

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Regular meeting: Monday, May 14, 2001 at City Hall. The meeting was held in the Veteran's Room at C

Meeting was called to order at 7:25 p.m. By roll call, members present: John Walsh, Beverly Moran, Al I Mikos, Karen Izzo and Edward Handi. Matt Cripps was excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell arrived shortly after roll call. Athletic Director Kenneth absent. Ronald Culmo from the Public Works Department was also present.

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Without objection, the agenda was accepted, as presented.

Public portion:

James Mascolo, representing Derby Pop Warner questioned whether the picnic grove area can receive m maintenance at this time in preparation of the fall football season.

Mr. Culmo stated that the area was loamed and seeded early in the spring but due to the extended cold sp the seeds did not germinate. Now soccer is playing, eliminating the chance for seed to grow. As the area .

watering is cumbersome requiring water trucks to provide the source of water as the water pressure at the low. Soccer will be over in June and work will be done at that time but with the brief period between spring programs, the new growth will not have time to establish and the improvements will be very short lived.

Mr. Mascolo questioned whether an alternative location could be provided if conditions are poor at the picnic grounds. He noted the great difficulties and health issues playing on a field that represents a dust bowl rather than a picnic ground. He suggested the outfield of the softball field.

Members appreciated and understood his concerns. Being that there is limited space due to the lack of space, all the areas are being overused and showing extreme wear. With the chronic overuse of all the existing fields, all are developing very poor playing conditions. Unfortunately, until additional fields are found, one solution is limiting field use, which is a solution the Commission would greatly regret but which may become necessary. The Commission indicated that as the fall season approaches, scheduling will be prepared and all avenues will be explored to provide the Pop Warner program and all the programs with areas to play but the true solution will only be found with additional fields being provided which would then allow for the proper and necessary maintenance of all fields.

Approval of minutes:

A motion was made by David Mikos and second by Karen Izzo. Move to accept the minutes of the meeting held on April 9, 2001. All in favor. Motion carried.

Correspondences:

Nothing was presented.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell stated that Babe Ruth will be starting games next week. They have been practicing for the past few weeks.

Girl's softball has started practicing. They are on the large field at Bradley School and Ryan softball Field. Intermediate School softball program is not running this year, due to lack of participation, this has provided more time on the fields.

There was a conflict at the picnic grove involving the Soccer program. The picnic grove was reserved for a private party and this was not reflected on the Soccer practice schedule resulting in both parties seeking to use the field. The scheduling of the party was relayed to the Soccer program more than a month ago. Mr. O'Connell noted that on the first weekend in June, the grove is also reserved for a party and this too was relayed to the Soccer program at the start of their season. While there was discontent over this confusion, the scheduling has been reviewed and corrected for the Soccer program. Mr. O'Connell indicated that the Soccer program expressed that the Recreation Department did not adequately and equally provide for their needs. Mr. O'Connell noted, for the record, that the Commission will attempt to obtain alternate fields while the Bradley School field was being repaired. Public Works provides services for both the spring and fall programs. Mr. Culmo noted that the fields are lined for soccer twice throughout both seasons whereas the football programs only require nine times throughout the fall season.

Mr. O'Connell indicated that he was approached by the Soccer Director to explore various areas at Bradley outside of the field area where maintenance was recently done. Soccer was looking for a small area to allow for the younger players. An area by the right outfield of the softball field looked promising and was being investigated. Apparently a sanitary sewer problem was occurring in this area, which was being investigated. Mr. O'Connell noted that he was contacted over health concerns with the youth playing in the area, but he wanted it clear that he did not approve such play but rather, this use was in the planning stage only.

Questions arose as to the status of the Bradley School field maintenance repairs. Chairman Walsh noted that the agreement discussed and voted upon by the Commission last fall was that the field would be repaired with the understanding that this action would impact Soccer's spring season. Subsequently, questions have arisen as to the interpretation of the agreement. Chairman Walsh suggested that in the future any such agreements should be ratified by authorized directors of the program. As the timeframe for completion of the project is nearing, he suggested that the Soccer program director and the contractor, Marcucio Gardens, be asked to attend the next meeting to provide an update.

Members discussed unauthorized use of fields occurring on many of the facilities. It was noted that an advertisement has been using Bradley's large field. Soccer is also occurring at Ryan baseball field. The Commission was concerned that use has to be discouraged because of the limited number of fields. The mission should be to provide fields for those seeking to play. But considering the demand by authorized users, it was felt that additional signs should be posted prohibiting unauthorized use and enforcement by the police should be encouraged. Mr. Handi noted that the use of paid attendants and this may be another option. Mr. O'Connell indicated that most days the facilities are closed to the public but he would explore the possibility of the part-time maintenance person watching over the areas.

Addressing the budget, Mr. O'Connell noted that the gas line item, gas used at the field house at Ryan, is being expended and he will be seeking to transfer funds from another account. He is also watching the water line usage has increased over the last few months. The question arose as to the cost of watering the fields, Bradley and the picnic grove. This will be investigated.

Ms. Izzo questioned whether the summer program will be at Irving School. Mr. O'Connell noted that he is currently installing a basketball hoop for use. Ms. Izzo indicated that permission has been received although the exact cost is yet to be determined. With the installation, Mr. O'Connell was confident that the program would run at Irving. It was suggested that the Board of Education be contacted to finalize arrangements. Arrangements for bathroom use will also be explored, either in the school or a portable unit.

Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Marcucio was not present this evening. Mr. O'Connell noted that in speaking with Mr. Marcucio there was some question as to the use of recreational fields if the fields were to be constructed at the new High School. Members felt that there would be continuing cooperation and Chairman Walsh indicated that he would speak with the Superintendent to clarify the field usage arrangements.

Committee Reports:

Facilities Committee – Members met last week to review the proposed High School plan. The proposed plan includes an all-weather track, one (1) girl's softball field, one (1) football practice field and one (1) soccer field. Football and baseball would continue to play on the existing fields. The plan would provide additional space for soccer when school programs are not utilizing the area. Pop Warner would then have exclusive use of the

and Little League area. The school would also provide for an additional gymnasium, a much needed space for recreational programs.

Members felt that the plan relieved much of the strain on the existing recreational facilities. With added funding and maintenance could be provided to the existing facilities, thus raising the quality of the playing areas significantly.

A motion was made by Karen Izzo and second by David Mikos. Move that the Recreation Commission endorse the proposed fields designed for the new High School project will greatly help the recreational programs and provide additional field space for community use.

Discussion on the motion. Members questioned the logistics of scheduling these new fields. Mr. O'Connell stated that there would be the continuing communication with the High School Athletic Director. Members stressed it is important to clarify that the shared use of all fields, both existing and proposed, would continue between the High School and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by David Mikos and second by Al Felice. Move that the Parks & Recreation Commission continue to work with the Board of Education for the mutual usage of facilities. All in favor. Motion carried.

The Commission noted that if the proposed plans do not proceed, the Parks and Recreation Commission will seriously review the needs of the programs and develop a plan to remedy the overcrowding and poor conditions.

Programs Committee – A meeting was held with Alderman Kelleher attending to review the plans for the new High School. The value of the fields and the needed support for the referendum was expressed to all the program directors and coaches.

A meeting is set for May 15, 2001 at 8:00 p.m. at the Derby Veteran's Community Center.

Budget Committee – The 2001-2002 budget presentation was made to the Board of Apportionment and the Committee is awaiting their decision.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Members noted their safety concerns for the merry-go-round at the Bradley School playground. It was requested that the Public Works Department speak with Principal Duggan to explore its removal.

Mr. Culmo indicated that the list of maintenance issues presented at last month's meeting is being reviewed. Items that have already been addressed and work will continue to resolve these concerns.

A motion was made by Ed Handi and second by Beverly Moran. Move to adjourn this meeting at 9:04 p.m. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be Monday, June 11, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall. If the Aldermanic Chambers are not in session, the meeting will be held at the Derby Veteran's Community Center.

then the Veteran's room will be requested.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

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