

**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, May 12, 2016**

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

ROLL CALL:

Other members in attendance were: Elsa Rolland; Jim Schmitz; John Weigman, School Board Representative; Mary Berges, Council Representative; Cady Cianciolo; and Lee Belardo

ABSENT: None

GUEST:

Ms. Corrao, Parks and Recreation Director arrived shortly after the start of the meeting.

APRIL 14, 2016 MINUTES:

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

Mr. Mitchell declared the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

BIKE TRAIL FOLLOW UP:

Mr. Mitchell advised the issue of bike trails is to be discussed further at the June meeting.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the times for the Greater Cleveland Trails and Greenways Conference would be held from 8:30-5:30 on June 2, 2016 at the Brecksville Human Services Center and is \$60 to attend. He added that he would appreciate an update from any of the board members who are able to attend.

DOG PARK FOLLOW UP:

Ms. Berges reported she made contact with the animal hospital and found that they have donated the land, but are trying to privately fund the dog park. She said the City is not doing the funding although there is a City Council Member who is trying to get it organized and they are looking for donations. She was hoping to talk to one of the veterinarians, but she did not hear back from that person. The person Ms. Berges spoke with said they are still trying to get donations, but are waiting to attain non-profit status. It is taking longer than they originally thought. The current standing is as follows:

- Land donated
- Looking for donations
- Privately funded

Ms. Berges is hoping to acquire additional information from the vet. She indicated she would call the interested City Council Person. She hoped to have more information by the next meeting.

Mr. Mitchell advised it sounded as if the land came free and a City Council Member or more are trying to solicit private funds for the development of the actual dog park.

Ms. Corrao asked if the land is donated and everything else is privately funded, how will liability be addressed.

Ms. Berges said it could be under the City's insurance as a City park, but there could be signage stating "Use at Own Risk." It is known that the dogs are not on leashes, so there is a certain expectation that if you are bit that you have taken that risk upon yourself; if this is private that was a good question.

Ms. Corrao advised she felt it was a Catch-22 because they were thrilled to hear it would be private and being donated, but then they come back full circle to that liability issue.

Mr. Schmitz speculated that if the kids use the skate park by the school where they have jumps and they get banged up and they just accept that and he felt it would be the same for a dog park.

Ms. Berges added she would like to actually outline what is involved in putting together a dog park for the next meeting. She said the City of Ann Arbor has a couple of dog parks and they put together a subcommittee with the parks organization and held public meetings. She said it took approximately eight years from the time they started until the time their first dog park was developed.

#### SURVEY PREPARATION:

Mr. Mitchell recalled they decided at a previous meeting that they were going to break the work into sections and tonight's section would be focused on review of the facilities portion of the survey. He stated facilities are the actual parks and what amenities are available. He indicated they would see if they are still appropriate and where they might need to be modified or new ones added. He indicated the main question on page 3 of the survey is, "Indicate the importance of the following recreational facilities in Avon and make one selection per row" and he added there are 22 different kinds of facilities being considered. He asked if the structure of the questions – Important – Very Important – Unimportant was sufficient.

Mr. Belardo said those three categories worked very well years ago. He said he is surprised the Walking Trail result received one of the highest average ratings and he didn't see any reason to change the overall evaluation system.

Ms. Corrao felt we should also have Very Unimportant category. She felt if we have two positives there should be two negatives. Ms. Corrao also suggested Important – Don't Care – Unimportant as another list of options.

Discussion centered around the structure of the voting categories that should be included on the survey.

Ms. Rolland suggested they ask how often they would use a specific facility such as three times a week and so on.

Ms. Corrao advised they are wondering if the facilities are needed and how often you would use them is a different kind of question.

Mr. Weigman indicated they started down that path in discussions in 2008 and he indicated they were not trying to create an excess, but to capture what they thought were the best ideas. He said he would do some searching to see what might be better or different. He felt that category wise they should remove the ones of lowest importance and possibly add some others. He mentioned they could see what ideas for categories they could put out there and make changes as necessary. Mr. Weigman reviewed the table of the survey results with (1) being Very Important, so those with the highest number were actually the least important.

Ms. Corrao felt they should focus on the structure once Mr. Weigman does a little more research. Mr. Belardo felt there was no need to change the structure just for the sake of change. He said if it worked well the last time then let's go with it.

Mr. Weigman said he does not know if Survey Monkey chose the (1) as being most important and so forth as he did not remember structuring it in that manner. He felt they would have put the (1) (2) (3) on the form to show people the intent. Ms. Corrao felt they should just focus on the items for now. Mr. Schmitz said one thing to consider if we change how we rate them is that it would then be more difficult to compare the different studies apples to apples. Mr. Mitchell suggested for now they stick with the current structure and Mr. Weigman would be doing a little research to make sure they were not missing something important. He indicated he would like to focus on the actual items on the list.

(A male voice) agreed Survey Monkey must have compiled the ratings since they were not in an Excel spreadsheet format. He questioned the logic of the organization of the list as he could not find a pattern. Mr. Mitchell agreed and said it was organized in the summary.

Ms. Berges inquired about adding lacrosse fields. Mr. Weigman felt that was a great one to add to the list. He asked Ms. Corrao what had been added to facilities since 2008. Ms. Corrao agreed lacrosse fields are new. They have upgraded playground equipment and have a new playground at Northgate. Playgrounds are one that was ranked high. She continued that they have Avon Isle for facilities rental, although we had the Community Center back in 2008, but she felt it was not the same caliber as the Isle.

Ms. Berges said that was a good point. She inquired if people were looking for a center that offers classes as she felt that would be different than a rental for gatherings. Ms. Corrao agreed and suggested we also have the YMCA now that did not exist in 2008. Mr. Weigman felt we should clarify further in the categories so the people can better respond. Ms. Rolland stated a Community Center would have a meeting room for rent with a kitchen and activities and events. Ms. Corrao added that the Community Center has really stepped up since 2008 in that regard with all of their offerings although they were separate from parks.

Mr. Weigman said they would be pulling some of the items off the list that do not need to be on here again and asked what, besides lacrosse fields, should be added. Ms. Berges suggested pickle ball as there is a league that plays there every week at the Y. Ms. Corrao felt that was an activity and not necessarily a facility. She said that tennis courts or gym floors could be converted for pickle ball, but that takes time. She does not have the resources to do that because it takes time to tape everything.

Mr. Mitchell asked if they could paint a pickle ball court on a basketball court. Ms. Corrao said you could not really paint the court; it would interfere with the intended use. She said you could fit four pickle ball courts on one tennis court. Mr. Mitchell felt we should just have it and see what kind of response we receive. Ms. Corrao said it would get a big response because the current pickle ball program took off. She said you would never install less than four courts.

It was noted that lacrosse would be played on a soccer field or football field, but was different designated lines.

Ms. Corrao said right now she is painting five lacrosse fields. She added that she has fourteen soccer fields not including those at North Gate. Ms. Corrao said they maintain the lines on the new property for lacrosse as well and said they have not reduced the soccer fields because of the acquisition of additional land.

Mr. Mitchell advised he would like to add something about a publicly accessible golf course, which are available Avon. He said he is looking ten years down the road as land becomes more scarce and expensive in Avon. He continued that what we have seen with Avondale could become a reality with every public golf course in Lorain County and the only way you will be able to play golf is if you have a membership. Ms. Corrao agreed people would think it is important, but she felt the City would never take on a municipally operated golf course. Mr. Mitchell said ten years ago no one would have thought the City would take ownership of a professional baseball stadium. He advised the City owns it, but the City does not have anything to do with operating it and he felt the same was true and possible with a golf course.

Mr. Belardo inquired as to how many acres an 18-hole golf course would require to which Mr. Mitchell responded approximately 200 acres. He stated there are some publicly owned golf courses owned and operated by a city. Ms. Rolland inquired if Avon would have to provide a pond.

Ms. Berges said this does not indicate the importance of the recreational facilities in the City of Avon and to her it implies that some of these are already in Avon. Ms. Corrao stated the majority

of them are. Ms. Berges continued that we do not have outdoor chess in Avon and we do not have shuffleboard, although she didn't know for certain.

Ms. Berges said some of the facilities are indicated as "in Avon," but do not exist here. Mr. Schmitz said some of the facilities in the last survey are indicative of the importance of them in Avon and some do not exist here. He stated we looked at the top items in the communities around us and included some of their facilities in the survey. Mr. Mitchell felt the reason they stated "in Avon" was because they could have indoor swimming available in Avon Lake or Westlake at the Y as options and they wanted to ask if it was important for people to have that type of facility in Avon. Mr. Weigman added that they could be offered by a private owner, as long as they are available in Avon, such as tumbling and cheerleading.

Ms. Berges understood that there was no expectation that because it was on the list the City was actually looking into providing that program/facility.

Mr. Mitchell felt a really good example of that are racquetball courts as we do not have them and we never intended to have any as far as City facilities. He speculated that if racquetball courts were 90%/8%/2% then the City might take steps to somehow ensure that there would be racquetball courts available in Avon.

Mr. Schmitz inquired about indoor volleyball courts as well as a field house. Mr. Mitchell felt a field house would be good here. Ms. Corrao felt a field house would be repetitive as a field house would house all of those things. She said they could take away indoor basketball and the like. Mr. Weigman felt they should leave those options available on the survey. Ms. Corrao agreed since the survey would indicate the need for things such as indoor volleyball, indoor basketball and indoor tennis that would then create the need for a field house. Mr. Weigman felt they could make things clearer by adding a second line under those items that may not be understood by the general populous such as what is a field house. The general consensus was to add Field House to the list.

Mr. Mitchell stated that theoretically a field house would then be the highest ranked item based on all the different types of activities that might take place in a field house such as soccer and basketball and volleyball. He surmised if they were to start a very ambitious project to install a field house they could use the other more granular items to drive how it was laid out. He indicated it may be overlapping, but both would be useful.

Ms. Corrao felt they need to decide what our goal is because right now playgrounds, football fields, soccer fields and walking trails ranked very high. Ms. Corrao said she is glad they are important because Avon already has them in place.

Ms. Corrao inquired if we need to have people tell us our soccer fields are important because they are not going anywhere. She said the City is in such a different position than it was back in 2008. Mr. Mitchell felt it was useful for them as a board to have that reinforcement. He thought it is very possible that kind of conflict, about property usage, will arise in the next five years. Mr. Weigman said enrollment in specific programs would also reinforce what property is used for.

Ms. Corrao wondered if they should break it down into outdoor/indoor facilities. She indicated they should determine if things such as whether sand volleyball is important compared to indoor volleyball. She felt they should decide which indoor and which outdoor facilities were important.

Mr. Mitchell said he would read down the list, asking for suggestions for removal of items. He cautioned that having the option remain on the list would be okay as it takes a few seconds to answer, having the options on two surveys is more insightful than only one survey; if a specific item shows the least interest two years in a row, they will know what that means. Ms. Corrao suggested the Commission consider items that need equipment the Parks do not provide, such as shuffleboard, bocce ball, chess, etc.; these are different than bringing your own basketball to a court. Her department does not “rent” equipment. Mr. Schmitz said those facilities represent the senior population, which is growing due to the assisted living facilities being built here.

A community garden was discussed and Mr. Weigman asked Ms. Corrao if she had a need for the grounds behind the Village School. Ms. Corrao replied that her department does not, but Lacrosse and Soccer may be interested. Mr. Mitchell said the response comparisons might also indicate trends; the purpose of the survey is not just to see what is still needed. Ms. Corrao and Ms. Berges agreed that having specific choices on the survey will be interpreted as something that will be offered in the future and Ms. Corrao suggested they not include things the City will never offer. The decision was to leave all choices on the survey to enable better comparison to the last survey.

Mr. Belardo asked if there was going to be an order to the list and it was agreed to place the items on the survey in “indoor” and “outdoor” categories.

| Facility                | Important (?)<br>% | Very Important (?)<br>% | Unimportant (?)<br>% |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Baseball                |                    |                         |                      |
| Basketball Indoor       |                    |                         |                      |
| Basketball Outdoor      |                    |                         |                      |
| Batting Cages Indoor    |                    |                         |                      |
| Bocce Ball/Lawn Bowling |                    |                         |                      |
| Chess-Checkers Outdoor  |                    |                         |                      |
| Dog Park                |                    |                         |                      |
| Field House             |                    |                         |                      |
| Fishing                 |                    |                         |                      |
| Football Fields         |                    |                         |                      |
| Golf Course             |                    |                         |                      |
| Ice Rink - Indoor       |                    |                         |                      |
| Ice Rink - Outdoor      |                    |                         |                      |
| Lacrosse Fields         |                    |                         |                      |
| Pickleball              |                    |                         |                      |
| Playgrounds             |                    |                         |                      |
| Racquetball             |                    |                         |                      |
| Running & Biking Trails |                    |                         |                      |
| Shuffleboard            |                    |                         |                      |

|                   |  |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Sledding Hills    |  |  |  |
| Soccer Indoor     |  |  |  |
| Soccer Outdoor    |  |  |  |
| Softball          |  |  |  |
| Swimming Indoor   |  |  |  |
| Swimming Outdoor  |  |  |  |
| Tennis Outdoor    |  |  |  |
| Volleyball Indoor |  |  |  |
| Volleyball Sand   |  |  |  |
| Walking Trails    |  |  |  |

COMMUNITY VOICE (WEBSITE)

Mr. Mitchell and members did not see anything that required a response from the Commission.

COUNCIL

Ms. Berges reported that Council approved a new access drive onto Case Road at Veterans’ Memorial Park. A few months ago, Council approved to keep the rates the same as they were in 2015 for Aquatic Center daily fees. She also reported that Mr. Schmitz’s grandson was sworn in Monday night, May 9, 2016, as a full time fire fighter for the City of Avon.

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Ms. Corrao stated that there had been a case of vandalism in one of the restrooms and asked that people be aware of how the facilities are used. She also reported that there was a lacrosse tournament at Veterans’ Park a few weekends ago and there were thirty-one teams with 600 players and their fans. The fields were torn up, but grass grows back and everyone had a great time.

SCHOOL BOARD:

Mr. Weigman said a new member was appointed to the School Board; her name is Kelly Zurawski.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mrs. Rolland and seconded by Mr. Schmitz to adjourn the May 12, 2016 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Mr. Mitchell declared the motion passed.