

Park and Recreation Commission

Andrew Cota, Chairman

Beverly Moran
James Benanto
Ronald Sill
John Monahan
James Butler Sr.
Bruce Sill

Minutes

(meeting recorded)

Special meeting: Thursday, February 23, 2017 in City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

By roll call, members present: Andrew Cota, Beverly Moran, Ronald Sill, James Butler Sr. and Bruce Sill. James Benanto and John Monahan were excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell was present. The Athletic Director clerk Jennifer Moffat was excused.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:

Motion made by James Butler Sr. and second by Ron Sill. Move to accept the agenda, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

Walter Mayhew thanked the Commission for holding this special meeting.

Esmat Mekael of 185 Marshall Lane, Derby, Youth Soccer board member, stated he was very sorry that Mr. Mayhew is seeking to destroy the soccer program.

Aldermanic President Carmen DiCenso indicated that he had spoken with Mr. Mayhew previously and understood that the intent is to run a soccer clinic on the off nights to the Youth Soccer program. There is a cost for the clinic and it is the parent's choice whether to send their child/children. As a former coach he has sent his children to clinics. He stressed that he understood that there was no intention to start a league. The purpose of this clinic is to offer instruction in the sport.

Mr. Mayhew indicated that he found the soccer program to be well run and they offer reasonable fees for participation. He did not intend for this clinic to hurt the program, but in order to offer quality coaching and instruction, there is a higher cost. He understands that increasing registration fees for the youth program could result in a loss of participants and he did not want that. He saw this separate instructional clinic as an opportunity to offer skill enhancement to those who desire to attend. He noted that he created the website that the Youth Soccer is using. He did serve previously on their board. He is a licensed High School coach and he appreciates the benefits of the youth program as well as instructional clinics. As pastor of the Walnut Hill Community Church he runs a 5k race for the school with all funds raised being distributed to the school. At this time he distributed letters of support from Anthony DeLucia Jr. of 72 Franklin Ave. Derby dated February 20, 2017, Jim Gildea dated February 21, 2017 and Kelly Anroman dated February 21, 2017.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON SOCCER FIELD USE REQUEST:

Chairman Cota reviewed the history of this request. He noted the request first came before the Commission on February 13th when Mr. Mayhew requested use of Witek Park Soccer Field on alternate days from the Derby Youth Soccer to hold a soccer clinic for children ages 5 to 8 years old. It would be an instructional activity, not a league. At that meeting, members of the Derby Youth Soccer voiced concerns that the request would interfere with the present Derby Soccer League. At first it seemed to be a scheduling issue but upon further review it seemed appropriate to seek direction from Corporation Counsel.

Continuing, Chairman Cota indicated that his communication with Corporation Counsel concluded that it did not appear that the Commission could restrict the request unless it would actually interfere with the operation of the Derby Soccer League use of the field because they already have established days of use. Further, referencing the Charter section XVIII Section 7-86 it states “The Commission shall be advised by the Board of Alderman that all request for any use whatsoever for any park or playground shall be the sole responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Approval for non-city sponsored activities in or on all parks and playgrounds shall require an affirmative vote of the Commission with the approval of the Board of Alderman.”

In further discussion with Mr. Mayhew it was clarified that this activity is not for profit and the Church is simply contracting out services from a private firm for certified coaching services and Walnut Hill community Church is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

Members discussed possible parameters or restrictions that should be placed with this request. Members agreed that this use of the field should be for an activity for Derby residents. Mr. O'Connell indicated that for profit groups have requested use of facilities in the past with many of the players being from other communities. It was agreed that at least 80% of the participants have to be Derby residents. Additionally, members expressed the need for liability insurance as specified by Corporation Counsel and that the coaching staff shall provide their certifications. As this is instructional only, there is no request for special treatments for the field such as lining etc.

Motion made by Ronald Sill and second by James Butler, Sr. Move to approve the field use request from Walnut Hill Community Church for the use of Witek Park Soccer fields on Monday and Wednesday nights during the period from April 10, 2017 through May 31, 2017 for the purpose of holding a soccer clinic for 5 to 8 year old children that will offer teaching from certified soccer coaches and further, that there shall be at least 80% participation of Derby children and that necessary insurance certification will be provided prior to the start of the clinic. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Beverly Moran and second by Ronald Sill. Move to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

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