

**Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
Held in the Caucus Room of the Municipal Building, 36080 Chester Road,
at 8:00 P.M. on Thursday, April 14, 2016**

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

ROLL CALL:

Other members in attendance were: Jim Schmitz; Cady Cianciolo; Lee Belardo; John Weigman, School Board Representative

ABSENT:

Else Rolland; Mary Berges, Council Representative

GUEST:

Diane Corrao, Parks and Recreation Director

MARCH 10, 2016 MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mr. Schmitz and seconded by Ms. Cianciolo to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2016 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Mr. Mitchell declared the motion passed.

BIKE TRAIL FOLLOW UP:

Mr. Belardo asked what time the June 2, 2019 Brecksville meeting starts. Mr. Mitchell suggested that the information may be online. The issue of bike trails is to be discussed further in June.

DOG PARK FOLLOW UP:

Mr. Mitchell stated that he spoke with Jennifer Braken, with the Lorain County MetroParks. They are waiting to see what happens with the Oberlin project before they proceed with any other dog park plans. He had not heard of any land donations and suggested they remove that possibility from the table. Ms. Berges was to check on the progress of the Amherst dog park. They will discuss that further when Ms. Berges is present.

Ms. Corrao was asked to distribute a letter written by a resident and past Council member, JoAnne Easterday. It regarded a previous discussion during a Commission meeting, when property near the public pool was suggested as a possible location for a new dog park in the City. Ms. Easterday was opposed, stating that location, or any location near homes, would be

inappropriate due to the noise that would be involved. Ms. Corrao added that Ms. Berges did speak with Ms. Easterday and explained that the area near the pool was not being considered by the Commission. Mr. Weigman added that the Commission concurred with Ms. Easterday regarding not having a dog park near residences.

Mr. Mitchell suggested they delay further discussion on this topic until there was information from other projects, such as the Amherst project.

SURVEY PREPARATION:

Mr. Mitchell suggested a quick review of the last survey. One option would be to review the questions previously asked and decide if they want to ask them again.

1. Have you or a household member visited an Avon City park in the last twelve months? 89.2% previously answered yes.

Mr. Belardo asked how people were notified of the survey and Mr. Mitchell responded, stating there were ads in the paper, flyers were sent to the schools and were sent out in all of the water bills. The flyers had links to the survey on the internet and locations the survey could be picked up. Copies were located at the Parks & Recreation office, the Library and the Senior Center. The information was entered into the Survey Monkey tool.

2. Have you or a household member participated in a City of Avon recreation program in the past twelve months? 63.4% previously answered yes.

Ms. Corrao stated that people are beginning to understand that (ASLA) Soccer, Little League, Lacrosse, Youth Tackle Football and Avon Eagle Swim Team are separate, volunteer entities. She suggested they be included in the survey because they are recreation programs offered within the City. She said the question could say, “participation in City of Avon sponsored programs, or any other recreation program?” Some are not sponsored by the City, but use City parks.

3. Which is your age group?

4. Do you have children in your household? 82.5% said yes.

5. Check all children’s age groups that apply... 60% were six to ten years old. Mr. Weigman explained that people with multiple children checked multiple boxes, so 60% did not mean 60 out of 100 families. The “one to five” age group is to be changed to “newborn to age five”.

6. Indicate the importance of the following recreational facilities in Avon... Choices were - Very Important, Important or Unimportant and approximately twenty-three facilities were listed. Mr. Weigman said the Commission members at the time looked at other surveys and spoke with people associated with parks in other municipalities to come up with the list of facilities to offer. Mr. Mitchell said they tried to include facilities that a number of other cities had. Options that

were currently offered in Avon were also included. Other municipalities included Westlake, Bay Village, Rocky River, Hudson, Solon, Avon Lake and North Ridgeville.

Mr. Mitchell suggested that the list of recreational facilities to include in the new survey might take an entire meeting. He identified “highlights.”

Facility	Important %	Very Important %	Unimportant %
Walking Trails	72		
Running & Biking Trails	72		
Swimming	64		
Indoor Swimming	63		
Off Leash Dog Park	15.8		55
Outdoor Tennis	46		
Outdoor Basketball	51		
Sand Volleyball	45		
Football Fields	41		
Soccer	61		
Softball	54		
Baseball	64		
Fishing			44.2
Sled Riding		43.5	
Children’s Playgrounds	77		
Racquetball			47

Ms. Corrao said racquetball is offered at UH, needs to be played indoors and is something that the City is never going to offer. Is this for recreation offered *by* the City or *in* the City? Mr. Weigman said they were looking for things available within the City. She said the four courts at UH are always in use. Mr. Mitchell said he did not think something should be excluded because the City does not currently have the facility for it. If 90% of the City said they want it, that may be the impetus to offer it. Ms. Corrao agreed.

Mr. Mitchell continued:

Ice Rink		40	
Outdoor Ice Rink	18	40	40
Shuffleboard			71
Indoor Basketball Courts	47		
Outdoor Chess			77.3
Bocce Ball/Lawn Bowling			77

The above list will be discussed, in detail, at the next meeting in May. The next section asked the importance of specific programs, as opposed to facilities.

Program	Important %	Very Important %	Unimportant %
Tennis Lessons		39	
Golf Lessons		44	
Volleyball Leagues			42
Basketball Leagues	Evenly split – i.e.: 30/30/30		
Pilates			43

Mr. Mitchell said a lot of the programs are pretty evenly split and one way to look at that is two thirds of the people either think it is very important or unimportant. There was discussion regarding the rating terminology and how to get a more accurate sense of what people want.

Mr. Mitchell read a list of programs that a high percentage chose as “Not Important.”

- ✓ Cheerleading
- ✓ Martial Arts
- ✓ Gymnastics
- ✓ Pom Pom
- ✓ Baton
- ✓ Dance Classes
- ✓ Bridge
- ✓ Bingo
- ✓ Frisbee Golf
- ✓ Running Club
- ✓ Skiing Lessons

Mr. Belardo said he would be interested in knowing how people feel about an outdoor amphitheater. Offering outdoor concerts was discussed along with the possibility of having them at the baseball stadium. Mr. Belardo said the outdoor concerts for the Bicentennial were very well received.

Mr. Mitchell said that the desire for swimming lessons was high at 55% and skateboarding was low at 74%. This will be another area requiring more time to discuss in detail.

The next section was #8, “List any recommendations for the following Avon parks.” This was open ended and took a long time to do. Mr. Weigman said there was a lot of good feedback. If it stays like this, it will be time consuming. Mr. Mitchell recalled that the previous Commission split this by park then categorized similar responses.

The next section, #9, “List three areas where you would like to see funds allocated in the City of Avon Parks & Recreation program.” Mr. Mitchell read from a summary that the top five categories were a pool / swimming, expand recreation program offerings, a community / recreation center, trails / walking and soccer. In this particular category, 705 people answered and 581 did not.

“Please provide any other comments” garnered 353 comments from 299 respondents, which were useful and time consuming. Some of the comments reiterated information already requested.

Ms. Corrao suggested they ask for comments regarding the rental buildings. Mr. Weigman suggested one meeting to brainstorm with the questions the Commission wants to have on the survey. Mr. Belardo suggested they limit the questions with simple instructions and clarity.

The next category asked for overall assessments of the City’s Park and Recreation program. He said about 70% replied with a broad range of suggestions to improve the parks further; 20% provided overall positive comments on the current program; 10% provided overall negative comments on the current program.

Mr. Mitchell summarized future actions:

1. Change question 2
2. Change question 5
3. A meeting will probably be spent on facilities; what will they ask
4. A meeting will probably be spent on programs; what will they ask
5. Refine No. 8 & 10 – how do they want to ask freeform questions and do they want to change the questions to make analysis easier. He said 90% of the time spent post survey was on categorizing free form responses. He speculated that giving a category first and then asking for a comment might be easier. Mr. Weigman suggested they keep a portion of the survey for free form responses to get feedback in an area they might not have thought of.

REPORTS:

PARKS:

Ms. Corrao said spring is here; yesterday, April 13, is the first time Little League could get on the fields, due to the weather. Summer program schedules are out. Mr. Mitchell asked if Ms. Corrao had seen the building at Shady Park in North Ridgeville and he described the inside of a “pole barn.” The whole floor is turf and it has batting cages, etc. Ms. Corrao said she felt the community would be well served by having a field house with basketball courts that could be converted to tennis and volleyball courts and maybe a turf area as well. She said this would not compete with Track 3D because that is for more elite athletes. This would be more for City Rec programs. She added that she is outgrowing basketball court availability with the schools. She started a volleyball league and she is confident these programs would grow. Mr. Mitchell said the North Ridgeville facility is open for use; their Parks Department does not use it. You go to the Police Department and pick up the key then lock it up when you are finished.

SCHOOL BOARD:

Mr. Weigman said School Board member, Scott Radcliffe, resigned to join Avon City Council. The School Board will be looking for a new member to serve Mr. Radcliffe’s unexpired term.

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS:

Mr. Mitchell passed out the Strategic Plan document. He added a 2016 column, to which he added the MetroParks – Creekside at fifty-six acres. The new acquisition took the City over the ten acres per resident target for the first time ever, so we are at the minimum goal at build out. He expressed his appreciation to the administration for making that happen. He further described the document.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mr. Weigman and seconded by Mr. Belardo to adjourn the April 14, 2016 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Mr. Mitchell declared the motion passed.