

# **Minutes**

## **Park and Recreation Commission**

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(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Tuesday, October 11, 2005 in the Veteran's Room of the Old City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh, David Mikos, Al Felice and Karen Izzo. Matt Cripps, Beverly Benanto were excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell and Athletic Director Joseph Orazetti were present.

### **additions or deletions to the agenda:**

Without objection, the agenda was accepted as written.

### **approval of minutes:**

A motion was made by Karen Izzo and second by David Mikos. Move to accept the minutes of September

written. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public portion:**

Michele Mastrianni of 105 Ida Avenue spoke on the deplorable conditions of the Ryan field house. She indicated that maintenance issues were presented in February 2001 to the Commission and many of these issues still remain. In June, parents and the head football coach walked through the building noting and photographing the issues. In September, she observed and photographed the ongoing issues, noting that the gasoline had been spilled inside the building. She noted seepage coming from the walls into the woman's bathroom, scum and filth in the shower, and a general concern for the safety and health of the children using the building. Although minutes reflect the update of the building with handicap accessibility, she noted that the handicapped stall is too small. Visitors will not use the facility due to its conditions. Stair treads are falling apart. Chemicals are left out and easily accessible.

Chairman Walsh questioned why this was not brought to the attention of the Commission previously. Ms. Mastrianni indicated that she had spoken to members of the Commission and Ms. Izzo raised the question at a previous meeting. She and her husband have spoken to Mr. O'Connell on a number of occasions.

Chairman Walsh indicated that when the issue was raised recently, he and the directors toured the building. He noted that the building is tired after years of use and would be very costly to improve it aesthetically but during the tour it was clean. The first concern is for safety and health. Athletic Director Orazetti indicated that steps are being taken to keep it clean and maintenance is ongoing.

Chris Mastrianni questioned how much funding has gone toward the building in the last five years, as it does not appear sufficient to address the ongoing issues. Mr. O'Connell noted electrical work (\$5,400), roof repairs (\$3,500), and ongoing work (ongoing and cost not available) as well as work performed by Public Works employees and other maintenance staff.

Chairman Walsh noted the many new additions to recreation in the City, the new soccer fields, the skate park, and the greenway as representative of the support by the City. Ms. Mastrianni indicated that the new things are being added but the existing facilities are being left in disrepair.

Mr. O'Connell noted that the new bleachers in the Derby Veteran's Community Center were funded by a grant for the skate park realized because of the joint effort with Shelton.

Kathy Slowik of 60 Chestnut Drive questioned the comment of why the parents did not come sooner, citing that the Commission should be recognizing and addressing these ongoing maintenance issues in a timely fashion.

The Commission members noted that the Parks Department is dependant on Public Works. The Parks & Recreation position is a part-time position. He brings his list of needs to Public Works for implementation. Mr. O'Connell noted that the maintenance staff is separate from Public Works and is still under reorganization. It was his understanding that the newly hired Chief of Staff may be charged with their oversight. The restructuring of Public Works has just recently been implemented but during the fourteen month restructuring process the available staff was greatly reduced and a lot of work being accomplished.

Alderman John Orazetti recommended that the Public Works Director include a list of maintenance projects for the next year.

ongoing within his monthly report presented to the Board of Alderman.

Laura McCormick of 281 Olivia Street questioned what happened in the past five years when these issues were raised. She was distressed by the conditions and felt that if it was taken care of over the years, these matters would be resolved before this Commission now.

Ken Marcucio questioned what happened to the LoCIP funding for the Public Works equipment storage facility that was to be built. It was noted that the funding is no longer within the City's budget. The project is on the list of capital improvements the Parks & Recreation Department has recently submitted to the City.

The long-range plan, voted down by referendum, did include major work to the Ryan Field complex to include the realignment of the track and the football field that would include modification to the location of the field currently being implemented in phases with phase 1 being the soccer fields.

Ms. Mastrianni noted that the field house is closed from Thanksgiving through March. She asked that consideration be given to performing work during this down time.

A list was developed of immediate repairs needed before the next home game. The seeping leak and other issues in the bathroom must be addressed. The hanging light fixtures must be repaired.

Gary Haydu of 10 Commodore Hull Drive indicated that he is obtaining quotes for fencing repairs and is currently a step in the process for funding.

Chairman Walsh indicated that the budget is set in June and if it is not in the original budget, funding would be a request. He suggested that Mr. Haydu meet with Mr. O'Connell.

Mr. Haydu also requested that trash pickup be addressed at the

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Mr. Haydu also requested that trash pickup be addressed at the field in a timely fashion during the seasons when the containers were full for weeks at a time.

Mr. Marcucio stated that the City has to determine what they are doing with the Little League fields. A major league field is, by league standard, considered a minor league field in size. He inquired as to the recommendations made by the Field Search Committee.

Chairman Walsh noted that the fields throughout the City get extensively used from April through November with no significant time for maintenance. With the addition of fields, it will provide for a shifting and less use of any individual field. Compounding Derby's problem of fields is the fact that the school system has no other school system in the state. The issue of fields is something that needs to be jointly discussed further. The study that created the long-term plan included members from Parks & Recreation, Board of Education, and Alderman and the issues identified by the study are still relevant.

Mr. O'Connell noted that the Recreation Department Capital Plan request recently submitted to the Mayor includes many projects and totals more than \$1.5 million.

**Correspondences:**

Nothing was presented.

**NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:**

A.) Update on the Greenway: Chief Cota prepared recommendations for the Greenway etiquette.

Trails are open from sunrise to sunset.

Motorized vehicles are not permitted except motorized wheelchairs.

Alcohol is prohibited on trails in park systems.

Trail speed limited to eight (8) miles per hour.

Pedestrians always have the right of way; keep right, always pass on the left, giving aud pedestrians, skaters and other bicyclists. Team up and carry cell phone if possible.

Protective gear, including helmets, are encouraged

Maintain single file when others are within 100 feet

Keep dogs on leash and clean up after your pet.

Please do not litter.

Small Children should not be left unattended on the trail.

State and Local laws are enforced.

It was noted that concerns are being received regarding the cleanup after pets or lack there of as of now for further information regarding maintenance. Generally, the use has been exceptional. Members suggest receptacles be placed at the ends of the trail. It was understood that vehicle access would be blocked but for emergency access. A suggestion made by the police was to color code sections of the trail so should occur, the person could identify his location. The installation of the bridge has been delayed to the mid

B.) Update on Neighborhood Committee request to have the Commission oversee the administration of the Onopiak property: Chairman Walsh attended the Neighborhood Committee. He indicated that they prepared to turn the properties over to the Parks & Recreation Commission as maintenance issues are s

discussed. He did relay the Commission's concerns regarding maintenance.

Members noted that the agenda item on the update of the Public Works reorganization was not on the agenda. Members expressed their concerns that the needed maintenance for the recreational facilities will be properly addressed. Since the Commission has no control over the action, they are held accountable by the parents and this is discussed again. Members asked that someone attend the Commission's meeting to explain in detail, the reorganization.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS:**

**Parks & Recreation Director's Report:** Mr. O'Connell reported that the Derby Veteran's Community Center has begun its fall schedule. The Pop Warner cheerleaders are practicing four nights a week, there is corporate softball one night a week and men's basketball one night and Sunday mornings. Next month, the Saturday basketball program will begin. Use of the facility for birthday parties has been started again. Youth basketball is about to begin registration. The program will regionalize with Ansonia and Seymour. The bleacher bids are in and a recommendation has been made to the Finance Committee for their acceptance. The preferred vendor installed the bleachers in the school.

It was noted that Pop Warner practice is down on the softball field as the lights at the picnic grove have not been installed.

**Athletic Director's Report:** Mr. Orazetti requested a copy of the janitorial check list for Ryan Field so he can be watchful. He will advise the coaches that if there is damage as a result of a player, the cost of repair will be covered by the athletic budget for the sport.

Mr. Orazetti noted that the practice field is unusable. The condition is clay with no vegetation and the condition causes some health concerns for respiratory problems.

Mr. Orazetti confirmed that the Derby Veteran's Community Center gym would be available for scheduled school athletic programs.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Finance Committee –** Mr. O'Connell noted that the capital plan submitted includes work on the pool including a new water feed to the pool as the conditions have been identified as a concern. The plan includes the bleacher painting of the light poles at Ryan as well as necessary electrical work is included in the plan. There are other projects also included. Members suggested that the Building Official inspect the bleachers, both at Ryan Field and at Seymour Field as there is some concern for their safety.

Regarding the general recreation budget, the finances are in line for this time of year. (report attached). The line item is being expended relatively quickly and bears watching should the unexpected occur.

A motion was made by David Mikos and second by Karen Izzo. Move to accept the finance report, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**Programs Committee** – A meeting was set for October 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Mikos noted that he is assisting in the the men's over 35 basketball program. He did make mention that an automatic defibrillator for the faci advantageous. Mr. O'Connell indicated that the Fire Department had approached him a number of mon offer of a unit but it has not been delivered. The question arose whether this program requires separate O'Connell will explore the matter.

**Facilities Committee** – At Witek Park the grass is coming in better since the irrigation system was adj additional amendments are needed. The erosion has been repaired. As the irrigation system does not se that would be used for visitors for watching the games, the conditions are not as favorable.

There are ongoing discussions on the future use of the Derby Veteran's Community Center for recreati The Field Search Committee is on-hold at this time.

Motion was made by Karen Izzo and second by Al Felice. Move to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. M unaniously.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be Monday, November 7, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. at Hall, 35 Fifth Street. If the Aldermanic Chambers are unavailable then the Veteran's room will be requ

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

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