

**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, January 12, 2017**

Chairman Tom Mitchell called the meeting to order

ROLL CALL:

Other members in attendance were: Jim Schmitz, John Weigman – School Board Representative; Mary Berges – Council Representative; Cady Cianciolo – Mayoral Appointee

ABSENT:

Lee Belardo

GUESTS:

Diane Corrao – City Representative; David Smith, new resident and bike enthusiast; Pastor Dave Woosley, of Faith Lutheran and a bicycle advocate

December 8, 2016 MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mr. Weigman and seconded by Ms. Berges to approve the minutes as submitted of the December 8, 2016 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission; Mr. Schmitz noted he was an excused absence at the December meeting. The vote was: unanimous in favor and Mr. Mitchell declared the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **BIKE PATH**

Mr. Mitchell stated they planned to revisit the Bike Path discussion in June 2017 and hopefully have some more substantive conversations about easements and property owners and the complexities associated with implementing a Bike Path and connect the City in that manner. Ms. Corrao said she would be talking to the engineer and ask about how we get further information about the multi-purpose trail/path looking to install in the right of way and find out about possible grant funding and what the next step should be.

Pastor Woosley said he would be working with Bike Cleveland and some others to hopefully eventually collaborate with Avon in helping to connect the City through what they have learned.

Mr. Mitchell advised a former member of this Commission, Paul Burik, put forth a report and a proposal of some ideas Avon could do in regards to a bike path. He said they are hopeful to get some planning kicked off after they get through the survey actions.

Mr. Schmitz noted he did not agree with moving this discussion back to June as he felt the Commission should talk about it in March. He did not feel it helps the bike path by backing up the date. Mr. Schmitz suggested talking about it in March and again in June.

Ms. Corrao said she can ask the City Engineer, Ryan Cummins, if he could attend the March meeting; however, the part they would be discussing in June is the specific area that relates to the grant and is different from what Mr. Burik presented for a path throughout the whole City. Ms.

Corrao stated the grant would only relate to the area under the overhead electrical lines for a multi-purpose path from SR 254 to SR611 and she could provide any updates as they become available.

Mr. Mitchell felt January, February and March meetings were full with survey work for the most part as they would be preparing to give their presentation to City Council. He suggested they talk about it again next month and decide where they want to reintroduce the topic. In the meantime, they could invite Mr. Cummins to a meeting and at least they would have some idea and target on progress. Ms. Corrao suggested Mr. Cummins attend the March meeting by video conference. Mr. Weigman suggested Ms. Corrao reach out to Mr. Cummins as to his availability and his readiness to talk about this specific grant as well as projections that fit in the master plan.

Pastor Woosley indicated he met the person who designed the bike connectors back in the 1990's, who was a Metropark engineer. He said the interest in the community for bicycling and pedestrian paths has increased and the majority of the surrounding communities were already ahead of Avon. He indicated neighboring cities have also discussed multi-purpose paths under the power lines along I-90, which could go a great distance and eventually connect to the towpath.

Mr. Mitchell advised the Master Plan does create potential connectivity with a multi-purpose path through corridors although it depends on the development schedule. Pastor Woosley advised if Avon were to connect in they would be able to ride all the way from Cleveland to Toledo without a car. Mr. Smith added the Metro Parks have a lot of experience wooing their neighbors and installing fences along trails. Pastor Woosley noted the North Coast Inland Trail in Elyria is actually part of the trail that begins in Philadelphia and he felt this is a movement going across the country and there are a number of paths throughout Ohio and the North Coast Inland Trail is one of the major ones and is the northern route for cross country bicyclists unless you go along the lake. Pastor Woosley indicated there is a trail from Bedford to Kent that is all under power lines and it runs parallel to the towpath and it is well used and it is space that cannot be used for any other purpose.

Mr. Weigman said the grant would be 80% paid for by the federal government and the remaining 20% would be paid for by the Lorain County Metro Parks. Ms. Corrao suggested they contact Jim Ziemnik, Director of the Metro Parks. Mr. Smith inquired if there has been other support for a bike path. It was noted, that everyone would like it, but it is not a revenue generator and the question remains as to how you fund it and get it implemented. Ms. Corrao mentioned the Metro Parks bought the Creekside property for future park development and the plan is to put a path through the property to connect to the existing Metro Parks on SR83.

Mr. Smith indicated he would do some research to see if he could find out what grants are available for this type of improvement. It was noted the majority of communities who have these paths were funded through some type of federal dollars and grant monies. It was also noted the current Charter prohibits the widening of Detroit Road in specific areas within Avon City limits.

Pastor Woosley stated initially the bike paths were opposed in other communities such as Cleveland, but he felt now they are more widely accepted. Ms. Corrao indicated every little section that can be done helps and eventually would connect. Discussion included whether

collaboration with another municipality was needed. Ms. Berges advised one of the items on the plan is to establish a committee and focus on the bike path and bring experts together. Pastor Woosley felt now was the time since the City is growing the available space is shrinking. He added that Jacob Sickle would be a great contact as he was the leader of Bike Cleveland. It was noted the Master Plan was available by request at City Hall in the Planning Department. Mr. Smith also suggested reaching out to ODNR for community grants available. Ms. Corrao indicated we have applied for some and she would follow up with the City engineer as he was the one who applied for the grant. Mr. Smith stated when he lived in Iowa sections of the bike path were sold to merchants and a plaque was installed on that stretch of the path indicating who helped fund a particular section.

Mr. Mitchell suggested in addition to Mr. Cummins providing an update that possibly Mr. Sickle could be contacted. Mr. Schmitz recommended the guests continue to help push for the bike path to become a reality by continuing to attend City meetings. Pastor Woosley stated he was very encouraged by the current administration.

2. SURVEY MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Mr. Mitchell advised they have 811 responses to date from the initial marketing that went out on December 12th, which he felt was pretty good. Mr. Weigman stated the School Board Meeting was last night and he let them know he would be getting the information to the School Board to send out by a couple different avenues the school utilizes, which includes over 5,000 email addresses.

Mr. Schmitz said he would talk to some of the seniors at the Senior Center and encourage them to take the survey.

Mr. Mitchell stated the flyer was scheduled to go with the February water billing. Ms. Berges agreed and stated it would cost about \$800 for the insert and she would need to have the City seal added to the flyer. Discussion included if it made sense to spend that money for the insert. It was noted, it would hit every household. Ms. Corrao stated they should think about what sample size they needed for the survey as she felt they were already there and anything on top of that is bonus. Mr. Mitchell agreed, but reminded them the demographics could change by reaching out in a different way such as with the water billing and he felt it was a worthwhile investment. Ms. Cianciolo agreed it covered all the bases. It was noted, the link could be sent out by Facebook again. Mr. Mitchell stated the parochial schools responded back they would communicate to the families of the student body about the survey. It is believed that Mr. Belardo sent the press release to the newspapers to which Ms. Berges said she saved the one from the Plain Dealer. Ms. Corrao said she would handle getting the survey information on the sign at the gazebo. It was noted the timing was off for the City Newsletter and the survey would not be advertised in that publication. Mr. Mitchell noted he posted something on the Community Voice as a fair amount of people subscribe to that via the City Website. The paper copies were placed at all the aforementioned locations. It was suggested that any completed paper copies that are turned in could be entered periodically. It was noted the survey was going to be left open until the end of February or early March. Ms. Corrao noted she would most likely be sending out a spring program flier and she would add a section about the survey in the flier.

Mr. Weigman advised getting the statistical numbers will be easy, but going through the comments will take a long time as you have to read through them and categorize them. Mr. Mitchell indicated there were hundreds of comments already received. Mr. Mitchell said with the

last survey they divided the comments up by categories and gave each person an area to review and that seemed to help streamline the process.

The Commission briefly reviewed the completed surveys. Mr. Weigman noted there were 11 write-in categories to divide up amongst the Commission Members and compile the results along with the mathematical results. The members agreed to divide up the comments compiled by sections as follows:

- Avon Isle – Ms. Cianciolo
- Little League and Question #12 – Ms. Berges
- Swartz Road Park – Mr. Schmitz
- Veteran’s Memorial Park and Question #11 – Mr. Mitchell
- Heritage Square, the Aquatic Facility and Question #13 – Mr. Weigman
- Northgate Park and Question #10 – Mr. Belardo

Mr. Mitchell stated they would begin next month to review the comments and would set the guidelines for what the desired output would look like and bring it all together in March for consistency. It was noted, the survey would be open through February and the final results could be available at the March meeting.

REPORTS:

- COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE– Ms. Berges advised Cady Cianciolo was reappointed to the Parks and Recreation Commission for a five year term. She also made mention of the Inclusive Playground that would be located by the Aquatic Facility. Ms. Berges stated the City is partnering with a number of groups and looking at grants and sponsors to fund the playground and the City will provide the infrastructure and she believed the development plan was in 3 phases. Ms. Berges advised it was a very comprehensive plan and they were looking for November of 2017 for Phase I to be developed.
- PARK DIRECTOR/RECREATION COORDINATOR– Ms. Corrao advised the Garden Club has been contacted about filling the unexpired term of Else Rolland to serve on the Parks and Recreation Commission from their membership as a Mayoral appointee.
- SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE – Mr. Weigman said he was reappointed for another year through December 31, 2017 on the Parks and Recreation Commission as the School Board Representative. Mr. Weigman inquired if there was any benefit to the Parks and Recreation Department having access to the gym at the Avon School Board Office Building, which used to be the Early Learning Center.

Ms. Corrao said that is a very small gym and they looked into using it for indoor Pickle Ball and it is just not big enough to even have 2 courts. She added that for anything after hours or weekends there has to be a custodian present and she did not know about adding that extra burden to the school. Ms. Corrao suggested the possibility of small child activities during the day, but she did not know of anything currently.

Mr. Weigman advised he would bring up the topic for discussion at a future School Board meeting as to what all was involved from the school's perspective. Ms. Corrao said the schools were very open to allowing something there, but she felt it was more a matter of what was being offered and whether there was a big enough market for that particular activity. Mr. Weigman said it was something to keep in mind if the right opportunity should present itself.

FUTURE DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- The Final Report of the Survey in June
- Discussion of the top five recreation choices from the survey results in July

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS:

Mr. Weigman advised the school is in the process of finalizing a survey to receive feedback from the community as well and he encouraged all to take the survey as it becomes available.

Ms. Berges had no further comments.

Ms. Cianciolo had no further comments.

Mr. Belardo was absent.

Mr. Schmitz had no further comments.

Ms. Corrao said she is really excited about the survey results to see what the community is wanting.

Mr. Mitchell had no further comments.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Mr. Schmitz and seconded by Ms. Cianciolo to adjourn the January 12, 2017 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the vote was unanimous in favor and Mr. Mitchell declared the motion passed.