

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, August 13, 2012 in the City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

By roll call, members present: Andrew Cota, Nick Serednitsky, James Benanto and Ronald Sill. David Mikos, Beverly Moran and Red Clynch were excused.

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

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Motion made by Ronald Sill and second by Nick Serednitsky. Move to accept the agenda, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made Ronald Sill and second by James Benanto. Move to accept the minutes of June 11, 2012, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

No one from the public was present.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Nothing was presented.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell reported that the Summer Program registered 120 children at the Bradley School facility. This is a record number. This year free breakfast and lunch were provided. They served on average 70 meals per day. With the great turn out, additional staff was needed and this is something that should be remembered during next year's budget preparation. John Saccu, through Youth Services funding, sponsored an art class taught by Rich DeCarlo. The class was held each Tuesday afternoon and a variety of projects were done. Additionally, the group went on three trips at a nominal charge to each child.

At the Derby Veteran's Community Center they served approximately 30 free lunches per day. Mr. O'Connell noted that in previous years there was a playground program at the picnic grove but it was not well attended. They tried Irving School playground but access to the bathrooms was at the Public Library and that involved crossing the street. Transportation is an issue for many of the downtown youth and Valley Transit tried offering a bus but it received little use. He will continue to explore ways in which to attract the downtown youth to the Center during the summer months.

Pop Warner is underway. They registered 100 boys for football and 85 girls for cheerleading. There is no Jr. Midget football team and no Midget cheerleading team. These numbers are down and there is a trend toward lower participation numbers in many communities. There also seems to be a decline in the number of volunteers willing to assist in the programs.

Youth Soccer will be up at Witek Park. No numbers were available.

Middle School soccer will be using the Amendola soccer field.

Also at Amendola, three men's soccer teams are practicing. Two of the teams are allowed to play their scheduled games at Witek Park. Mr. O'Connell oversees the scheduling of the games at Witek Park being watchful not to over schedule the fields.

Mr. Sill noted that the dog walkers have transitioned over to Witek Park from the Greenway. He asked if there were any problems and Mr. O'Connell indicated that there has been no problem with the fields but Public Works has indicated some changes in the paths and grassed areas that they cut. Speaking of the fields, the port-a-potty was once again vandalized. He had it removed after the spring programs due to the vandalism and he will order another when the fall programs begin. Mr. Serednitsky asked if the doggie bag dispensers that were on the Greenway could be installed at Witek Park. Mr. O'Connell will speak with Public Works.

With the recent vandalism of the football field in Ansonia, Mr. Benanto asked if there is any opportunity for a vehicle to go on Ryan Field and do the same damage. Mr. O'Connell stated that it would likely be difficult but not impossible. There is Light the Night lighting on each end of the field. The gates are generally locked.

Speaking of the capital projects, Mr. O'Connell was able to utilize the school maintenance personnel, Chester Glodek, to install a water heater system at the Derby Veteran's Community Center. The water heater system serves the entire building including the Board of Education offices.

Mr. Glodek has been asked to assist the City Engineer in doing the inspection of the Ryan Field House roof by providing access holes for the inspection to be accomplished.

Mr. O'Connell is working on the replacement of the whirlpool at the Derby Veteran's Community Center. He explained that when he took over the center there were many problems with the whirlpool. It was discovered that the motor in the unit was a residential motor and was not designed to accommodate the demand. To solve that, they fabricated a commercial unit that would fit into the existing area of the shell. Trying to find a new unit has been difficult because the size of the unit needed to fit in the existing space only offers residential use models. He continues to research a replacement and will likely have to customize the replacement by purchasing a new shell and then again fabricating a commercial motor.

Plans for the renovation and expansion of the basketball courts at the picnic grove continue. Mr. O'Connell was able to purchase rims and hoops from Blanchettes. They have a special buying program that is providing a significant savings on the costs. Mr. O'Connell indicated that the intention is to prepare the tennis court area surface for basketball use. The hoops will be installed. He will wait until next year to paint the surface. The existing basketball court will also be resurfaced this year and painted next year. By painting in the spring, it will extend the life of the painted surface.

Plans are to remove the tennis courts at Bradley School and return the area to a grassed area. Funding has been allocated. Being that the courts are being removed from the picnic grove, Mr. O'Connell suggested waiting on the removal at Bradley to see if there is any rekindling of interest in the sport.

Mr. Benanto questioned whether there was any progress in using the Middle School gymnasium. Mr. O'Connell indicated that a recreational Zumba class approached the principal to request use and they were abruptly denied. Mr. Orazetti indicated that he too has had conversations about the building use and has been denied. He explained that it was apparently an issue of not being able to secure the gymnasium from the rest of the building. Anyone could wander. The option of installing a gate was discouraged as the fire marshal stated that due to fire codes the gate could not be locked while the building is occupied. Mr. Benanto noted that the school system has unfettered usage of the outdoor

facilities and he can not understand why the indoor facilities were restricted. Mr. Orazetti noted that he also understood that the Middle School building has not been accepted formally by the City. This would be something that should be raised with Mr. Keith McLiverty, the chair of the building committee.

Mr. Benanto made a motion to prohibit the use of the recreational fields by the Middle School programs until there is a resolution to the gymnasium use. There was no second. Members continued to discuss the matter.

Motion was made by James Benanto and second by Ronald Sill. Move that the Middle School athletic programs be denied use of Bradley School until such time that an arrangement can be made to use the Middle School gymnasium facility. Discussion on the motion

Members and the directors continued to discuss the issue noting the many apparent complications to the building approval process. They indicated that they did not want to punish the children. It was felt that the Board of Education has been consistently deaf on any matters involving the recreational fields or the recreational program needs. The thought of having an additional gymnasium facility was a selling point for many during the referendum process. The prohibition of use of the facility has gone unaddressed for years now and many parents are questioning the Parks and Recreation Commission members about the ban by school officials. Members suggested researching the building committee outstanding issues and also to speaking to interim Superintendent George Tanner prior to instituting a ban on outdoor facility usage.

Mr. Benanto rescinded his motion and Mr. Sill rescinded his second.

Motion was made by James Benanto and second by Nick Serednitsky. Move that it be stated that at the next monthly meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission to be held in September that the use of the Amendola Complex at Bradley School by the Middle School athletic programs will be withdrawn by the Commission unless a resolution can be found to allow usage of the Derby Middle School for recreational uses. Motion carried unanimously.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Orazetti noted that soccer nets at Witek Park were in poor condition. Mr. O'Connell noted that new ones have been ordered. Mr. Orazetti indicated that the Varsity Soccer will be playing a number of home games on Ryan football field so as to utilize the lights for night games. The scheduling is being coordinated with the football programs.

The Booster Club has provided funds for the purchase of a new scoreboard at the softball field.

Mr. Orazetti is looking into changing the keysets at the field house so as to manage the number of keys that have been previously issued. Also, at the field house, there has been equipment stolen and some building damage and he suggested enhancing the security of the building. He will speak with Mr. O'Connell.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Nothing further was presented.

Motion was made by Ronald Sill and second by James Benanto. Move to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary

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