

**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, June 8, 2017**

Vice Chairman John Weigman called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

Members in attendance were: Vice Chairman John Weigman – School Board Representative; Mary Berges – Council Representative; Lee Belardo; Mary Brady and Cady Cianciolo

ABSENT:

Chairman Tom Mitchell

City Representative

Diane Corrao – Parks & Recreation Director

May 11, 2017 MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mr. Belardo and seconded by Ms. Berges to approve the minutes as submitted of the May 11, 2017 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission. The vote was unanimous in favor and Mr. Weigman declared the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. BIKE PATH: Ms. Corrao stated that the City Administration is still working on some parts of the Grant Application and it is due to be submitted by the end of June. The City may not know anything regarding the grant status before the Park & Recreation Commission meets in August. Ms. Corrao said she would keep the Commission apprised of any updates and she suggested the September meeting for the next official update.

2. BASKETBALL/SOCCER AT THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PROPERTY: Ms. Corrao said that soccer was in full swing at this location and it worked out well and the season is now complete. She indicated she would contact the school groundskeeper to find out if the school will resume responsibility for maintenance/mowing of the field in the off season. When soccer rolls back around in the fall Mr. Weigman inquired if the City would take over maintenance/mowing of the fields again to which Ms. Corrao said they would. Because the work for the Schwartz Road Park project has gone out to bid with the bids scheduled to be opened on June 22nd and the work hopefully beginning in mid to late August, Ms. Corrao said that she will have to keep the soccer leagues at the BOE and it was looking like that was going to be a permanent situation and it has worked out well.

Mr. Belardo asked for clarification on the Schwartz Road Park project to which Ms. Corrao indicated it is a second access road project and was not related to mowing or maintenance of the fields. It was noted, it will be an asphalt access road.

Ms. Corrao advised she received approval from both the School Superintendent Mike Laub and Mayor Jensen to do some basketball court work contingent upon her budget before she commits. She stated she could provide pricing on the asphalt as well as the basketball goals. It was noted, the current asphalt is in great condition and a light overlay was all that should be needed and then mark out the court lines. The larger expense will be the four basketball goals. Ms. Corrao said the Parks Department employees could

install the basketball goals saving the City added expense. Mr. Weigman inquired as to a time frame if the funds are available in the budget. Ms. Corrao advised because her team has a lot of big projects they are working on right now, she is hoping to be able to do it early fall this year around mid-September or early October.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. SURVEY REVIEW:

- Finalize Presentation – for July 3rd Work Session of Council

Mr. Weigman gave an overview of his most recent changes which were mostly minor aesthetic changes. He noted that he and Ms. Corrao still needed to get together and markup the survey to indicate those items that have already been completed. Mr. Weigman said he would send out the revisions made by him and Ms. Corrao to the Commission Members and then send it to City Council once the final version is ready.

- Page 4 through 8 was all demographics.
- Page 9 – People still want walking trails and connectivity and playgrounds were always going to be important.
- Page 10 – quantifies the same result from the previous page noting that an Ice Rink was right in the middle. A grid was listed at the bottom of the page for how the averages were scored.
- Page 11 – Indoor Recreational Facilities with Ice Rink ranking fourth. Community Center, Swimming, Basketball Courts were the top three. A Field House was ranked sixth. Typically, a Field House is more of a sporting complex versus a Community Center that can be used for both sports and other uses such as meeting rooms and the like. Mr. Weigman noted one thing verbiage wise that came out in the questions later was that people did not necessarily consider the YMCA to be the final solution.
- Page 12 – Programs with Swimming and Outdoor Concerts ranking highest.
- Page 13 – quantifies the results of the programs with Yoga, Summer Day Camps, Ice Skating ranking just after Swimming and Outdoor Concerts. It was noted a lot of these programs are available in some way or another in Avon currently.
- Page 14 – is the assessment of all seven of the parks.
- Pages 15 through 27 – Each park were analyzed based on Main Themes, which were those items mentioned most often and then Additional Ideas/Opportunities are listed. Checkmarks beside an item indicates it has been completed by City/Parks Department.
 - Aquatic Facility – Top requests are a Lazy River and Sidewalks on SR83 – Ms. Corrao noted a lazy river is a possible future project, but it is estimated at over \$500,000 and the City is hoping for a sponsor to help fund the project.
 - Schwartz Road Park – Top request was additional access and that is a current project and the completion date is hopeful for October.
 - Veteran’s Park – Top requests were a second entrance and more parking as well as additional bathrooms or port-a-potties.
 - Northgate Park – Top request was remove curvy slide. Discussion included what it would take to remove that piece of equipment.

- Heritage Square – Some mentions of updating the landscaping and some thought it already looked great.
 - Avon Isle Park – Top requests were parking is limited and ingress/egress needs improved.
 - Little League Park – Top requests portable bathroom toward back of park. Ms. Corrao mentioned one is always placed there at the beginning of the season until the end of the season. Also requests to move the Skate Park behind the Police Station was a common theme.
- Page 28- List 3 Areas to Allocate Funds. Mr. Weigman noted he listed them out as well as used the Word Cloud to provide a graphic and what was mentioned more often was a bigger graphic than something mentioned less frequently. Many of the themes were repeated throughout the survey. It was mentioned that AED units in the parks are wanted. Ms. Corrao said she spoke with the Fire Department about that possibility, but while they are worth the high expense, theft is a major concern. The Avon website was mentioned several times as not being easy to navigate especially the parks content. Ms. Corrao noted that the Parks Department is constantly changing and it is difficult to keep the content current and possibly they could look into having someone in the Parks Department maintain the Parks information to keep it more up to date. It was suggested that the website could be a future topic for discussion similar to what Avon Lake, Rocky River and Westlake use.
 - Page 31 – “What Amenities Would You Like to See when French Creek Park is Developed.” Word Cloud added. Frequently mentioned themes included Field House and Indoor Pool. It was noted this park will be located near Recreation Lane and the Crusher’s Stadium and not near a residential neighborhood like most of the other Avon Parks.
 - Page 33 – “What Other Programs Would You Like to See Offered”. There was a lot of commentary on Hockey and Ice Skating. Word Cloud added. Offerings similar to neighboring cities mentioned. Drug prevention program was mentioned and it was noted the school offers some education in that area now.
 - Page 34 – Additional Comments. 335 responses. Many gave positive feedback of how much Avon residents love Avon and love the parks and love the job that Avon Parks and Recreation are doing. Lots of good positive feedback from the community. Ms. Brady felt it should be mentioned that archery, bb gun, firearms and hunting was not cost effective for the number of participants and not feasible at this point in time. There was some discussion regarding a community center and what neighboring cities provide. Mr. Belardo noted that the nice thing about Fairview Park was that it was a joint effort between the City and the Schools to provide a facility for the student athletes as well as the community at large. Mr. Weigman noted Avon has a lot of good things for sports offered, but he felt on the arts side for a performing arts center to be included in such a facility would help bridge the gap. The final comment listed provided by a survey taker wraps it up nicely. “I think we have come a long way in improving the Parks and Recreation areas and feel you should be applauded for all that has been done. I only hope it will continue and that maybe from the survey you will find what the majority would like. Thanks for all that has been done.”

Mr. Weigman said if the other members found anything in the survey in the individual ideas or comments that does not quite track the focus of the comments that he would make updates. He would finalize the PowerPoint and email it out and they could respond within a short turnaround time and then let the Clerk of Council know it was ready for distribution. It was discussed the items that have been completed would have a checkmark where there is currently a bullet point. Ms. Berges felt unless there was an important reason it becomes too much to add explanations. Mr. Weigman agreed to mark the completed ones with a checkmark and leave the explanations out and if people have questions or want additional feedback they can contact the Parks Director, to which Ms. Corrao agreed. Mr. Weigman stated he would contact Mr. Mitchell and confirm with him the July 3rd date for presenting to City Council.

Mr. Weigman inquired as to how they want to approach the media with the survey results. Ms. Berges felt that was a very good question as she was certain those who took the time to take the survey would be interested in the results. Mr. Weigman inquired if it made sense to put the PowerPoint slides on the City website. Discussion followed as to whether the commentary should be disseminated to the public as some comments may have only been mentioned once. It was noted, the statistics went through page 13 and the commentary is the following pages. Ms. Brady liked the idea of including the Word Clouds because if something was mentioned frequently then it was a bigger bolder word and if something was only mentioned once it was much smaller meaning it was less significant to the survey takers as a whole. Mr. Weigman asked if there was something to be concerned about with putting the whole report on the website. Ms. Cianciolo felt the way it was presented was broad enough that they were not committed to implementing an idea. Ms. Corrao reminded the group that some ideas may have only been mentioned once and was listed. Ms. Corrao was not in favor of the commentary being included, but rather just the statistics. Mr. Weigman suggested they include the statistics and the Word Clouds for the website and City Council would receive the full report. Mr. Belardo advised he did not look at the report with an eye as to what the media would glean from it, but he has some reservations with all of the “additional ideas and opportunities” section because without further explanation someone could read it as a list of things the Parks Department has been remiss in doing. Mr. Weigman felt it was just brainstorming. The discussion continued with mention that the media might highlight a perceived negative in order to sell newspapers. Mr. Weigman noted that it is all public information and someone could request it. Ms. Berges said the residents should know where to go to get the information. Ms. Cianciolo suggested a link could be posted similar to when they asked for residents to take the survey at the beginning of the process. Mr. Weigman suggested a couple of paragraphs could be written in the next newsletter with a link to the survey results. Ms. Berges indicated she would check into when the next newsletter was going out. Mr. Weigman inquired if there was an additional expense to add it to the water bill to which Ms. Berges confirmed there is and she believed it was approximately \$800.

Mr. Weigman said his intent of the Executive Summary is to cover the main talking points of what came out of the whole survey as a one page, two paragraph summary.

2. FUTURE TOPICS

- INVITE CITY ENGINEER TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE BIKE PATH EASEMENTS
Mr. Weigman noted that topic will remain to be determined until they hear about the status of the grant.
- DOG PARK
It was noted, the Dog Park ranked very low on the survey.

Mr. Belardo advised from time to time Cleveland Magazine will rate a community and its Parks and Recs Department is a part of that rating. He said one of the things the rating checks off is whether or not it has a swimming pool and the like. Mr. Belardo inquired if a Dog Park was one of the amenities that rate a community higher or not. Mr. Weigman stated he has never seen a Dog Park mentioned in those surveys. Mr. Belardo advised if a Dog Park moves the community rank higher even though it was low in the survey results, he felt then it was worth considering. Mr. Weigman advised he cannot imagine Council spending money on something that is not highly rated like the connectivity issue. Mr. Belardo said he is including all opportunities in his question such as Ice Skating and others. Mr. Belardo noted if one of these offerings helps to move the community forward then it was worth considering.

Mr. Weigman felt they strike this item from future agenda topics because until the French Creek Park is built out, he was not sure they need to keep having this discussion as that would be the logical place for a dog park. The general consensus was in agreement with Mr. Weigman's suggestion and no opposition was voiced.

- REVIEW THE WEBSITE
Look at websites of Avon Lake, Rocky River, Solon and Bay Village

COMMUNITY VOICE: - No new updates

REPORTS:

- COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE—
Ms. Berges advised the Charter Review Commission met this year and they looked at items they thought needed to be changed/added/removed/clarified in the Charter language. She said the one item that pertains to the Park and Recreation Commission is the item to “Eliminate the Park and Recreation Commission”. Ms. Berges stated the reason for this proposed Charter Amendment is there is now a full-time Director and staff and the Park and Recreation Commission has no authority as things still have to go through the Director and it was felt there is some redundancy. She said it will be on the ballot in November. Ms. Berges advised the City Law Director explained that if approved by the voters then the Commission is deemed dissolved at that point.

Mr. Weigman felt it was a good idea.

Ms. Brady inquired if Ms. Corrao felt having this Commission in place is an added burden. Ms. Corrao felt when this Commission was developed it was a good thing and it was created when there was not a full time Park Department. Ms. Corrao said it has been wonderful to have the survey and to have the Commission work to create it and compile the results. Ms. Corrao stated a big reason for the Park Commission is to continue to look into purchasing land or other opportunities for growth and the parks that we currently have are pretty well established as far as location, although they want to constantly improving them, they cannot add more soccer fields to the current parks as the parks are basically built out. Ms. Corrao said any time land becomes available the Administration is going to look into the possibility of purchasing it and they are very proactive about more park land. Ms. Corrao noted the Commission is not paid a lot of money, but those funds could be used toward a new piece of playground equipment. There were voices in agreement with Ms. Corrao's statement. Ms. Brady stated the reason for her question was because she wanted to hear Ms. Corrao's opinion on it and if Ms. Corrao felt the Commission is not needed then she would support that decision. Ms. Corrao said she is in full agreement with the Charter Review Commission in placing it on the ballot asking for a Charter change.

Mr. Belardo advised he is surprised it requires a Charter Review to remove the Commission. Ms. Berges advised it is interesting because a similar thing happened with the Senior Center Board a few years ago, but it could be dissolved by Ordinance because their board was not listed in the Charter like the Park and Recreation Commission.

Ms. Berges advised there was a groundbreaking last week for “Every Child’s Playground” and it is very exciting. She felt it is a true collaboration of the schools and many other community groups working together to make this playground successful.

- PARK AND RECREATION DIRECTOR– Ms. Corrao said they are in full swing for the summer.
- SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE – Mr. Weigman advised graduation was last Friday and finals were today and school is officially out for the season. There were 275 graduates and he noted it would be the last smallest class for a long time as next year’s class was approximately 100 more students and the upcoming 8th grade class is around 390 students. Mr. Weigman noted the school looks at staffing every year to support student needs.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Mr. Belardo and seconded by Ms. Brady to adjourn the June 8, 2017 meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission. The vote was unanimous in favor and Mr. Weigman declared the motion passed.

Transcribed by Barbara Brooks, Clerk of Council
City of Avon