitehall Community Park YMCA.

Sorrell explained that almost immediately following the Governor's stay-at-home orders, the YMCA of Central Ohio laid off 85% of its staff. Liz Zingale is the only remaining staff member at the Whitehall

branch. The organization has no income at this time aside from donations. Several branches have been converted into shelters and summer camps (a major revenue source) also seem unlikely.

Adkins informed the Commission that the WYAA is donating funds to order banner portraits of the WYHS seniors to hang on Yearling Rd. The WYAA also donated \$500 to Center of Hope food bank.

McQuate asked, if the dog park is to be tabled for another year- and he expressed doubts that it would even be funded in 2021 – has the department explored other options for the property? Sorrell said that other options have not been discussed, but new suggestions and ideas were very welcome.

In other updates, Parks maintenance staff has cleaned up the Doney Rd. property, which now officially belongs to the City, including tree removal. The neighbors are happy. The department made the decision to close the community gardens. In the event that the department is able to run events/programs in July, it will be looking for volunteer help with little notice and will be reaching out to Commission members to do this. July 4th related events have not yet been cancelled. Maintenance staff are flexing their hours as they cannot get overtime right now. Shannon Werner is lending a lot of help for the City's meal distribution program. This program is, at a minimum, distributing 350 meals every evening Monday – Friday. It has operated for 2 weeks and will go on for at least 2 more weeks. The program is funded by the World Central Kitchen. Werner also procured an additional food donation from Bob Evan Farms.

There being no further business, Charles moved, seconded by Bolich, and the meeting adjourned at 4:52 PM.

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

Chairman John Fetters

Prepared by:

Shannon Werner