

**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, July 14, 2016**

Acting Chairman, Jim Schmitz, called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

Other members in attendance were: John Weigman, School Board Representative; Mary Berges, Council Representative; Cady Cianciolo and Diane Corrao, Parks & Recreation Director

ABSENT:

Else Rolland, Tom Mitchell and Lee Belardo

It was noted that Else Rolland moved out of Avon and the Mayor would need to appoint, with subsequent approval by Council, someone to fill the vacancy to this board.

MAY 12, 2016 MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ms. Berges and seconded by Mr. Weigman to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2016 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Mr. Schmitz declared the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Weigman stated when it was discussed a couple of months ago about facilities, it was decided we would not change the grading scale topics across the top and he felt there was no reason to change it for programs as well. Ms. Corrao confirmed we would be staying with Very Important, Important and Not Important. Mr. Weigman advised he was trying to decide if we should reduce the programs list and he mentioned Pom Pom, Frisbee Golf, Skiing lessons and Baton. Ms. Corrao confirmed Baton, Pom Pom and dance are offered at Pizzazz on Jaycox Rd. as private lessons in the City of Avon. Mr. Weigman said they looked at what other cities were offering and that helped in developing the list and trying to decide what else we need to offer going forward based on some of these results and he does not know where to go with this because some of these programs are offered privately already.

Mr. Weigman added that Ms. Corrao offers a good variety of programs and there might be some things on the list that may never realistically be offered in Avon, such as skiing. Ms. Corrao agreed and said there is already snowshoeing at the French Creek Reservation in Sheffield, but she does not know how we would ever be able to have any kind of cross country skiing and certainly not downhill skiing programs as she felt we do not have the space needed or the proper terrain available. Mr. Weigman said he is trying to figure out what we get out of the results. Ms.

Corrao responded the City has tennis lessons, although this year they did not have it for grades K thru 4 because of a time change conflict, but the City still had grades 5 thru 8 and the high school coaches have 9 thru 12, to a question asked by Mr. Weigman. He inquired as to what the others felt could be removed from the list. Ms. Cianciolo inquired if he meant such programs as skiing that was most likely never going to be offered in Avon, to which Mr. Weigman confirmed.

Ms. Corrao felt there were a lot of programs listed that are already available in the city limits or close by. She covered the program list as follows:

- Golf Lessons - offered at Bob-O-Links.
- Summer Days Camps- The City has Playground Days, but that was not a full day camp. The YMCA has summer camps and some are full days and some of the daycares have full day daycare day camps.
- Self Defense - likely offered at the Taekwondo places.
- Ice Hockey / Ice Skating - fall into more of a facilities category.
 - Mr. Weigman added a hockey club has been organized at the high school level.
- Archery – they plan on something next year in conjunction with Cabela’s at a park in a controlled environment.
- Weight Training - offered at fitness gyms
- Pilates - offered in different places in the city
- Horseback Riding – offered privately at Holly Hill in Avon Lake
- Yoga – offered at a yoga studio
- Cheerleading – offered at Tumbles & Cheers
- Martial Arts – offered a couple of martial arts studios
- Gymnastics – offered at Little Flippers as well as in Avon Lake
- Pom Pom and Baton Lessons – offered at Pizzazz
- Dance – offered at several locations in the area
- Bridge – might be played at the Senior Center
- BINGO – didn’t know of any offerings. It was not offered at Holy Trinity any longer.
- Frisbee Golf – great idea for at a park, but it can’t coexist on the soccer fields, etc. - not feasible at this time
- Running Club – a couple of running camps and running clubs are offered
- Skiing Lessons – not practical in Avon

Ms. Corrao stated she was not sure where they wanted to go from this point. Mr. Weigman inquired if we ask for more feedback on a program and we are not going to do much with the information should we just kill the topic because the city is plugged into a lot of these programs already, whether directly or indirectly. Mr. Weigman stated that most of these programs are available today although 4 or 5 years ago, when the list was created, there were more gaps. Ms. Corrao advised unless the board wanted to use it as a comparison from then to now, but it depends on what their goals are. Mr. Weigman advised he knew what the goals were back then and that was to identify the gap and fill it as they were able. Mr. Weigman said many of those gaps have been filled and he did not know now. He suggested it could be left on the list to see where the interest lies, but if they were never going to act on it. Mr. Weigman felt we should have a list of actionable items so they could have a better offering for the community. Ms. Cianciolo inquired if we wanted to do an “apples to apples” comparison or remove items from

the list or tweak the list prior to comparison. Mr. Weigman said he had several surveys over time and it has changed dramatically this last time from the prior two and he understood the intent with the first two with trying to determine where there are gaps and identify them and fill it if they could. He added that the Parks Department has done an excellent job in filling those gaps even simple things such as park maintenance. Mr. Weigman felt the City was farther along now and the gaps do not exist as much as they did in the past. Mr. Weigman stated he didn't know if we should collect data just to collect data and he inquired if we should add or take anything away if we are to keep it. Ms. Berges believed they were going to add Pickle Ball and LaCrosse. Ms. Corrao felt the list is dated because Pickle Ball and LaCrosse did not exist years ago or was not heard of in this area. Ms. Corrao suggested it either be left open ended or add more modern programs along with the classics.

The board discussed the conscientious decision to omit such programs from this list as soccer, football and baseball and it was noted that those are established programs were doing well and were not necessary to this list. Mr. Weigman suggested they add a question "What programs would you like to see offered that you currently do not have access to in the City of Avon?". He stated they were looking for guidance as to what could potentially be added in the future. Ms. Corrao suggested they add to the question "...whether offered by the City or a private entity within the City limits?" as she felt it needed to be specified. Mr. Weigman suggested they use the words, "within the area?". The board was in agreement for the phrasing of the question. Ms. Corrao added that once the information is received then decide if it is something that can be offered and then how can it be offered. Mr. Schmitz and the rest of the board agreed that the City did not want to compete with privately operated programs in the City.

After some discussion of the verbiage for the question to be posed it was decided it should be the following: *"Would you like to have access to other programs in or near the City of Avon, such as _____, that are not currently offered or available?"*

Mr. Weigman inquired of Ms. Corrao if she felt Pickle Ball was considered currently offered. Ms. Corrao responded that it depends because they have it in North Ridgeville at the Dell Web retirement facility as an outdoor activity. Ms. Corrao added that Avon Oaks currently offers it indoors, but she was not sure how long that was going to last as a coach recently stepped down. Ms. Berges added the YMCA in Avon has it available indoors.

Mr. Schmitz stated he personally would like to see more activities available for adults such as sand volleyball. Ms. Corrao said the City used to have sand volleyball leagues. Ms. Corrao said the City used to have a sand volleyball league, but there seemed to be a crossover between the indoor leagues which run Sept. thru April and then the outdoor leagues started shrinking as people seemed to want a break and the interest died off and she discontinued the adult sand volleyball. Ms. Corrao commented that some people wanted kickball and that is now available at All Pro Stadium on Monday nights. Ms. Corrao felt that some of it was just getting the information out there better so that people know what programs are available.

Mr. Schmitz said he felt adult basketball was always good if the City could coordinate with the schools and get it implemented. Ms. Corrao advised there is no longer a City league because it became too competitive so much so that the authorities needed to be called and then it became a

pickup game for those who dropped in at the gym for \$3 and a varied number of players would show up. Ms. Corrao added most of those drop-ins were not Avon residents and it was dropped after that and it is available at the YMCA. Mr. Weigman believed St. Mary's has some pickup games in the evenings and Ms. Corrao said there are those who play at University Center Health & Fitness.

Mr. Schmitz asked about Line Dancing to which Ms. Corrao stated it is offered at the Senior Center. Ms. Corrao added there is a lot offered at the Senior Center. Mr. Weigman suggested with regards to marketing that they think about how programs are being advertised, although he did not know how you would market so many different programs. Ms. Corrao added that there might be those who are not eligible for membership at the Senior Center just yet, but want to Line Dance or something else that is offered at the Senior Center. Ms. Corrao suggested if the demand was there for something of that nature it could be offered at Avon Isle. Ms. Corrao stated someone would need to be willing to make minimal income during signups for a program or willing to hold a class once a signup minimum quota has been reached. Ms. Corrao said that is how a lot of youth programs were started and she gets instructors who are willing to come and say what their minimum requirements are for such a program.

Mr. Weigman suggested the board go with the numerical questions and the free text question and once they have the feedback then have the discussion as to what makes sense for future offerings.

- BIKE TRAIL FOLLOW UP:

Ms. Berges stated the representative for the bike trail discussion had a meeting earlier that night so she was not sure if she would be late or not able to make the meeting at all this night. She suggested the board still be given an update and she would forward the information. Ms. Berges advised she doesn't have any new information on the Bike Bath at this point.

Ms. Corrao believed they were waiting to see if the City would be able to get a grant to install the bike paths as discussed previously. She found out the City will not be getting that grant, unfortunately. Ms. Corrao advised they have not done anything further with it at this time. She stated that since the City did not receive the grant it would all be on the City financially and we might have to seek easements from property owners. Ms. Corrao felt the monies for this type of project are not allocated at this time although she did not believe the administration wants to put it aside, but they were still very interested in the bike trail concept. She said these things can take time to develop and possibly we bring it up in the spring of next year and see where the City is financially after some other businesses have opened up and there are more recreation funds available.

- DOG PARK FOLLOW UP:

Ms. Berges distributed a handout and gave them some items to consider as they look at the possibility of a dog park. She added the items were not necessarily insurmountable, but they need to understand what all is involved and the costs associated with implementing a dog park. Ms. Berges said the list was for the boards review and consideration. She updated the board on

the dog park in Amherst where the land was donated by the Veterinarian hospital although she was not able to get much of a response from them when she tried to make contact. Ms. Berges stated she spoke with the Councilman from Amherst who was helping them with the project and he said the City is not involved in it at all and he has not heard anything on its progress for about a year now. Ms. Berges advised the Amherst Councilman indicated their City did not want to use taxpayer dollars to fund the dog park. Ms. Berges felt that was a dead end until someone responds back and the Amherst dog park website and Facebook has not been updated in quite some time. Mr. Weigman inquired if the City of Avon Lake installed their dog park to which Ms. Corrao confirmed such. Mr. Weigman inquired if we received cost estimates from them. Several board members responded that they had not received anything. Mr. Schmitz stated that the once interested parties do not seem to be pushing for this program any longer.

Ms. Berges advised that Danbury Township has a dog park near Marblehead called “Bark until Dark” Dog Park. She said she called and talked to one of the trustees for Danbury Township and was told there are 5 acres of land that belonged to the Township and they decided a dog park would be a good use for that property.

Ms. Berges gave the following statistics for the Danbury Township Dog Park:

- 2 fenced areas- one for small dogs and one for large dogs.
- 2.5 to 3 acres allotted for the large dogs and a little over an acre for the smaller dogs.
- Grassed area and the local quarry donated stones to be spread in areas where the drainage was poor to help keep the mud to a minimum.
- \$20,000 for fence
- \$4,000 to bring water in from the road
- Well received in the community
- No cost to use the park
- Dogs must be vaccinated among other rules posted
 - *It was noted the honor system was used as proof of vaccination unless a concern was reported.
- City provides dog bags and their maintenance crew comes through to clean up if necessary.

Mr. Weigman inquired if it was mentioned who is responsible if there is an incident to which Ms. Berges replied it was not discussed. Ms. Berges was told there was only one incident reported where one dog attacked another dog. The board was unclear as to who would be responsible for such an incident. Mr. Schmitz said there is some property on SR 611 near the baseball fields that they were thinking could be used for a dog park. Ms. Corrao added that would be a good location, but she felt the hope was still to put more ball fields on that property. Ms. Corrao also felt it would be good to have a dog park near these ball fields once the funds were available so people could utilize it while other family might be on the ball field.

Mr. Schmitz felt this topic could be brought up again a year from now to see where the City was at that point with regards to a dog park. The board agreed and mentioned it could always be moved up if the need arises.

SURVEY PREPARATION:

- CONTINUE SURVEY REVIEW

Ms. Berges inquired as to what they should focus on in August so we keep moving forward as the board has covered facilities and programs. Mr. Weigman inquired if the City has a Survey Monkey account. Ms. Corrao said she would have to look into that as she did not know. Mr. Weigman stated the schools have one they have used over the years for different reasons. He added it is not a big expense and Ms. Corrao mentioned she felt she could afford it in her budget. Mr. Weigman said they could use it for a couple of months or even a year he felt was not that pricey. He commented that in 2008 they discussed demographics and then facilities and now programs and after that they have recommendations about the parks, which was a free text format. Mr. Weigman stated there was a lot of work involved in the free text, but he felt it had a lot of value in it to allow people to give ideas. He mentioned that 544 responses were given at the last survey across the four parks; Swartz, Northgate, Veteran's and Little League parks.

COMMUNITY VOICE (WEBSITE):

Mr. Weigman inquired if the board still was interested in continuing to get the feedback. Ms. Corrao said absolutely that we always want to hear what people have to say. Another question Mr. Weigman posed was, "List up to 3 areas where you would like to see funds allocated in the Parks & Rec program" and they received 705 responses and he felt we should just keep them in place. He said the tenth question was, "Provide any additional comments". Mr. Weigman felt they have gone through most everything and he inquired if they have figured out a date that they want to do this. He knew they were waiting for the pool season to end. Ms. Corrao felt next month they could start putting it together and then determine when you believe it could be completed. Ms. Corrao said it would be great if they could begin to implementing changes next summer in terms of programs and the sooner they have the information the better and it would help her in terms of budgeting for the upcoming season as well. Mr. Weigman suggested they choose a month when they want to roll this out and allow 2 months to put it together. He felt if they target November it should allow enough time and look at the results in January. Ms. Corrao commented that when this was started in 2008 social media was not what it is today and now they might receive responses in one day what they would have expected in total previously. Ms. Corrao said if it could be rolled out in November it would help her in trying to make something happen in the summer or fall.

Ms. Corrao stated she would look at the cost of Survey Monkey. Mr. Weigman inquired if other departments in the City were also conducting citizen surveys. Ms. Berges stated that she mentioned it previously, but there has been no talk of it that she was aware of at this point. Ms. Corrao felt they did not need to wait for other departments to be conducting surveys to contract with Survey Monkey for a time. Mr. Weigman speculated it was around \$300 for the year and inquired if Ms. Corrao could budget monthly to which she confirmed the possibility. Mr. Weigman indicated they could set it up and test it before sending the link out to the public and he did not believe it would take a huge effort. The board indicated they could test it mid to late October and have it ready for November and they could discuss how to get the word out to the community.

- Survey Monkey
- Ready up the questions

REPORTS:

- COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE– Mary Berges mentioned the City has a new Clerk of Council, Barbara Brooks and said she is doing a great job. Ms. Berges stated that Avon was rated the Number 1 suburb by Cleveland Magazine, which is very positive. She said City Council approved the Knights of Columbus on Moore Rd. to install a baseball field, which would be privately owned. Ms. Berges stated T3 recreational facility has also been approved to build next to the YMCA. She added the parks department will be able to host programs at the T3 facility and would house such things as softball, football, baseball and will replace the existing facility. Ms. Berges indicated T3 is hoping to break ground as soon as they can.
- PARK DIRECTOR/RECREATION COORDINATOR– Diane Corrao advised baseball is starting to slow down a bit from the summer leagues, but fall ball would be picking up right away. She stated that little league has done a great job with the kids that want to keep playing that do not move onto another sport and practice for fall ball would begin this weekend. Ms. Corrao said there was one boys’ team in the Williamsport Tournament. She updated the board that the coed softball league has one more week of games before tournaments. Ms. Corrao commented that registration for fall flag football was starting and the tackle football registration was through tomorrow so all the fall sports were starting to gear up. She said the parks are looking great even though it has been very dry and some dry grass around, but they look fantastic with all the flowers in bloom.

Mr. Schmitz inquired if they finished at Northgate Park with the addition of the playground equipment. Ms. Corrao said the playground is finishing up although she has to do some painting on two of the apparatus’ from the purple to the cobalt blue. Ms. Corrao added the Playground Days program is 9:30a-12:30 Monday thru Thursday and she could not really be there painting while the program was in progress. She indicated the painting might take place on a Thursday afternoon into Friday or she might have to wait until the second week of August to do the painting. Ms. Corrao stated she was starting to look into renovations at Swartz Road Park.

Mr. Weigman inquired if there was a scheduled date for the second access road installation at Swartz Rd Park where the barn was removed. Ms. Corrao said that is coming along a little slower and she believed Bramhall Engineering began the work, but now that the City has its own engineer they needed to work out the details of turning it over to our City engineer complete the work. She said it was to go out to bid next month and now was not happening yet and was looking like a 2017 event as well as the improvement to the Veteran’s Memorial Park. Ms. Corrao advised they need to make certain there were no drainage issues and that the neighbors do not sustain water on their property and they have gone above and beyond to get some easements increasing the costs. She said they were hopefully to get the prep work complete this year and then work on the roadway early in 2017. Mr. Weigman inquired about an additional access to the pool off of SR 83. Ms. Corrao said she was not aware of any immediate plans for that improvement and it would most likely involve more than just Avon because that is a

State Route. Mr. Weigman stated that he has not seen a lot of issues with coming out onto Detroit Road so maybe it was not that critical. The board was in agreement that the traffic light helped tremendously. Ms. Corrao said the pool is doing fabulously and last year there were over 2,700 passes and this year there has been over 4,000 and they do not have a problem reaching 1,000 customers a day in this heat. Mr. Weigman inquired if they wanted any feedback on the pool specifically on the survey as they have not addressed that topic. Ms. Corrao indicated there have not been many complaints although there is always a few. Mr. Weigman added they could talk more about the pool next month.

- SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE – John Weigman advised school is on summer break and there is not a lot going on. He stated that graduation went great as always and there are some summer projects they were working on with the school infrastructure to keep current. Mr. Weigman added they were getting prepped for the next school year and things are going well and they are happy with the state of the schools right now. Ms. Cianciolo inquired as to the first day of school for students to which Mr. Weigman replied it was pushed back a week this year and he believed it would be August 29th and the goal was to give families more summer time before school is in session.

FUTURE DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- SURVEY

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS:

The board members present each stated they had no further comments.

ADJOURN:

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

Mr. Schmitz declared the motion passed.

Transcribed by Barbara Brooks, Clerk of Council
City of Avon