

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, September 10, 2007 in the New City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

The chair welcomed Mr. Clynch and noted his long time interest and participation in the Parks & Recreation in the City. The chair acknowledged Ms. Moran's tremendous job in serving the Commission for many years.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh David Mikos, Nick Serednitsky, James Benanto, Andrew Cota and William Clynch. Al Felice was excused.

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

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Without objection, the agenda was accepted, as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by David Mikos and second by Nick Serednitsky. Move to accept the minutes of August 13, 2007, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

No one came forward.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Chairman Walsh received an e-mail relating to the Pop Warner field not being lined for the first game. Mr. Benanto recalled that the lines were done in 10 yard increments and that Mr. O'Connell was at the game and received no complaints. This will be relayed to the Parks & Recreation director.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell was excused this evening. Chairman Walsh indicated that the order for the railings and bleachers has yet to be placed. Mr. O'Connell has been working with the City Engineer to move this forward. The intent is to install the railings and emergency lighting and try to do a section of bleachers if funding is available.

Mr. Serednitsky noted that the electrician has indicated he will be bringing someone in to check the lumens. It was noted that one of the light bulbs was out at the last game. The lighting does seem to be very dim. Mr. Clynch suggested that cleaning the lens may help. Mr. Cota suggested that a long term plan should be considered to replace the lights in increments being that full replacement at one time would be costly.

Chairman Walsh has communicated with Alderman Hughes. Alderman Hughes has expressed concern for the extensive use of Witek Park and the effect on the field surface. It was noted that generally a field can support approximately 25 games a year. Ryan Field is serving more than 60 games per year and the use is showing in terms of the field conditions. Members discussed the adult, high school, middle school and youth programs at Witek. Consideration may be necessary to reopening the Bradley School field for soccer. There has been some question as to the actual use verses what is authorized. Mr. O'Connell will be exploring whether there is unauthorized use occurring.

Reality is that all the fields are experiencing overuse and the previous long-term plan should be revisited. Discussion may be necessary for pursuing artificial turf as this is a durable solution to maintaining the field surface.

The Greenway Plaza dedication went very well. All of the benches have been sold. Bricks for the plaza are still available.

Members discussed the Greenway and O'Sullivan's Island. The Greenway is heavily used and traffic flow is difficult at times. Suggestion was made that maybe a center dividing line and arrows may improve these conditions. On the Island, the fire school has been demolished and now a complete environmental assessment can be done to determine the level of contamination. Future plans envision the area as a park with access down to the point. A boat launch is also a consideration.

Mr. Clynch questioned whether the grant writer has been approached to pursue funding for recreation. Chairman Walsh noted that the grant writer's duties are extensive and her title is as economic development director. Members agreed that this position is a great resource and it was suggested that the needs be determined and prioritized and then the City could be approached for pursuing funding. Chairman Walsh noted that recommendations presented by the Recreation Committee earlier this year have yet to be acted upon and the Committee did speak to the recreational concerns being discussed by this Commission. There was a committee to be formed to study the Little League but that Committee did not materialize. Many projects have been on the Capital Plan for years but have yet to be accomplished and that plan is consistently changing. Members felt that the projects need to be prioritized, not only for pursuing new projects but to make certain that the existing facilities are safe and functional. Then the funding sources could be explored. City funds, grant funds and possibly private fundraising for specific projects may be viable solutions.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Orazetti was excused.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Nothing was presented.

Motion was made by James Benanto and second by David Mikos. Move to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary

These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.