



WORTHINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Tuesday, March 19, 2019 Meeting

Members Present - The members present were Laura Ball, Bob Burpee, Rachel DeNoewer, Michelle Miller and Rob Wendling. City support staff Darren Hurley, Parks & Recreation Director and Lauren Lange, Recorder were also present.

Kelly Whalen, Chair of Bike and Pedestrian Committee was also present.

The minutes from the February 19, 2019 meeting were approved.

Bike and Pedestrian Planning Related to Parks – Mr. Hurley shared an update on the Bike and Pedestrian Master Planning process going on in the city with leadership from the Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Board. The process, being led by a consulting team, has included various opportunities for public input and has now been presented in draft format to City Council and the community during a February visit from the consulting team. The input received during that visit is now being integrated into a final set of recommendations that will be presented as early as May to City Council for adoption.

The Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Board, since its creation a few years ago, has been given \$100,000 each year in the city's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for bike and pedestrian improvements to be made. Each year, the board looks at the needs in the community and recommends improvements to be made. For 2019, they are looking at a few options that would be a positive impact for parks. Their first priority is an improved crossing at East Granville Road Park across 161 to Pingree Drive. This would provide some kind of self-actuated signal that would direct traffic to stop or yield to pedestrians crossing at that intersection. They are also looking at something similar to cross Linworth Road at the south end of Linworth Park to connect to the neighborhoods on the east side of Linworth Road.

In addition, they have interest in bike racks in parks that do not have them and ensuring safe bike and pedestrian access to parks in general. Ms. Miller asked what type of beacons would be installed in these locations, Mr. Hurley was able to pull up some pictures to display. Mr. Hurley went on to recommend a possible motion in support of the Bike and Pedestrian Committee moving forward with crossing improvements as well as addition of bike racks in the city parks. Members agreed, voted, and passed the following motion.

Motion in support of the Bike and Pedestrian Committee improving crossing access at Pingree Drive and E. Dublin Granville Road and the addition of bike racks in the parks.

Olentangy Parklands River Access Brainstorming – Mr. Hurley reverted back to the Parks & Recreation Commission Master Plan and goal for 2019 to revisit the river access topic. He would like to establish a clearer plan deciding on how involved the commission wants to get and whether the hiring of a consultant would be necessary or tasking staff with the project. Mr. Burpee asked for experience from Ms. Ball and Mr. Wendling in other cities of Gahanna, Dublin, and Westerville. Mr. Wendling commented that there is plenty of Grant money available for projects such as this. Mr. Hurley added that the fire chief has spoken to him about the need for access in case of emergency. Ms. Ball began with wondering what kind of boats would need access and gave example of types of river banks that can accommodate different boats. She also encouraged a water calming area that can be achieved by stacking stones a certain way on the bank to create a calm water area for entry and exit. The Olentangy River is prone to flooding so that should be considered when building a structure. Ms. Ball added that MORPC (Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission) is working a movement right now to unify all the blueways (bodies of water) in central Ohio like they did the greenways (trails), so they may be a good resource to start with. It was also suggested to work with Metro Parks and other river neighbors to achieve some of the goals of more educational information for trail and park users to learn about the river, its habitat, its history, and looking at other successful models from communities with river corridors.

Mr. Burpee asked if access has been available at Thomas Worthington High School. Mr. Hurley replied that he has been told at one point there was but nothing salvageable is left at this point. Ms. Miller asked if there were resources in house to take on a project like this. Mr. Hurley said that depends at what length members would like to go with this project. Mr. Hurley agreed to begin looking at some ways to frame this dialogue at future meetings and to create methods to move some of the individual projects along.

Other – Ms. DeNoewer asked if Mr. Hurley would be interested in meeting with Aryeh, Friends of Metro Parks President, as he could help answer some questions of how their organization funds extra projects for the parks and if something similar would work in Worthington. Mr. Hurley agreed and asked Ms. DeNoewer to send him some possible dates and times to meet.

Mr. Burpee asked about whether Mr. Hurley had been able to identify a timeline for the current city lease with the schools at Snouffer Park. Mr. Hurley indicated he had not but he would follow up.

Ms. Miller inquired about the status of the second Community Garden. Mr. Hurley answered the garden at Snouffer Park will be tilled this spring and soil preparations will go on through this year. Moving forward in the near future the commission will need to advise on the policies of the garden. Planned opening is spring of 2020.

Mr. Wendling reported that a large tree recently uprooted at Moses Wright Nature Preserve on the south side, however it is not over a path but it is hanging on to other trees. Mr. Hurley agreed to mention it to Parks Crew.

Mr. Hurley announced that Shawn Daugherty received the Blue Heron Award for his conservation work with FLOW & FSWCD at last night's council meeting.

Mr. Burpee asked about the replanting progress at Perry and Snouffer Road Parks. Mr. Hurley agreed to send out dates and information for the community planting events that will be taking place.

Mr. Wendling asked who was responsible for the project of clearing the bank in The Flats. Mr. Hurley replied that the school system is doing the work, however the city was consulted and advised that the work would be taking place.

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