



WORTHINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Tuesday, November 17, 2015 Meeting

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

The minutes from the October 20, 2015 meeting were approved.

Park Planning Process – Park by Park Improvement Prioritization – Mr. Hurley indicated that he had made the changes to the newly distributed park by park priority listing that were discussed in the October meeting. He asked members to begin thinking about the final document and what format they would like to see. The next park on the list to review is the Olentangy Parklands.

The Commission members reviewed the ratings of projects at the Olentangy Parklands. Mr. Armitage asked if adding restrooms to the Parklands would be too cost prohibitive. The group discussed and consensus was a restroom facility is needed and should be prioritized. Like all of the projects, cost and the ability to pay will have to be considered in the order projects can be accomplished. The groups discussed the sledding hill and agreed it needed to stay in the Parklands and that staff should focus on how to ensure it is safe and whether any reconfigurations would be helpful in relationship to safety and impacting the trail. In addition, it was decided to list Improving River Access as a stand alone item with the understanding this would be a series of projects to be determined over time. Temporary improvements to the portable toilet location and chip trail improvements were selected to be moved to maintenance. The group agreed to remove the addition of natural play areas, a second community garden, a free little library at one or both playgrounds (these have historically been provided by other groups or organizations), and the outdoor exercise area for adults. Finally, the members wanted to add cleaning up the lower parking lot area as a maintenance item. The new project listing was agreed upon as follows:

1. Improve river access.
2. Add permanent restrooms to the area around the tennis courts/trailhead, consider composting restrooms like the Metroparks.
3. Fix the tennis courts surfacing.
4. Improve the sledding hill including safety and the conflict with the trail.
5. Repave the parking lot.
6. Add way-finding signage at key points in the park and along the Olentangy Trail.

The next park reviewed was Park Boulevard Park. Members discussed the overall projects and how they were mixed between active and passive uses. The members agreed that for the most part Park Boulevard Park was best left for passive activity due to its neighborhood feel and lack of parking. They agreed to move improving and formalizing the sledding hill to maintenance citing just a desire to make it as safe as possible without making it a community wide attraction. They also agreed to remove increasing creek access preferring to just promote it as is and do a good job of maintaining it. They also decided to remove the addition of a gazebo or pergola for rentals as a reflection of their desire to keep it passive and not promote rental usage. Finally, they preferred to list landscaping improvements under maintenance. The only remaining recommended project was:

1. Add benches/picnic tables for passive use.

Mr. Hurley indicated to commission members that at our pace we would likely be working on the planning process into the first quarter to first half of 2016. Staff would begin drafting the text of the final plan for feedback by January 2016. He asked members to be thinking about the next parks on the list in preparation for the December meeting. Specifically, the discussion of the Selby Park Shelter would be important and if members have not been in the facility he would like them to make arrangements with him to do so prior to the next meeting. Members spent some time discussing how projects could be sorted in respect to projects requiring large capital funding versus easier to implement projects. Mr. Hurley indicated this would be something staff could provide insight to through sharing some plans from other communities and some varying layouts for member review and consideration.

Mr. Hurley will revise the list based on these discussions in preparation for the December meeting.

Other – Mr. Hurley informed members of a holiday party being hosted by Chair Laura Ball immediately after the December meeting.

Mr. Armitage asked Mr. Hurley why staff were not accepting donated magazines on the fitness floor. Mr. Hurley speculated it may have to do with trying to keep the area looking neat by presenting only magazines in our binders or it could be in regards to trying to ensure only appropriate content but he would check and follow up directly with Mr. Armitage.

Mr. Burpee asked about Parks Manager Alan Little's status with the Parks Maintenance operations. Mr. Hurley indicated that Mr. Little had resigned from his position with the City and a search for a replacement would begin soon.

Ms. Miller asked on behalf of a neighbor about the possibility of adding holiday lights along the Olentangy Trail or somewhere in the Olentangy Parklands. Members discussed the idea and agreed that the City's resources are best invested in our lights in Old Worthington and on the Village Green for our Tree Illumination Event along with at our major facilities at the Griswold and Community Center.

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