

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, May 12, 2008 in the New City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh, James Benanto, Andrew Cota and Red Clynych. Nick Serednitsky, Beverly Moran and David Mikos were excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell and Athletic Director Joseph Orazetti were present.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Without objection, the agenda was accepted, as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Red Clynych and second by James Benanto. Move to accept the minutes of April 14, 2008, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

No public came forward at this time.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Nothing was presented.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell stated that the spring programs are going well. Scheduling of the programs is going smoothly. There is one team for Babe Ruth. Opening and closing of Witek Park is working well.

There has been vandalism at Witek Park. The portable toilet was set on fire. The toilet had been tipped over twice before. To lessen the risk of vandalism, the portable toilet has been placed down by the entrance of the park. This is certainly an inconvenience but unfortunately, the units are targets for vandalism. Mr. O'Connell has been speaking with Board of Alderman President Hughes about this ongoing trouble at Witek Park. Cameras similar to those on the Greenway are being discussed. A campfire area was observed between the fields and King's Court.

Details for the free lunch program have been finalized and the program will run again this year. It worked very well last year at the Derby Veteran's Community Center. Mr. O'Connell has been speaking with John Saccu, newly appointed Youth Services Director, to explore how to integrate programs for the youth. They have discussed presentations on nutrition and exercise. The Summer Camp is being planned for Bradley School.

Adult Ed has requested use of the gym this summer. As the facility is not air-conditioned, there is very little scheduled. The Board of Education is using the little room off of the gymnasium for tutoring.

Mr. O'Connell has heard no word on the budget. The Board of Apportionment and Taxation should be finalizing the City budget by the end of the month. Capital Planning has had difficulties with scheduling a meeting but he will keep the members advised when he is notified.

There is still a bit more work to be done on the bleachers. He is working with the contractor to complete the work before graduation although the work already done would likely be sufficient for the graduation proceedings. The Ryan Field capital account is funding this project and Mr. O'Connell will determine whether the remaining funds are sufficient to complete the project this fiscal year.

Graffiti on the Greenway is an ongoing issue. It was suggested that an abundance of signage may be more of an attraction for graffiti than for the information it provides the walkers. A culprit was caught previously and the courts sentenced him to cleaning and painting over the vandalism. Damage to the railings also needs repair. A recent editorial in a local paper has suggested that dogs be banned from the Greenway because of the chronic problem with dog excrement. This falls under the Board of Alderman jurisdiction.

Mr. O'Connell has explored the possibility of a summer baseball clinic but there does not seem to be much interest.

The relationship with the Boy's Club to manage the skate park has been finalized. The park should open in the next two weeks.

Mr. O'Connell noted that Amity has started a new Pop Warner program this year. It will be interesting to see how this will effect the participation in the Derby Pop Warner as players have been from Orange in previous years.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Orazetti stated that the fall schedule is complete. There are roughly 100 events. Eighteen football games will be played at Ryan Sports Complex. All varsity/JV soccer is scheduled at Witek Park and approximately thirty-three games will be played. The Middle School soccer will play at Amendola. The one exception would be senior night when lights would be needed so they will play at Ryan. This schedule greatly relieves the play on the football field. Pop Warner will continue to play on the football field.

Mr. Orazetti asked if the spring football scrimmage can be played at Ryan. Mr. O'Connell will check with Public Works. Mr. Benanto suggested as an alternative, approaching Shelton; if necessary. The DeFlippo group will be holding a picnic in conjunction with the game. The picnic grove is rented out on that day but the concession stand by the field can be used. Members took no exception to having the game on the field.

Mr. Orazetti stated that the Varsity batting cage has been vandalized twice. Consideration is being given to installing a permanent one and funding is being explored. He questioned whether the installation needed approval. Members felt that the current location of the cage is suitable and would take no exception to installation there. Mr. Orazetti will keep Mr. O'Connell advised and once plans are finalized, the matter can be brought before this Commission.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Nothing was presented.

Motion was made by James Benanto and second by Andrew Cota. Move to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary

These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.