



WORTHINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Tuesday, October 15, 2019 Meeting

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

The minutes from the August 20, 2019 meeting were approved (the September meeting was cancelled).

McCord Park Renovations Project Update – Mr. Hurley reviewed notes from input gathered by POD Design regarding McCord Park from individual Commission Members and at other stakeholder meetings. POD also met with staff and community garden participants to gather more opinions on design offerings of the playground and garden features. Looking ahead, POD will have drawings on display at the annual Community Center Halloween Party and will be meeting with students at Wilson Hill Elementary School to continue gathering community feedback. A public open house is tentatively being planned for early November. Mr. Hurley also provided an updated copy of the project schedule to all members.

Ms. Miller questioned what would be on display for the public at the Halloween Party, requesting that it be approved by members first. Mr. Hurley replied the images on display will be those the Commission Members viewed and agreed were preferable. Ms. Ball recommended a wood playground company she has hired in Westerville which had a great reputation and then maintained the equipment for five years after installation and taught staff techniques of continued maintenance.

Mr. Hurley was asked about the meeting with the garden representatives and what the plans were for the garden. Mr. Hurley indicated they were looking at improvements like fencing and a new shed and that currently POD was not recommending a reduction to the current garden footprint. The approved concept plan allowed for up to a 20 percent reduction if it would benefit the overall plan but at this point staff and POD did not see a benefit in cutting back the garden size. Mr. Hurley noted that there might be a reduction in total plots depending on where the shed was going to be placed as it was expected to go into the existing footprint.

Mr. Hurley updated members on the status of the budget for this project. The 2020 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is now in the hands of City Council. The approved conceptual master plan for the park carried an approximate cost of \$2.8 million dollars and the current CIP shows \$1.8 million in 2020 for phase one and then a currently unfunded \$1 million in phase two for 2021. This funding would ideally come from a grant or state capital funding. There are many other topics to be discussed in this year's CIP with City Council so we will need to see where the final budget lands. Mr. Kessler requested clarification pertaining to what was included in Phase 1. Mr. Hurley responded that the playground, garden

improvements, train observation area, shelters and some paving as well as the repaving of the Community Center parking lot were all in the proposed funding for 2020. Mr. Hurley will alert members of Council hearing/discussion dates in case they would like to be present.

Community Center Lifeguard Shortage – Mr. Hurley made members aware of the shortage of lifeguard staff the Community Center is experiencing. The shortage has caused a reduction in open hours available at the pool. He asked members to pass the word around the community that we are hiring as young as 15 years old and starting pay is \$12.34/hour. Members and swim lesson participants have been informed of upcoming pool hour changes. Mr. Kessler suggesting increasing the rate of pay due to competition with the unskilled labor market. Mr. Hurley confirmed that many avenues have and continue to be evaluated in order to attempt to recruit additional lifeguards.

Parks and Recreation Cost Study – Mr. Hurley overviewed a cost study being completed by a consultant working with city staff to assess and provide a report on cost recovery across the Parks and Recreation Department. The results are likely to look a little different than in the past as the calculated costs are including full-time staff costs, facility costs, and some other indirect costs that have not been considered in the past. The goal will be to provide the study results to members and City Council and then consider next steps of whether the information can inform some policy or priority updates to services. Specifically, staff are hoping for direction on how to best price programs and what the community expects in terms of recovering costs.

Some discussion developed around numbers so members could better understand what was being presented. Ms. Ball inquired about an energy audit, Mr. Hurley confirmed that a different project was just completed that had assessed the Community Center and Griswold Center in terms of energy efficiency and had taken steps to improve those areas based on a guaranteed cost recovery/savings.

Other – Ms. Miller informed the group of an Eagle Scout Project that installed a frisbee box in the Olentangy Parklands, south of Highgate Avenue and North of Whitney Playground. She felt it looked unfinished and was not aesthetically pleasing like other Eagle Scout Projects Shawn Daugherty had supervised. Mr. Hurley agreed to speak to Mr. Daugherty about it and get it resolved.

Ms. Miller reported graffiti, specifically red spray paint, on a tree at the bottom of Tucker Drive. It was later discovered that was part of a “Prom-posal” and staff was aware of it.

Ms. Miller inquired about the progress of the second Community Garden. Mr. Hurley replied that the ground is being worked and is currently composted. Plans are being made to open it in 2020.

Ms. Miller wondered if there was anything that could be done to control the deer population. Mr. Hurley said it is an ongoing conversation and part of the problem is the number of people, especially along the Olentangy Parklands, who feed them. There is an effort being led by City Hall to assess the issue. Mr. Kessler suggested public education may help.

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