

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

(meeting taped)

Monthly meeting: Monday, August 8, 2011 in the City Hall.

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

By roll call, members present: Andrew Cota, Nick Serednitsky, David Mikos, James Benanto, Red Clynch and Ronald Sill. Beverly Moran arrived at 7:15 p.m.

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

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion made by Red Clynch and second by David Mikos. Move to accept the minutes of June 13, 2011, 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 Pop Warner is into their first week of practice. There are four teams, no pee wee, for approximately 95 participants. The cheerleaders have four teams, no jr. midget, for approximately 90 participants.

Mr. O'Connell is looking into a fall baseball team as interest has been expressed. The Babe Ruth 13-15 year old team did not develop this year.

Capital Planning has funded two projects. The purchase of a new field groomer was approved. One bid has been received and the cost is higher than the amount awarded. Mr. O'Connell noted that the price was originally set a few years ago and prices have gone up. He will work with the vendor and the Finance Department to resolve this overage. The second project is the field house roof. Mr. O'Connell is working to get the information together to go out to bid.

Maintenance and repairs are being done to the press box. There is one more tree that has been identified to come down. This should be taken care of shortly. The football field is in fairly good shape due to the efforts of the Public Works. The football lights were put up today.

Mr. Mikos noted that the High School football team has used the field for practice and questioned whether this is becoming an accepted action as they also used the field last year. There is a practice field that should be used so that the main playing field does not deteriorate due to overuse. He asked if this usage was approved by the Commission.

Mr. Benanto stated that the practice field is 45 yards wide whereas the football field is 50 yards. To properly get the feel of the field and to accomplish the plays, the players need to practice on a full size field. Mr. O'Connell indicated that he can not patrol the field constantly and he and the athletic director have had discussions regarding the overuse. Mr. Clynch noted that Pop Warner is using the field for 16 games and they also practice on the field. Should their use also be examined? Discussion continued. This ongoing issue was identified when the fields were examined years ago. The study done more than a decade ago showed that the issue of overuse will remain a chronic problem for all the fields due to insufficient field space. Members suggested sending a letter to the athletic director encouraging reasonable solutions to reduce practice time on the field so as to try to minimize the field deterioration.

Motion was made by Ronald Sill and second by Beverly Moran. Move to forward a letter to Athletic Director Joseph Orazetti expressing concern for the football field and outlining a suggested schedule of use that the field would favorably support. Motion carried unanimously.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Orazetti was excused.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Derby Little League recently hosted a tournament. Parents expressed concern for the poor field conditions. Mr. O'Connell indicated that historically the League has maintained their own fields. In recent years he has observed a slow decline in the pool of volunteers and the level of maintenance being performed. He noted that Public Works offers minimal field maintenance services as this duty has not been under their purview. The Parks and Recreation Department has assisted in maintenance of their field house in recent years. The field house is shared by Pop Warner and Little League and funds from their budgets support the utilities for the building.

Members discussed reevaluating the funding to the Little League program taking into mind that a shift in budget funding may be needed to pay for field maintenance. As the City budgets are getting leaner each year members suggested revisiting all the program budgets. A few years back the directors of each of the programs came before the Commission and discussed their funding needs, their individual budgets and their mission statements for the programs. It was suggested that the programs be invited to future meetings to open these conversations.

Motion was made by Beverly Moran and second by Ron Sill. Move to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

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