



## **WORTHINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

### **Minutes of the Tuesday, September 19, 2017 Meeting**

**Members Present** - The members present were Dan Armitage, Bob Burpee, Peter Calamari, Dave Kessler, Michelle Miller, Rob Wendling, and Darren Hurley, Director of Parks & Recreation.

Steve Kolwicz, Consultant with POD Design was present.

Scott Brown, Parks Manager, Michael Burgdorfer, Recreation Supervisor & Julie Sergent, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator were also present.

The minutes from the July 25, 2017 meeting were approved.

**McCord Park Master Plan** – Mr. Hurley began by recapping the open house event where the public was invited to view and provide feedback of the conceptual plan for McCord Park. Mr. Hurley and Mr. Kolwicz provided comments of the public in a few documents to members including those from the public meeting, those coming on-line, and those emailed or coming from letters. Mr. Hurley indicated the majority of the feedback had centered around a few key issues that the Board Members need to provide feedback on in the next step of the process. Those three issues were the proposed trail connection coming north from the All Children's Playground, the location of the new playground, and the location of the Community Garden.

Mr. Hurley shared that a few nearby residents voiced some of their concerns at the open house and two wrote letters of their concerns to Mr. Hurley who had provided them to the members via email prior to the meeting. The concerns came from neighbors with residences behind the Community Center who were concerned about the proposed paved multi-use trail connection from the All Children's Playground north to the newly proposed site of the other playground and open park area. Their concerns included attracting additional people to the area behind their residences, additional noise, more kids going to the All Children's Playground which is already too loud, and the loss of trees/screening that would occur from the construction of the path. Mr. Kolwicz indicated the proposed new pathway would not disturb any current vegetation. Mr. Kessler believes it would be important for the path to be paved because the ground in that area is often wet. He also indicated his neighbor who also backs up to the property felt the paved path could be a good thing if located close to the Community Center as now people cutting through sometimes get closer to the property lines and the path would encourage people to stay on it and not be as likely to wander onto or closer to private property. Mr. Kessler stated that generally neighbors not backing up to the property he had spoken to had been supportive of the overall plan.

Members decided to take a walking tour of the park starting at the All Children's Playground. Mr. Kolwicz pointed out where the proposed multi-use trail connection would go and members observed the proposed spacing to the abutting residences and the existing screening conditions. Members proceeded to walk the areas around the Community Garden, the existing and proposed playground locations, and the field hockey field. Mr. Kolwicz showed the location of the proposed changes including where the new soccer field would extend, the removed parking areas/pavement, the proposed playground footprint, the new outfield fence, and some of the multi-use trail locations.

Mr. Burgdorfer was asked if these changes would affect any of his summer programming. He replied that it would not but could improve his programming with increased green space and closer access to a playground. Mrs. Sergent indicated additional greenspace would be beneficial for special events for the community such as Touch a Truck and the annual Halloween Party. Mr. Kolwicz indicated that although some of the parking at the west end of the large parking lot was being removed, overall the parking for the McCord Park/Community Center complex was not being reduced. It was just being distributed differently.

After concluding their walking tour, members discussed the issues Mr. Hurley framed at the beginning of the meeting. They began by agreeing that the benefits of providing a multi-use path connection from the All Children's Playground into the proposed pathways in the project area for this plan outweigh the concerns brought to them. In looking at the area, the path could be located close to the Community Center and with the amount of screening and distance from the existing properties they felt it was appropriate to include it in the plan. They requested the plan show the addition of more screening to further buffer the trail from the residences and that the trail location be adjusted to be closer to the Community Center.

Next, they discussed the Community Garden and the challenge of its location in terms of that being a highly desirable green space for community activities and Parks and Recreation Department programs. Many agreed that moving it near the railroad tracks to the far northeast corner of the park as had been originally discussed was not ideal. Mr. Armitage suggested mapping out garden owners, to understand the locations the owners are coming from around the community. Mr. Burpee stated he loves the conceptual plan the way it is but we should consider removing the garden. Mr. Kessler suggested the possibility of eliminating the McCord Park Community Garden and creating several more in various parks across the city. Mr. Armitage suggested gardens could even be themed to fit interests like flowers or organic vegetation. Mr. Wendling stated that since many gardeners have perennials planted advance notice about any relocation would be important. Mr. Hurley indicated locations would require sun, close parking, water access, and lack of wildlife and that he wasn't sure how many locations we had for this in our existing parks. Mr. Kessler suggested partnering with the schools to use some of their grounds to meet the needs of the community. Members unanimously agreed that they want to keep the resource available to the community but want to move the location from McCord Park. They instructed staff to do some research and return with some ideas for relocation of the Community Garden. Mr. Kolwicz offered that POD Design could help look at some locations and possible solutions.

Members then discussed the proposed playground and how freeing up the space might allow it to be more of a flowing footprint similar to what staff had toured at Northam Park in Upper Arlington. Mr. Kolwicz asked for input on the playground and shared pictures of that installation that had been displayed at the public open house. He indicated there was positive feedback from the residents attending that evening. Members asked Mr. Kolwicz to revise the drawings to show options for playground layout now that the idea to remove the Community Garden from that space had been brought forward.

Mr. Burpee inquired about how the process of presenting to City Council will go from here. Mr. Hurley indicated the most pressing need is to get City Hall and City Council some cost estimates for the project so the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) could have accurate numbers for discussion. Mr. Kolwicz feels he has adequate information to be working on those estimates now. As a result, Mr. Hurley indicated there wasn't a rush to get the final McCord Park Master Plan completed and he would recommend we work on the revisions discussed tonight and discuss again at our October meeting. Then, it could be decided if it was ready to go to City Council or if more process and community input was needed. Members agreed and requested revised concepts for their next meeting along with research and input about some options for the Community Garden.

**Community Center South End Roof and HVAC Project Updates** – The south end of the Community Center is in need of roof replacement. The project is currently out to bid with hopes of having it completed by the end of the year. The Community Center is having an energy efficiency study completed that will result in recommendations for improvements that will pay for themselves over time. This will include HVAC, lighting, etc. The money for this project is in the 2017 budget, however the project will likely be completed in 2018 once the study is complete.

**Other** – Mr. Armitage inquired about the replacement for Brandi Williams, Fitness Supervisor, who resigned over the summer. Mr. Hurley replied that they had two strong internal candidates and were going to make a decision this week. He is also in the process of making an offer for the vacant Building Maintenance Assistant position.

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