



## **WORTHINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

### **Minutes of the Tuesday, October 17, 2017 Meeting**

**Members Present** - The members present were Dan Armitage, Laura Ball, 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; & Abby Karagory, Senior at Thomas Worthington High School, were also present.

The minutes from the September 19, 2017 meeting were approved.

**McCord Park Master Planning** – Mr. Hurley reviewed the McCord Park Master Planning conversation from last month's meeting. In follow up, Mr. Kolwicz displayed a new conceptual plan for McCord Park without the current Community Garden and how that alteration changed the concept of that area of the park. He described the play trail which would be a paved path with play areas alongside it. He also explained the impacts to existing trees near the planned soccer field and the new parking area and showed the shift of the paved multi-use trail connecting the All Children's Playground with the rest of the park with the path now closer to the Community Center and showing additional screening.

Mr. Kessler commented that he spoke to the neighbor on the southwest corner of the park and the neighbor was concerned about the natural barrier possibly being removed along their property. Mr. Kolwicz responded that the current concept plan was not showing any changes to the western border of the park. Mrs. Miller asked if shelters that are displayed on the concept drawing would be able to be reserved. Mr. Hurley replied that they would be. Mr. Burpee commented that he loved the look of this play trail and that it would serve more people than a Community Garden does, so it is a better use of the space. Mrs. Miller agreed with Mr. Burpee.

Mr. Kolwicz then displayed aerial mapping of other possible options for Community Garden space around Worthington. He showed city parks and school properties where smaller gardens could possibly fit. Members commented of other Community Gardens in these locations that could be enhanced, including in the flats near Thomas Worthington High School, Linworth High School, and Brookside Elementary School. Six of the Worthington Parks have some green space that could be considered. Godown Park has water available and the space since the tree nursery is being phased out, but would be hard to find a flat enough spot and the nearby railroad tracks may not be preferred by gardeners. Mr. Wendling mentioned there is city owned property near the corner of Foster Avenue & Kenbrook Drive that could be considered as a potential site as well. Mr. Kessler requested again, that whichever sites are decided, it is important to have

the gardens be branded with signage, screened with aesthetically pleasing fencing, and built for easy maintenance.

Mr. Hurley would like to move forward with garden planning by assessing the impact of transferring to multiple smaller gardens and the cost involved. He would also like to check on other options such as school locations and assess whether other larger sites exist. He would also like to meet with garden leaders since they have not been involved in this discussion up to this point other than an initial meeting with Mr. Hurley and POD Design. Mr. Wendling inquired about a timeline if this were to happen. Mr. Hurley replied it would not be likely to happen before the growing season of 2019, therefore gardeners could transfer perennial plants the summer of 2018. Mr. Hurley expressed the importance of involving the gardeners in this process and in not approving a plan that removed or significantly changes the garden until a transitional plan could be put into place.

Mr. Hurley requested feedback about the proposed playground. He asked if members liked the playground as drawn in the concept plan with the different play pods responding to resident feedback about keeping some play in the existing playground location and also bringing playground elements to the area closer to the Community Center and ballfields. The members agreed they liked this concept.

Mrs. Miller inquired about the timeline of this proposal to City Council. Mr. Hurley said he hoped to meet with gardeners in the next month to begin a discussion of the options. Mr. Kolwicz will come with budgetary estimates in November. Mr. Hurley would like to get approval in November or December but feels it is important to resolve the garden issue fully and not send it to Council without options for the garden.

Mr. Brown commented that it may be possible to leave a small space at McCord Park for a garden since there are so many gardeners in close proximity. Mr. Kessler agreed, but noted that there are many gardeners close because the garden is close. Mrs. Ball said it would be wonderful to incorporate gardening into the schools, including harvest parties and seed saving events as well as a garden club. Mr. Wendling replied that there are grants available to help fund projects like this. Mr. Kolwicz described a program he learned about a program that helped incorporate gardens into communities, he was unable to recall the name of the company on the spot.

**Other** – Mrs. Deming passed out copies of the Park Improvement Fund information that is displayed on the city's website. She commented that the Arbor Committee would like to bring it to light and thought it might be possible to expand it and include trees. They would also like to be able to promote it more. Mrs. Miller offered some insight to promote it more as a memorial or celebration fund. Mr. Wendling added that a foundation may be more effective for the purpose proposed because it would be a charitable organization and funds would be more easily accessed. Mr. Hurley said staff was currently researching options for forming a foundation as a follow up from the Parks Master Plan. He added that Council has recently discussed the possibility of a Community Foundation but there were some concerns raised that this could cause the city to compete with other charitable organizations in Worthington and that might not be a good option. Staff will continue to investigate options for parks donations and also in the short term look at ways to better publicize the Park Improvement Fund.

Mr. Hurley announced that Ryan Cooper, currently the Customer Service Coordinator at the Griswold Center, has accepted the Fitness Supervisor position. He will begin on October 30<sup>th</sup>. Julie Stoltz, currently Customer Service Coordinator at the Community Center, has accepted Ryan's Customer Service Coordinator position at the Griswold Center. This transition will leave another vacancy at the Community Center. Emilio Castillo is the new Assistant Maintenance Technician and began work on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

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