

**Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting  
Held in the Caucus Room of the Municipal Building, 36080 Chester Road,  
at 7:00 P.M. on Thursday, March 10, 2016**

The Chairman, Tom Mitchell, called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

Members in attendance were: John Weigman, School Board Representative; Mary Berges, Council Representative; Jim Schmitz

ABSENT:

Else Rolland; Cady Cianciolo; Lee Belardo

GUEST:

Diane Corrao, Parks and Recreation Director

FEBRUARY 11, 2016 MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ms. Berges and seconded by Mr. Schmitz to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2016 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Mr. Mitchell declared the motion passed.

BIKE PATH FOLLOW UP:

Ms. Corrao said the grant request submitted to First Energy included the path itself and her information was that the City would probably not receive a response until at least May. Mr. Mitchell said this will be on the agenda in June.

Mr. Mitchell said he would not be able to attend the Greater Cleveland Trails and Greenways Conference to be held Tuesday, June 2, in Brecksville, Ohio, but hoped that someone from the Commission could attend.

DOG PARK FOLLOW UP:

Mr. Mitchell stated that he left a voice mail and sent an email to Jennifer, with the Lorain County MetroParks. He explained in his messages that the Commission was gathering ideas at this point and he was checking to see if the MetroParks property in the area of the Miller Nature Preserve might be a feasible option. He did not receive a response yet.

Ms. Berges said she talked to the City Engineer, Ryan Cummins, and he said there is an existing water main that runs along the western side of Recreation Lane from the stadium to SR 611. An extension of a new water line from the existing water main would be fairly easy. Mr. Mitchell asked if anyone could think of any negative aspects to having a dog park located there. He recalled that water and residential proximity were concerns and it seemed that location may address those concerns. Mr. Mitchell asked if there was an issue with having a dog park located under the power lines and Ms. Corrao said yes. An easement would be required, anything put there would have to be lower than the current elevation and having a fenced area where people would be spending time might be a problem. Ms. Berges' question to Mr. Cummins was limited to water availability.

Mr. Schmitz said that might be a starting point for the dog park. Mr. Mitchell said a parking lot would be a significant cost factor and asked if there would be a way to share the parking lot with the stadium. Ms. Berges added that Council received a letter from a resident in the area of the pool, Police and Fire Stations who was vehemently opposed to a dog park there and was prepared to rally her neighbors to oppose it. Mr. Mitchell said the Commission had already come to the conclusion that locating a dog park in close proximity to a residential neighborhood was not going to happen.

Mr. Mitchell said another thing to follow up on was the possibility of property being donated and since this was in the newspapers, he asked if anyone heard from a property owner interested in that. No one did. Mr. Mitchell said they now have a couple of options. One would be to ask the engineer for an informal rendering of where a dog park would go in the Recreation Lane area and from there, to gather cost estimates to see if this is financially feasible. The other option is that this is not the time to pursue a dog park. He felt they should give Council a recommendation. Ms. Berges thought they begin researching the actual costs. Ms. Corrao suggested they talk to the Veterinarian in Amherst who is supposed to be installing a dog park next to her office to find out what the costs are that she is incurring as she goes through this process. She said this is more than a fence and water. The Commission should know what goes into building the dog park and what it takes to maintain it.

Mr. Weigman said the previous survey showed that one in seven participants either said the dog park was important to them or was very important to them. The numbers showed that walking trails, running/biking trails, children's playgrounds, a swimming pool, soccer fields and a community center were all ahead of a dog park in importance. Ms. Corrao said some of those have been satisfied and are being offered now. A dog park could rank much higher when another survey is done. Perhaps one of the people who attended the last Parks and Recreation Commission meeting would be willing to start the process and see it through to the end. She recalled that the other dog parks had a group or a committee that helped with it. Mr. Mitchell agreed that someone leading a "sub-committee" for this effort would be necessary. Ms. Corrao suggested that someone on the Commission contact the Veterinarian in Amherst to see if establishing the "sub-committee" is a good idea. It would be the Commission's task to see if they want to move forward with the dog park and then to ask for volunteers to pursue making it happen.

Ms. Berges will contact the Veterinarian in Amherst to request information regarding her effort to install the dog park near her office. Mr. Mitchell will talk to the Lorain County MetroParks about the dog park they just opened in Oberlin near the Splash Zone.

#### SURVEY PREPARATION:

Mr. Mitchell said the Commission members who worked on the previous survey tried to phrase the questions in such a way that they were not leading. There are some that are not applicable and will be removed, there are some that still apply and will be used as they were originally written; there will be some re-writes and some new questions.

Mr. Weigman read, "Indicate the importance of the following programs to your household," and said there were probably twenty questions following. Some of the questions identified demographics then listed four different parks. It took about 3 minutes to answer, there were 544 respondents and it was set up so the same computer could not respond more than once. The Commission will review the questions at the next meeting.

#### COMMUNITY VOICE:

Mr. Mitchell posted a request for more comments regarding a dog park. He also posted a comment regarding a volunteer to coordinate a 2016 Halloween Party in a public park.

#### REPORTS:

Ms. Berges stated that there are now fifty-six acres of additional park land in the City as the result of the purchase of property near the Miller Nature Preserve. There is conversation with the MetroParks as to how that will be transferred and it will be a passive park; primarily walking trails, bike paths, etc.

There was discussion of newspaper reports that the City is donating the entire property to the MetroParks and the reason that might occur. Ms. Berges said, in addition to the property becoming part of the MetroParks, there will be work done to alleviate the flooding in that area. At this time, the new property is not available for use, but will be in the future.

#### SCHOOL BOARD:

Mr. Weigman stated that there will be a new Pre-K and Kindergarten Principal starting next fall.

#### FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Survey review and plans for the next survey
2. Review Commission members' contact information
3. March re-visit the prospect of a dog park near Recreation Lane and possible information from the Amherst Vet.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS:

Mr. Schmitz said the barn on Schwartz Road has been dismantled and he expects to see a driveway into Schwartz Road Park soon. Ms. Corrao said they are working on drawings/plans and hope to advertise for bids in the next month and begin construction in September. Mr. Schmitz said the sooner the better.

Mr. Mitchell said this is the time of year the Commission typically moves the start time of their monthly meeting to later in the evening. He said he will not be able to be available for meetings beginning at 7:00, but he could not guarantee he would be able to make the 8:00 meetings either. Ms. Corrao asked if he would know his schedule in advance and Mr. Mitchell said there is a schedule, but it is subject to change daily. Ms. Berges and Mr. Schmitz said they would be fine with moving the start time to 8:00 P.M.

A motion was made to move the start time from 7:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. for the Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, beginning with the April 14, 2016 meeting, by Mr. Schmitz and seconded by Mr. Weigman, and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Mr. Mitchell declared the motion passed.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mr. Weigman and seconded by Ms. Berges to adjourn the March 10, 2016 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Mr. Mitchell declared the motion passed.