



## **WORTHINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

### **Minutes of the Tuesday, October 20, 2020 Meeting**

**Note** – This meeting was conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams.

**Members Present** - The members present were Laura Ball, Rachel DeNoewer, Alan McKnight, Michele Miller and Rob Wendling. City support staff Darren Hurley, Parks & Recreation Director, and Celia Thornton, Recorder, were also present.

The minutes from the September 15, 2020 meeting were approved.

**Cost Recovery Study**– This process was started prior to the onset of COVID-19 and subsequently put on hold. The goal of the process is to get a better understanding of what it costs users and residents (taxpayers) to provide various services. Types of costs include direct, indirect and facility. Mr. Hurley shared the cost recovery data spreadsheet and program fee pyramid model and reviewed the information. He then said it is the task of the Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC) to help the department place programs into the correct categories. There was board member discussion and a few questions. Mr. Wendling asked what portion of money the department makes on Youth Booster tournaments. Mr. Hurley responded there are very few tournaments still occurring on Worthington fields since the Youth Boosters discontinued their July 4<sup>th</sup> tournament and most other regional tournaments are heading to larger complexes like Berliner. There is some hope that with the renovations to McCord Park coupled with recent improvements at Perry Park that we might be able to attract some tournaments and their revenue. Mr. McKnight expressed concern that the exercise could price some programs out of the market when compared to neighboring communities. Mr. Hurley said that would be something we have to consider as most programs are already priced competitively in the market. The process will initially identify desired cost recovery and the next step will be a staff review of the feasibility of moving them to that level and part of that review will be whether there is price flexibility. Concern was also expressed about the difficulty in tracking total cost recovery moving forward without the assistance of consultants who used complicated equations. Would it be better for staff to be given direction around direct cost recovery which is easier to track and calculate? At the end of the discussion the PRC decided that total cost would be the best to use as opposed to direct costs only. When a policy is finalized it should involve an easy transition method for staff to convert direct costs to full costs or have a factor or percentage that can be added to assess full cost. They also decided that staff should take the first shot at placing the programs in the pyramid levels. Then, the PRC members can review, suggest changes, and settle on a final model to recommend to City Council.

**Selby Park Playground Renovation** – Mr. Hurley shared that the City has done better than initially projected with income tax collection during the pandemic, so the freeze on spending for 2020 projects has lifted to some degree. That is good news for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), including the Selby playground renovation. The playground has safety inspectors concerned as the surfacing is deteriorating rapidly and several components on the structure are showing rust and wear with some already being replaced. The department intends to follow the usual procedure and start with a survey of Colonial Hills residents on preferences for the new design. Those results will be given to consultants who will come up with multiple playground design options, which will then be shared with the community for some type of public feedback process. Mr. Hurley would also like to find a way to engage Colonial Hills Elementary students in some capacity. His hope is that construction on a new playground can begin next spring (2021). A survey is currently in development. Mr. McKnight asked that the survey be sent to the PRC as well. Mr. Hurley told the PRC to be ready for questions regarding the west end of the park, including the Selby Shelter. That process will be coming but is not part of the playground renovation.

**McCord Park Playground Renovation** – The \$1.8 million funding for McCord Park Renovations has been restored, so the department can proceed with Phase 1. Design and preparation of construction documents will resume, and bids will go out this winter so that construction can begin in the spring. Funding beyond this allocation for phase two has not been identified yet and Mr. Hurley is looking to see if there is state funding, etc. that could apply. Other than missing out on some paving this past summer, the project is back on track and its original timeline.

**COVID-19 Updates** – The Community Center pool piping project is finally complete, and the center has regained control of the heating in the pool area, which means further additions to aquatic programs. This has added a financial boost to memberships. Staff is also resuming more programming on the south end of the building, such as Pickleball, preschool, senior programs, etc. Senior Centers were authorized to open on September 21, with strict restrictions, by order of the Governor. A plan for re-opening is in place but with recent COVID spikes we're pausing and waiting for the right time. Parks remain busy, though fields are closing for the season. The department only had one complaint this summer during field usage regarding COVID protocols. It was aimed at Big League Baseball and they quickly rectified the issue.

**Other** – Ms. Miller commented that she noticed and liked the new stencils on the Olentangy Trail and thanked the department for doing it. Mr. Wendling brought up a maintenance issue on the trail. There is a large spruce tree near the bridge along S.R. 161 that obstructs the view for people biking westward on the path. He recommended a trim. He is also concerned about maintenance on the two wooden bridges. Mr. Hurley said he will make sure the bridges are on the Parks maintenance list and will have them look to see if boards need replaced and whether another coat of anti-slip paint is required.

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