

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, August 14, 2006 in the New City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

By roll call, members present: John Walsh, Al Felice, David Mikos and Nick Serednitsky. Karen Izzo Beverly Moran and James Benanto were excused. The commission welcomed new member Nick Serednitsky, replacement for Matt Cripps, who resigned.

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 David Mikos and second by Al Felice. Move to accept the minutes of July 10, 2006, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

At this time, 7:20 p.m., David Mikos was excused leaving no quorum. The meeting continued for discussion purposes only.

PUBLIC PORTION:

No public came forward at this time.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Chairman Walsh noted that a meeting was held with the Mayor regarding the playgrounds. The matter will be reported under the Director's report.

Chairman Walsh noted that the matter of raises was presented to the Board of Alderman and the raises were approved.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Director's Report: Mr. O'Connell reported that a meeting was held with Board of Alderman President Ken Hughes, Chairman Walsh, Mario Tessitore (Soccer Program Director) and Mr. O'Connell about the schedule for Witek Park. At that time, Mr. Hughes encouraged reasonable use so as to allow the fields to further mature and to maintain the current conditions. Tentative opening day is September 16th. Chairman Walsh noted that authority over the fields has not been given to Parks & Recreation, the Board of Alderman still are overseeing the complex. There are also stipulations placed on the fields per the Derby Inland Wetlands Agency approval. Also, the matter of the drainage is still being discussed.

The upper field would be utilized as a full-size field for use by the travel teams, adult teams and the High School. Travel teams would play their home games on Saturday afternoons (with Sunday as a rain date) and practice on Wednesday and Friday evenings. They would practice at Bradley School on Monday evenings. Adult teams would play Sunday mornings. The High School schedule had not been determined but the field would be available weekday afternoons and Saturday mornings.

The Youth Soccer program would use the lower field. It would be sectioned for use by the three divisions. They would play games on Saturday and Sunday and practice on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. It was noted that the drainage issue on the sideline would not interfere with this use.

Mr. Felice suggested drills go across the fields, opposite the flow of a game, to preserve the goal mounts. Another suggestion has been made that the field use swap for spring and fall so as to stagger the wear and tear on the surfaces.

Athletic Director Orazetti asked about storage space, restrooms and team benches. Mr. O'Connell indicated that a bin could be leased, portable restrooms would be ordered and the benches will have to be discussed to determine the cost and the source of funding.

A meeting was held with Mayor Staffieri, Chairman Walsh, Superintendent of Schools Janet Robinson, Public Works Director Ron Culmo and Mr. O'Connell regarding the playgrounds. A list of issues (attached) sent to the Board of Education from the insurance carrier was presented citing many concerns. At this time the land is under the Board of Education jurisdiction but indications are that the Board of Education feels that Parks & Recreation should provide the necessary maintenance. Education Maintenance Supervisor Lou Rogowski has estimated that the cost for the repairs would be \$25,000 or more and use should be prohibited until the necessary repairs are made.

Mr. O'Connell noted that Parks & Recreation spent approximately \$1,700 to replace swings and repair the ground cover prior to the Summer Program using the facility.

It was recommended that the history of the playgrounds be explored. The feeling was that the facilities were supported by parent involvement and they were turned over to the schools upon completion.

Chairman Walsh noted that a number of meetings are being scheduled. The Board of Education Administration Committee is discussing athletic facilities. The Mayor is considering whether a committee should be formed to review the way in which things are accomplished regarding Parks & Recreation as well as looking at the structure of Public Works as it pertains to Parks & Recreation.

Mr. O'Connell met with City Engineer Michael Joyce to discuss the bleachers at Ryan Field. He has investigated aluminum materials and is searching for cost estimates. Hopes are to have two estimates for the Capital Planning Commission meeting next week. Depending on the speed of the purchasing process, the availability of materials, the adaptability to the current foundation and whether Public Works can do the installation, it was uncertain whether bleachers would be available at the start of the season.

Bids for the pool resurfacing were published with no response at the time of the close of the bid. A number of companies have contacted the City since the close of the bid. The Finance Committee has to make a determination as to how to move forward. This will likely take six to eight weeks to finalize so the work will not be done during the scheduled Labor Day weekend closing but rather an additional closing will have to be done.

Mr. Felice left at 8:10 p.m.

Programs were discussed. The Summer program ends on August 15th. Pop Warner will be starting August 1st. They are down to four teams because of their rosters and the question arises whether this will satisfy their charter with the National organization. Little League will have a fall program. Babe Ruth 13-15 division will be Derby/Ansonia with two teams. Senior Babe Ruth has joined with Seymour. Girls 14-18 fast pitch softball league is also scheduled.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Orazetti reported that JV soccer will have both girls and boys teams. That would add 8 to 16 games at Ryan Field and he will see if the schedule can be transferred to Witek Park. The Middle School also has soccer teams and Bradley School will be used.

Mr. Orazetti asked if there was an alternative plan should the bleachers not be in place at the start of the first home game. It was suggested that he ask Shelton for use of their fields as backup.

Mr. Orazetti confirmed that the custodian has been scheduled for the field house but he would likely not be scheduled during the games. Mr. Orazetti will be coordinating with Public Works for the field cleanup after the game.

JV football has changed their schedule from Monday to Saturday.

The football coach asked that lighting on the path to the football field be improved. It was noted that the Light the Night program did install some lighting and they will be checked to make sure they are functioning.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee – Printouts (attached) of the current and previous year budgets were distributed. Last year closed within the budget and receivables exceeded the projection. It was noted that the capital projects are on hold with the exception of the bleachers and the pool.

Programs Committee – The Committee did not meet.

Facilities Committee – Reports were provided earlier in the meeting

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Nothing was reported.

The meeting closed at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully prepared,
Karen Kemmesies, secretary