

## WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

May 8, 2019

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:04 PM by Chairman John Fetters. In attendance: Chris Bolich, Tiffanie Charles, Fetters, Katie Quincel, Mark Schieber, Director Shannon Sorrell, and Shannon Werner. Guests: Matt Golden.

Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, to excuse the absent members and the motion carried 5 – 0.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

There were no guests to poll for questions or comments.

Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, to approve the March 6, 2019 meeting minutes and the motion carried 5 – 0.

The Commission reviewed the following items: Employees' wages/ personal service for 2/17/19 through 4/27/19; bills and refunds for March and April 2019; and the Trust Fund, budget, and income for March and April 2019.

Director's Report:

Sorrell began her report with a pictorial slide show of the programs and projects the department had completed since the last Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

On April 13, the department held its first Friends of the Park event. In Whitehall Community Park, over 75 volunteers planted 650 saplings, picked up trash, and mulched the playgrounds. The WYHS baseball team moved over 40,000 lbs. of gravel and crushed limestone at the Community Garden behind the Senior Center. This was accomplished with a nearly \$2,000.00 donation in supplies (shovels, wheel barrows, buckets, gloves, etc.) from the Lowe's store on East Broad Street. These supplies will be reused for the next Friends of the Park event; a community planting of the YMCA in the fall.

Additional improvements have been made to the Community Garden with \$4,000.00 in grant funding. New beds have been installed, crushed limestone surfacing has made the garden fully ADA accessible, and there is no longer standing water in the garden.

Approximately 220 people attended the Star Party in Whitehall Community Park on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. The event was aided by a dozen volunteers from Whitehall United Methodist Church. The layout was great and the vendors did a fantastic job. The party was preceded by "Rocket Building with the Chief", and the kids launched their model rockets during the party.

This event was followed by COSI's Big Science Celebration on May 4<sup>th</sup>. The City and department participated in various events at COSI and staff operated a booth about aviation and its history in Whitehall. Thousands of people attended.

## Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission May 8, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Designated smoking areas have been established in John Bishop Park. Kiosks, which display departmental information and the park rules, have been installed at the entry points of all 5 parks.

In partnership with the Service Department, the two middle sections of benches have been removed from the amphitheater and the concrete replaced with sod donated by the High School. This has made a huge improvement in the look and feel of the area. Bolich suggested that signage may be necessary during Music in the Park to keep people from blocking views on the new lawn.

The Splashpad has been de-winterized and is up and running. This season, the Splashpad will stay open until 8pm on Sundays (during Music in the Park) and, while not advertised, will also be free to non-residents on Sundays. The department plans to operate the facility with a leaner staffing plan as well this season.

Sorrell expanded upon the department's seasonal hiring plan. Offers have been made to two new hires and the rest is returning staff. Cory Ollie's full-time position has been put on hold until the City's revenue projections are firmed up.

WYAA's opening day is May 11<sup>th</sup>. Andy Duncan will be representing the department and Sorrell encouraged the Commissioners to attend if they are able. The first ball tournament is May 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The maintenance staff is beginning to refurbish the ball diamonds, one at a time.

We have a great lineup for Music in the Park which will kick off with the June 2<sup>nd</sup> park party. Sorrell asked if the Commissioners would assist in welcoming the crowd and introducing the bands at the concerts.

The Summer Camp flyer will be going home with students this week. Staff will be onsite for every camp this year. Sorrell also spoke at the Whitehall-Bexley Rotary luncheon last week to thank them for their \$2,000.00 contribution to the camp.

Staff has made some changes to the Yoga program for the summer. Tuesday classes will be outdoors and Wednesday classes will be at Hamilton Crossing. Staff will plan several pop-up Saturday classes, too.

Completion on the Armory Addition slowed due to issues with the flooring company, but staff is expecting to move in within a few weeks.

The YMCA build is approximately 20% over budget at this time. This is due to the overall building climate in central Ohio. Sorrell has worked closely with the architects and builders to cut as much as possible while still maintaining the integrity of the project.

The next Dog Park public input meeting is scheduled for June 20<sup>th</sup>. Staff will be applying for a NatureWorks grant for this park.

The Stream Restoration project in Whitehall Community Park (funded by round 12 of the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund) is underway. The bulk of the work is slated for July/August, but this is completely weather dependent.

Whitehall Park and Recreation was also recommended for round 13 Clean Ohio funding. This proposal would open two access points for active and passive recreation on the Big Walnut Creek, as well as re-plant the understory between those points.

Schieber initiated a discussion about the City's need for a comprehensive tree plan (that both creates a sense of place and protects the environment) when development/re-development takes place in the city. He feels that voicing these concerns to the Council and administration is an appropriate role for the Parks and Recreation Commission to fill. Others agreed that they would like to see more preservation of existing trees in future development. Sorrell said she too has voiced these concerns and encouraged the Commission members to speak to City Council as citizens.

There being no further business, Charles moved, seconded by Quincel, and the meeting adjourned at 7:21 PM.

To the best of my knowledge these minutes are true and correct.

---

Chairman John Fetters

Prepared by:

---

Shannon Werner