

WHITEHALL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

February 17, 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING

The meeting of the Whitehall Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:01 PM by Chairman John Fetters.

On a roll call, in attendance: Chris Bolich, Fetters, GERAL Leka, Mike McQuate, Katie Quincel, Nathaniel Stewart, Director Shannon Sorrell, and Shannon Werner. Guests: Wes Kantor and Matt Golden. Absent: Mike Adkins.

Quincel moved, seconded by Bolich, to excuse the absent member and the motion carried 6 – 0.

The new Commission members introduced themselves and spoke about the backgrounds and their interests in Parks and Recreation.

There were no guests to poll for questions or comments.

Bolich moved, seconded by Quincel, to approve the meeting minutes for January 13, 2021 and the motion carried 6 – 0.

The Commission reviewed the following items: Invoices, Trust Fund, budget, and income for January 2021. The Commission discussed the nature and origin of these reports for the newest members. Sorrell will schedule a separate and optional informational meeting about the ins and outs of the City and the department.

Director's Report:

Sorrell provided an update on the Woodcliff/Midcliff development (northeast corner of E. Broad St. and Hamilton Rd. that includes the former golf dome site). The City is working closely with the development company to move forward. The (environmental) brownfield screening should be completed by May. The City is working with working with COCIC (Central Ohio Community Improvement Corporation) to demolish and abate the existing buildings by end of Q3 2021, followed the start of new construction. The hope is that Phase 1 is completed by the end of 2023, which includes \$.5M from state capital funds to complete additional park development of WCP Lower level.

Bolich reminded the group that the City initially promised the income taxes generated by the development of the former gold dome site would create an endowment to fund capital park improvement projects and protect the long-term sustainability of the department. He expressed concerns that this promise may not be fulfilled.

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The Commission also discussed the completion of a complete tree survey of the property that was done with the assistance of the ODNR. The majority of the trees did not have long-term viability, but several trees were earmarked for preservation – and that information was passed along to the developer.

The department will be launching a new community engagement program “Tuesdays with Cory,” at the request of the Community Affairs department. This online program will be hosted twice per month until the summer.

Sorrell and Matt Golden will be meeting with Lowes about partnership and products donations for May events.

The parks maintenance crew has been lining up facility improvement and maintenance projects for the spring. This week they have been very hard at work with snow removal.

Staff is also in full planning and recruitment mode for the upcoming Market on the Green, the summer farmers market to be held at the Kelley Green in Norton Crossing.

Parks staff, as well as Megan and Jenna from the Development Department, met with Franklin Soil Water Conservation District staff to discuss the educational and resource portion of the City’s contract with FSWCD.

The City received favorable bids on the paving work for 2021. The City and department is still considering deferring planned paving on the WCP main parking lot, and instead using those funds to complete the construction of the dog park in one complete phase. If this is done, the dog park will most likely not have designated parking, but improved access to the dog park from the existing parking lots at Lamby Lane Park.

OPRA conference scheduled for April, and several staff members have signed up to attend. OPRA will make a final decision in March if the event will go on as planned. Whitehall Parks and Rec. will have a nice table at the awards dinner.

Parks and Rec. hosted a soccer clinic at the YMCA using the Sutu Wall (on loan from MidStates Recreation) on February 6. With the assistance of Commissioner Leka, it was a great success and participants have signed up for two more sessions on the upcoming Saturday. Staff has also had a discussion with other stakeholders about reviving a youth soccer program in Whitehall. This was a preliminary discussion and no formal plan was developed. The goal is to start a league in 2022, working alongside the WCS Athletic Department and WYAA.

There being no further business, Bolich moved, seconded by Fetters, and the meeting adjourned at 6:53pm.

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

Chairman John Feters

Prepared by:

Shannon Werner