



WORTHINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Tuesday, May 19, 2015 Meeting

Members Present - The members present were Dan Armitage, Laura Ball, Ethan Black, Bob Burpee, Peter Calamari, David Kessler, Rob Wendling, and Darren Hurley, Director of Parks & Recreation.

Brandi Williams, Fitness Supervisor, and Holly Keller, Recreation Superintendent, were also present.

The minutes from the March 17, 2015 meeting were approved.

Community Center Game Room Proposals – Mr. Hurley introduced Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Keller and the topic of the possibility of better utilizing the current Game Room space at the Community Center. Mr. Hurley shared that the Game Room receives inconsistent usage, in that people tend to use it while waiting for family members, coming and going to other activities, or as a means to pass time while already here. It does not seem that people come here to utilize the room or consistently use the space as it often sits relatively inactive. Overall, staff have felt it is underutilized, but have struggled to find the right alternative partly because there is a reluctance to remove it because we have very little other than the pool and gym for youth members to do in the Center outside of our structured programming. Mrs. Williams continued with a presentation of her proposal to open up more gym space by utilizing the Game Room space as an additional fitness studio. She continued describing how she could minimally reconstruct the room to offer current and additional fitness classes, therefore, decreasing the use of gym space for fitness classes and opening the gym space up for other offerings including open gym for youth and families. She shared a listing of current classes in the gym that could be relocated to the new space and the number of new fitness programs, including some youth fitness, which could be added.

Mr. Armitage responded that he would hate to lose this game room as it stands. He feels the space provides a casual environment that is welcoming to anyone who walks in the front door, and offers various options for many age groups. He enjoys seeing side by side usage of different age groups in the same space. However, he also commented that he is always in favor of providing more open gym space. Mr. Burpee liked the fact that it would create more open gym times. Mrs. Ball supported the idea of spreading a few game tables around the building so they would still be available for use by patrons so that the Game Room space could be better utilized without losing the games for people to enjoy. She suggested installing a half wall around the current vending area and relocating the seating and tables to the main entrance space. Along with Mr. Wendling, Mrs. Ball also reinforced increasing youth and adult fitness programming. Mr. Hurley concluded that money has been budgeted for a project concerning the Game Room and staff

will continue to assess options. The funds allocated are contingent on revenues being brought in as they are from the City's revolving fund and not the general fund.

Parks Master Planning – Playground Discussion – Mr. Hurley provided a Playground Replacement Information document displaying each playground and the year of its last renovation. Also provided was a Playground Accessibility Map displaying the radial distance from each playground to the surrounding neighborhoods. Mr. Hurley said he was seeking feedback on standards for the distance residents should be from the nearest playground in addition to the overall quantity and condition standards for each playground. Mrs. Ball asked Mr. Kessler how often he noticed McCord Playground being used since it is so close to All Children's Playground. Mr. Kessler replied that it is frequently used by sport league spectators and neighbors. Mr. Burpee would like to evaluate the proximity of those two playgrounds and options they each offer and include Heischman in that evaluation as a third that is close by. Mr. Wendling indicated our other situation with two in close proximity is Indianola and Selby. Mr. Hurley commented that this may be a good opportunity to explore alternative approaches to playgrounds in addition to consideration about eliminating any because there are new approaches, such as natural playgrounds, that may allow a playground to be replaced without our traditional price tag that makes keeping up with all of them over time a challenge. Commission members asked for some pictures of new playground styles and Mr. Hurley said staff would provide them.

Looking forward, Mr. Hurley said Commission Members will need to advise on playground investment and priorities. McCord, Heischman, E. Granville Road and Shaker Square Playgrounds will be the next parks scheduled for replacement as the schedule stands now, with McCord and Heischman currently scheduled for 2016.

Parks Master Planning – Resident Survey – The resident survey regarding parks became available today on the city's website. Signs have been posted in each park with a QR code that directs to the website where residents will view a short video about our parks before they access the survey. We plan to let the survey run about 30 days and then will compile the results for Commission review. Commission members commended staff that this process was all carried out in house with current staff.

Other – Lifestyle Communities has shown interest in the UMCH Property as has been reported in the media. At this point no plans have been submitted to the City. When they are, Mr. Hurley will bring them to the Commission for feedback.

The Sunday Concerts on the Green were supposed to start this past Sunday but was cancelled due to weather. The Summer in the 614 Event will take place on Saturday June 6th from 4-8:30pm. Three bands will play and many vendors will be present for participants to visit. The Touch-A-Truck Event was held this past Friday and attracted over 2,000 visitors. Sustainable Worthington had a successful Earth Day event at Moses Wright Nature Preserve continuing their work of removing invasive species and other park improvements.

Mr. Black made the Commission aware that the AP Environmental Science class at TWHS requires its students to do a project in the community in place of a final exam. He recommended connecting with the coordinator of the class if the Parks Crew had any projects the students could help with.

Being no further business, the motion for the meeting to adjourn was granted.