

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, January 9, 2006 in the New City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh, David Mikos, Al Felice, Beverly Moran and James Benanto. Karen Izzo and Matt Cripps were excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell was present. Athletic Director Joseph Orazetti was excused. Board of Alderman President Kenneth Hughes and Joseph Bomba were also in attendance.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Without objection, the agenda was accepted as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Al Felice and second by David Mikos. Move to accept the minutes of December 12, 2005, with the addition that it be noted that Aldermen Kenneth Hughes and Joseph Bomba were also in attendance. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

No public came forward at this time.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Nothing was presented.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

A motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by David Mikos. Move to nominate John Walsh as Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

No other nominations were received. The floor was closed. Members congratulated Mr. Walsh and commended him on his continuing efforts for recreation in the City. Chairman Walsh noted that there would be many challenges and opportunities this year. He looked forward to working with the new administration.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell noted that basketball season is progressing. Youth Basketball has approximately 200 participants. This is a little lower than last year but reflects the city's population for this age group. The Saturday League has seven games every weekend.

Sign ups for Little League and Babe Ruth will begin shortly. The National League has adjusted the age group specifications and this may have an impact on the Babe Ruth program.

Soccer will also begin sign ups shortly. It was noted that Witek Park will not be ready for the spring.

At the Derby Veteran's Community Center, the janitor was being shared within departments and buildings. As of December 1st he has not been assigned to the Center as per arrangements made by the previous administration. This is causing difficulties and the matter was brought to the attention of the Mayor. It was thought that the Public Works reorganization was going to address this need but that has

not happened. Mr. O'Connell is working with the administration to resolve this problem and meanwhile he and volunteers are taking care of the necessary needs.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Orazetti was excused. It was noted that the issue of field house oversight was presented to the Mayor. He has set up a liaison committee with the Board of Education.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee – Reviewing the budget, Mr. O'Connell stated that the equipment and maintenance line item is running short due to the unforeseen needs such as the taking down of the football bleachers and other maintenance issues at the Derby Veteran's Community Center. Transfers will be needed within department line items to cover expenses through the end of the year.

It was felt that infrastructure maintenance of buildings is beyond the scope of the Recreation Department and there is a need for a maintenance supervisor within the City to oversee such projects.

Regarding the Derby Veteran's Community Center bleachers, funding is in place and details regarding life safety and ADA issues are being addressed with the designers and the city's building officials.

Programs Committee – The Committee did not meet.

Facilities Committee – Chairman Jack Walsh, Mr. Al Felice, Alderman Kenneth Hughes, City Engineer Michael Joyce and Philip Marcucio toured Witek Park. They noted field conditions and concerns that will be raised with the contractor. The contractor has already committed to doing remedial work in the spring. The drainage issue along the sideline is still being explored and modifications to the drainage system may be necessary as well as looking at the compaction and composition of the soil in the area. Prior to accepting the project, the City needs these matters addressed.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

A.) Discussion of priorities for 2006: Chairman Walsh indicated that maintenance issues of the recreational facilities are a chronic problem that has to be addressed. Members noted there are many gray areas due to shared uses and shared resources. There needs to be a well-defined system of responsibility explaining the relationship between the Board of Education and the Parks & Recreation Department as well as the shared resources from the Public Works. Also, projects need to be followed through to completion. It was noted that the turf management plan and overview of Witek Park has yet to be accomplished. Signage and rules of use for the Greenway have yet to be done. Chairman Walsh noted the interest in moving the fountain from Founder's Commons to the Greenway.

Members discussed the Capital Plan projects submitted by Mr. O'Connell. Top priorities would be:

- 1 - looking at the Little League backstop for repair or upgrade to insure safety,
- 2 – resurfacing of the Derby Veteran's Community Center pool interior and replacement of piping to the pool,
- 3 – the lights at the Ryan Complex football field to include review and necessary repair of wiring, checking lumen output of lights and initiating an ongoing bulb replacement program and painting of the poles.

Other issues include looking at bathroom needs for the programs at Witek and Bradley, looking at additional adult programs although currently there is no space or staff to accommodate such additions and looking at the long-term plan. Further, the Commission would like to improve the communication with the Board of Education so as to mutually work on addressing fields, possibly with inclusion of said fields in any discussion of school expansion.

Members suggested that program directors be invited to future meetings to discuss their by-laws, finances and program structure or it was suggested that the Finance Committee and the Programs Committee could liaison with the groups and report to the Commission. Also, looking at regionalization of some programs may be beneficial. Currently, a number of programs coordinate play with other local towns and this has been successful. It was noted that Pop Warner utilizes out of town players in order to complete the necessary number of teams as per the National Organization. The Commission will explore this practice further.

Motion was made by James Benanto and second by Beverly Moran Move to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary