



## **WORTHINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

### **Minutes of the Tuesday, January 19, 2021 Meeting**

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

**Members Present** - The members present were Dan Armitage, Laura Ball, Rachel DeNoewer, David Kessler, Alan McKnight, Michele Miller, and Rob Wendling. City support staff Darren Hurley (Parks & Recreation Director) and Celia Thornton (Recorder) were also present, along with guest presenters Grant Greiwe (DWA Recreation) and Kelly Shaw (7<sup>th</sup> grade Phoenix Middle School Student).

The minutes from the December 15, 2020 meeting were approved with a minor correction under the McCord Park Renovations heading - changing "Phase Two" to "Phase One."

**Organization Meeting – Appointment of 2021 Officers** – Mr. Hurley asked the commission to discuss possible appointees and consider nominations for Chair and Vice Chair for 2021. Ms. DeNoewer was unanimously appointed Parks and Recreation Commission Chair and Mr. McKnight was unanimously appointed Vice Chair.

**Selby Park Playground Renovation Proposed Designs** – Mr. Hurley shared that Staff have been working with DWA Recreation on designs for the Selby Park Playground. The designs are based on 132 completed neighborhood surveys (through Survey Monkey) and 200 responses from Colonial Hills Elementary students. DWA Recreation has prepared three designs. Two of them were traditional designs with similar footprints. The third utilized a new feature, a web-based climber, that has been very popular elsewhere and which allows us to offer something different for the community to consider. All three designs will be transitioned to a turf surfacing which we believe will perform better than the poured in place rubber currently in use. Thus far this type of surfacing has been successful at Heischman Park. Mr. Hurley then introduced Mr. Grant Greiwe with DWA Recreation to answer questions and take feedback. The plan is to take PRC feedback, make any last changes, and then take these three designs back to the neighborhood in February, so they will be ready for an early spring replacement. Ms. Ball asked if drinking fountains would also be updated or replaced at the same time. Mr. Hurley answered no but said Parks staff are looking at the fountains and may try to better line up the timing. Mr. Wendling observed that the concrete pad isn't as large, and Mr. Greiwe said that is due to budget constraints as the play area cost more. There were various other questions about the types of swings, slides, colors, the climber and particularly the artificial turf. Mr. Hurley shared that the natural color scheme was preferred by 75% of respondents (over bright colors). The artificial turf has had good reviews in other parks and the version that we're using in Heischman has held up well. Mr. Greiwe added that the infill would be sand rather than small

plastic pellets that are used elsewhere. Ms. Miller commented that she really liked the shade provided on some options. Ms. Ball and Mr. Wendling liked all three options.

**Mountain Biking Proposal Follow Up** – Mr. Hurley reminded the group that last month Kelly Shaw provided an excellent presentation for a mountain biking proposal. Staff was directed to do some follow up on the proposal and report back. Thus far Mr. Hurley has discovered the following:

- i. Liability – Mr. Hurley met with Law Director and this is not an insurmountable obstacle. It would be very helpful to have a group like COMBO in place to help with liability and oversight. The City would need to work through the details methodically to be sure we have the proper coverage.
- ii. COMBO – Mr. Hurley met via Zoom with Central Ohio Mountain Biking Organization (COMBO) representatives. They are very organized, are a 501c3, have liability insurance with the ability to name the City as an additional insured, and have Memorandum's of Understanding (MOU's) with various entities including the City of Columbus and the MetroParks. The City has obtained those and are reviewing the language with our legal team. They have not signed on to the project but expressed they would be likely to do so. Staff is working on contacting representatives from Columbus, MetroParks and the State of Ohio (Alum Creek).
- iii. Site walk – Mr. Hurley walked the site with parks staff and arborists. No major issues were expressed. There is significant honeysuckle to deal with, that might be a lot for a volunteer group, but we could possibly utilize some equipment in places to assist.
- iv. Remaining challenges/issues to resolve:
  1. Long term maintenance and staff load.
  2. Short and long term need for funding- both capital and maintenance.
  3. Impacts on the park from a user load standpoint re: parking, trail traffic, etc.
  4. Long term viability of COMBO/volunteers to maintain investment over time.
  5. Liability

Staff will continue to get answers to questions and develop a more specific path forward. PRC will then decide whether to recommend the land be provided and with what conditions (must reach agreement with COMBO, etc.). That could be done as soon as next month, or it could take some time to satisfy the outstanding questions/issues.

Mr. Kelly Shaw indicated he has continued working on this project and made more progress in the last month. He has been in contact with a person who owns a trucking company and who is willing to donate all of the soil needed to build the track (Mr. Shaw has a promissory note on behalf of this man's company in the form of an email). Mr. Shaw also met with Coach Armstrong (at Granby Elementary) to discuss fund raising. Mr. Wendling raised a concern that even four inches of soil compaction over tree roots can kill a tree. He asked for that to be kept in mind as the track was laid out so that trees can be preserved and not become a danger to those riding. There was some concern and discussion around additional parking overflow. Mr. Hurley asked for a little more time for follow up and then the commission can make a recommendation regarding the proposal.

- b. **McCord Park Renovations Phase 1 - Update** – Mr. Hurley shared that staff is currently working on the bidding documents for McCord Park Phase I construction. He is planning to present an update on design and bidding preparations to City Council on February 8 and will then request permission to proceed at either the last February meeting or first March Council meeting. He is still planning on summer construction for phase I.

**COVID-19 Updates** – All in-person programming has been cancelled due to the Franklin County/Columbus Public Health’s extended “Stay at Home Advisory.” The advisory expires January 23, so staff is hoping to resume at least some in-person programming the following week and into February. The building is still open for fitness and staff continues to offer online program options. The Griswold Center is still closed. The Community Center also experienced our first known positive COVID exposure last week. Staff notified all the people who were in the facility during that time and the protocols worked well. Everyone is beginning to look towards spring and summer events and what those might look like this year. Mr. Armitage asked about the fire engines parked at the south end of the Community Center on a regular basis. Mr. Hurley responded that the Fire Department had split responders into two groups for better protection to COVID exposure.

**Other** – None

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