

## **WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**June 27, 2018**

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 5:57 PM by John Fethers. On a roll call, the following members were in attendance: Mike Adkins, Chris Bolich, Tiffanie Charles, John Fethers, Katie Quincel, Zach Wright, Director Shannon Sorrell, and Shannon Werner. Guests: Councilman Wes Kantor, Bob Straits, and Matt Golden.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those assembled.

Charles moved, seconded by Bolich, to excuse Mark Schieber and the motion carried 6 – 0. Schieber subsequently arrived at 6:04pm.

Bob Straits, President of the Whitehall Youth Athletic Association, addressed the Commission to discuss recent problems the department was having with outside tournaments/ field rentals. WYAA helps host these tournaments and it raises a lot of money for the league through concession sales. The league does this on a volunteer basis and the lack of gratitude from the department coupled with complaints regarding trash, etc. from the department recently caused some conflict.

Adkins addressed Straits directly to express his appreciation for the league and Straits personally for all their hard work. Sorrell concurred and said the department will continue to work to make sure there are solutions moving forward.

Wright moved, seconded by Quincel, to approve the minutes from the May 9, 2018 meeting and the motion carried 7 – 0.

The Commission reviewed the following items: Employees' wages/ personal service for 4/29/18 through 6/9/18; bills and refunds for May 2018; and Trust Fund, budget, and income for May 2018.

Director's Report:

Sorrell reviewed the list of programs and events for the department and their participation numbers.

The department has added several new events since the last meeting: A movie in JBP on 7/27/18 and a 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament in JBP on 7/29/18. These events are intended to bookend the 7/28/18 Food Truck and Fun Festival for a complete weekend of city-wide entertainment.

Additionally, National Night Out (traditionally held at the Police Department) will be at Whitehall Community Park and will also serve as the park's "re-opening" and the playground's ribbon cutting.

Monthly programs for the Senior citizens have been planned out for the next several months, as well.

Bolich asked who is running the basketball event. Sorrell explained that a recent WCS graduate, Marlon Nelson, approached the department to rent the facilities. In order to make this a safe and successful

event, the department is planning this program with Nelson to make it a fully partnered event. As a partnered event, police presence can be covered by the Safe Parks grant and the department can help maintain greater oversight and control. Additionally, the goal of this event is to conduct outreach and present positive alternatives to violence and drugs.

Sorrell will present a full update of Summer Camps once it is complete and there are full participation numbers. Partnering with the TANF (YMCA) camp has been wise because general public sign-ups have been pretty low.

An update on the work at Whitehall Community Park: Very rainy weather has delayed construction, but the good news is the cost is coming in under bid. With this savings, a fence is being added between the road and path on the hill to the lower level. Conduit has been run to the lower level for future security cameras.

The wildflowers are starting to bloom in the lower level, the play structures are all installed, extensive honeysuckle removal is almost complete, shelter houses are in fabrication, a sledding hill has been cleared, and we are planning to install a gate to control road access to the lower level.

Savings from the parking lot paving will be applied to finishing the interior of the Armory addition. Sorrell shared updated renderings of the addition that will now accommodate: a fully functioning department office, breakroom, restrooms, second-story storage space, and garage space for the equipment necessary to run weekend operations. Once engineered plans are complete, they can be approved by the building department and work can begin/ be completed.

The installation of security cameras at the north end of JBP were delayed by weather, and can hopefully resume in August when the season slows.

The department will be participating in a Parks Passport program organized by Franklin County Public Health along with a nine other suburbs, to promote health and wellness in public parks.

Attendance at the Splashpad has been steady on hot days and very poor on other days. Operationally, it is running well. The seasonal staff is taking care of all facility and ground maintenance, Andy Duncan is handling the mechanicals.

Parks and Rec. received a \$495k grant to restore the creek tributary in WCP. The matching funds will be appropriated by Council. In October, we will hear about the COTF and RTP grant awards.

The department still intends to create designated smoking areas in JBP as soon as time permits. We are buying a nice temporary park sign (that will match the others) for WCP. The Senior Center roof has been replaced. The fascia boards on shelters 1 and 2 have been replaced.

Zach Wright inquired as to the status of the cleanup of the golf dome site and when it will partially return to park land. Sorrell said we will begin work on the tributary restoration in the fall, but we won't know exactly what will be designated park land until development plans are final which may be a couple of years out.

Finally, the Commission discussed problems the department has experienced hosting large softball tournaments and the unintended conflict with WYAA this has caused. USSSA contracts WYAA (for a very small sum) to manage trash and cleanup during their tournaments. When USSSA's trash/cleanup plan is violated, the department holds USSSA responsible. The department has had emails, phone calls, and an in-person meeting to address the ongoing issues. USSSA has threatened to hold their tournaments elsewhere, which would result in a devastating loss in concession revenue for the league. Moving forward, the department intends to require the tournament organizer to pay for a dumpster as part of their base fees. And after a review, we will likely increase field rental rates for 2019 too.

Sorrell also clarified that there have been no problems with the actual youth league, their operations, or playing season this year.

There being no further business, Quincel moved, seconded by Schieber, and the meeting adjourned at 7:18pm

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

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Chairperson

Prepared by:

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Shannon Werner