

**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, September 14, 2017**

Chairman Tom Mitchell called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

Members in attendance were: Lee Belardo; Mary Berges; Cady Cianciolo and Chairman Tom Mitchell

ALSO PRESENT:

Diane Corrao – Parks & Recreation Director

ABSENT:

Mary Brady and Vice Chairman John Weigman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 10, 2017 MEETING

A motion was made by Ms. Cianciolo and seconded by Ms. Berges to adopt the minutes of the August 10, 2017 meeting as published; all Yeas on roll call and motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

- Basketball/Soccer at Board of Education gymnasium/property
  - Ms. Corrao stated that soccer was going well and they have four soccer fields at this location and they were being used by the four and five year olds. She said she has not heard any complaints and that is a good thing. Ms. Corrao mentioned they have Port-a-Potties available during the games and there is a nice playground available for families and she felt it was a perfect situation for this age group. She advised it is a really good relationship the City has with the Board of Education for this cooperative effort.
  - Ms. Corrao said Mayor Jensen asked her to hold off until he spoke with Superintendent Laub about using the basketball courts at the school. She indicated she would follow-up with Mayor Jensen.

Mr. Belardo inquired if those courts are lit to which Ms. Corrao answered no.

**It was noted, Mary Brady joined the meeting.**

- Bike Path
  - Ms. Corrao advised she spoke with the engineering firm regarding the path under the high tension lines and the grant and they will not hear about the whether the grant would be awarded until October or November. She indicated she would ask again before the next meeting and provide any updates as they become available. Ms. Corrao stated she did not know the details on the grant and how the process works as far as the funding is concerned. It was noted, if funded, the project may not start until next spring at the earliest.

Mr. Mitchell inquired if there was anything else that needs to be done in anticipation of approval of the grant.

Ms. Corrao said there were two property owners who still have not given their consent for an easement on their properties for such a path. She stated one property owner has indicated they were not going to agree to an easement because the owner was trying to sell the property and he did not want it to hinder the sale in any way. Ms. Corrao indicated if that property should sell then the City could ask for an easement from the new property owner. It was noted, the property in question was zoned commercial. Mr. Mitchell felt the path would be a positive for a potential buyer.

- Sidewalks
  - Mr. Belardo advised each year the City provides a listing of areas that are a priority for sidewalk and pathway improvement. He inquired if that list has been provided yet this year and if pathways have been considered for areas that would improve connections to the bike path once a bike path is installed.
    - Ms. Corrao answered by saying that there are already sidewalks that lead up to that area on Detroit Road from both ends. She said there are sidewalks on Detroit Road to the Veteran's Memorial Park.
    - Mr. Belardo said he was thinking of SR611.
    - Ms. Corrao stated that on SR611 the goal would be to get the pedestrians/cyclists to the ballpark and there is existing sidewalk that goes across the bridge and then connects to an asphalt path leading into the ballpark.
    - Mr. Belardo inquired if the sidewalk would extend on Detroit Road from Veteran's Memorial heading west.
    - Ms. Corrao stated she did not know if they would be installing sidewalks in that area this year.
    - Ms. Berges said she did not know the areas proposed for sidewalks just yet, but she believed they were going to install sidewalks on the west side of SR83 from Kinzel Road heading north to Detroit Road for access to the pool facility. She said there have been some delays because of drainage issues and easements acquired.
  
- Review Parks and Recreation Websites
  - Mr. Mitchell stated this topic was brought up last month and it was decided to discuss it this month when Ms. Corrao was present to determine if it would be a useful exercise to do a comparison analysis or if they should take a different approach based on some feedback from the recent survey.
    - Ms. Brady suggested they each take a different city and report back as to their findings.
    - Ms. Corrao said a big issue is the maintenance of the website. She stated that currently the Mayor's Administrative Assistant posts to the website. Ms. Corrao explained that when you are on the parks and recreation page for Avon and once you choose a category such as programs or registration or facility rental then you are taken to Sportsman, a parks and recreation software page. She stated that Avon Lake uses Sportsman software for everything and wondered if we needed to expand its use. She stated that the Sportsman software program is maintained by her and her employees in the Parks Department. She thought that because the programs and such were ever changing that they should consider utilizing this software program more rather than on the home page of the main website.
    - Ms. Cianciolo advised she has registered on the website for notification of different offerings, even before the Sportsman software was installed and there has never been an issue. She stated that the webpage has always led her to where she was trying to go and she has been able to select, pay, reserve and the like very quickly and simply.
    - Ms. Corrao stated that for programs she felt the website works well, but even she admits that sometimes it is difficult to find something specific.
    - Ms. Cianciolo inquired if Ms. Corrao has had specific complaints received from residents about the website.
    - Ms. Corrao answered that she really has not. She said that possibly they could offer to place those who wish to be notified on a mailing list and they would then receive emails and through regular mail with a flyer attached updating people on all the current offerings.
    - Ms. Cianciolo inquired as to what that would do to Ms. Corrao's workload and this would also be in addition to what the schools were already doing.
    - Ms. Corrao said she already provides a paper flyer to the schools and Superintendent Laub has stated in the past that he is willing to email blast that same flyer.
    - Ms. Cianciolo said she received it in the email blast and it worked great and it gave ample time to review every possible offering and sign up.

It was noted the Aquatic Center website was maintained by Steve Corcoran of Look Strategies and he does a great job.

Mr. Belardo said it sounds as if the biggest issue would be who would update or maintain any website that is created.

Ms. Corrao advised for the Parks and Recreation Department she and Ms. Beres update the website and that is how it should be because of the ever changing programs.

Ms. Berges felt it was hard to know what to do because the comments in the survey were vague.

Mr. Belardo said the comments were just general in nature telling us to be more like what another City has for their website.

Ms. Corrao said often times those other cities have large recreation facilities. She felt the Avon website for Parks and Recreation gets better as they learn what needs improvement and those adjustments are made.

Ms. Berges believed they reviewed the website a year or so ago.

Mr. Mitchell said in walking through the website he did not feel it was hard to navigate.

Ms. Berges inquired if there was some place on the parks and recreation portion of the website where people can report a problem.

Ms. Corrao said yes, there is a Report a Concern tab on the Home page and then you can choose the Department you wish to contact. She stated that Ms. Beres receives the email for the Parks and Recreation Department and answers accordingly.

Ms. Brady wondered if Ms. Corrao had any idea as to how many people call instead of looking online for the information.

Ms. Corrao stated all of her programs and facilities rentals are registered online. She said she has not had someone come in personally and write a check for a program in probably three years. She also said all of the pavilion rentals this year were through the website, as last year she was still taking checks in person.

Mr. Mitchell wrapped up by saying that the City has a website and all of the Departments fall under that same structure and once you are on the Parks and Recreation portion of the site there are a whole lot of links that take you to your registration process. He said in the registration process Ms. Corrao has full control over what is posted, which is good.

Ms. Corrao noted that she does not have access to the Main page of the City website such as the calendar.

Ms. Berges said there was an expectation when you see the calendar tab that it would include all the start dates of activities of the City including Parks and Recreation.

It was noted, you can find the all the information for the Parks and Recreation Department by clicking on the Programs & Registration tab on the Parks and Rec page.

## MOTION

A motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Berges to NOT do a formal comparative analysis review, but rather individually look at the website and report any feedback to the Parks and Recreation Director and other Commission Members about the Avon site, all in favor and motion passed.

## FUTURE DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Invite City Engineer to discuss possible bike path easements
  - Mr. Mitchell noted this was somewhat discussed earlier in the meeting and he inquired if there was anything more the engineer could talk to them about.

Ms. Corrao felt they could wait until there is a decision on whether the grant will be awarded and then the engineer could explain the grant award and the next step in the process.  
The Commission was in agreement to wait.
- City Festivals
  - Mr. Belardo inquired as to how involved the Parks and Recreation Department was with City Festivals to which Ms. Corrao answered not at all.

Ms. Brady inquired if they were involved with the setup and cleanup of events.  
Ms. Corrao stated not for events such as the Summerfest or the Fallfest.

- Election – Charter Amendment
  - Mr. Mitchell stated he was not sure the Commission wanted to get involved in any kind of big project because of the upcoming November election when the proposed Charter Amendment to eliminate the Park and Recreation Commission will be considered. He inquired if they knew if that would take effect immediately, should it pass.
    - Ms. Berges advised the City Law Director said that once the vote is certified then it would take effect. She said they would probably still hold a November meeting since it will be only two days after the election. Ms. Berges stated that if the amendment passes then the November meeting would simply be to say goodbye.
    - Ms. Corrao suggested they have the ballot language available at the October meeting so they as the Commission understand the way the ballot reads should they receive questions from the voters prior to the election.
    - Ms. Berges stated there has not been a newspaper article to date about the ballot issues that explains each item. She said the three Avon Charter Amendment issues were all important issues and not just housekeeping. Ms. Berges felt it was important for people to understand each one of the issues the voters are being asked to decide upon. She added that people are going to want to know if the Parks Director and the Commission Members are for or against the ballot initiative.
    - Ms. Cianciolo asked if the other Commission Members wanted to discuss their availability for future surveys should the Commission be disbanded.
    - Ms. Corrao reminded them that was ten years away and could be decided at a later date.
    - Mr. Mitchell suggested each member and the Director bring pros and cons for discussion points of the ballot issue at the October meeting.

## REPORTS

- Council Representative – Mary Berges advised there was a Resolution that was passed by City Council to support ODOT’s designation of a bicycle route through the City of Avon along Mills Road. She said it is part of a program that is the United States Bicycle Routes and they have designated a west/east corridor and it includes Mills Road. Ms. Berges stated the Resolution says that the City of Avon supports and approves their development of that route. She said once it begins to happen that it would be publicized.
  - Mr. Mitchell inquired if that meant the construction of the route.
  - Ms. Corrao advised it just meant they were on the route. She said these routes are not necessarily bike paths or bike lines, but if someone wants to travel from one point to another that this is the designated bike route to take.
  - Ms. Berges advised City Council also approved a Special Use Permit for the Aquatic Facility for the construction of pavilions and gazebos and the installation of the playground equipment for the new Every Child’s Playground.
  - Ms. Brady said the Garden Club inquired if there was anything about installing plants at the playground or at the walking paths as part of the playground or did the City want the Garden Club to do any maintenance at the playground or the walking paths once they are complete.
  - Ms. Corrao felt it was a bit premature to know the landscaping at this point.
  - Ms. Berges thought there was a company considering incorporating some of the landscaping in some of the activities with the children.
  - Ms. Brady stated she remembers hearing it mentioned that at some point, once the playground was complete, the City wanted some plants incorporated. She said the Garden Club was available for suggestions of the types of plantings that would be best suited.
  - Mr. Belardo said he believed the Historical Society wanted to do a history of Avon and incorporate it in the playground.
  - Ms. Corrao stated that is planned for as a part of the playground.
  - Ms. Berges agreed and said it is nearing completion from reading the minutes of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. She stated they are finalizing the plaques and it has been a huge project and it will be exciting to see it completed. Ms. Berges said there is talk of a ceremony once all the plaques are complete.
  - Mr. Mitchell inquired if the basketball court was still on the plan for that location.

Ms. Corrao said not currently. She felt it would take acquiring additional land abutting the planned playground because the City is not going to remove all of the wooded area.

Ms. Berges agreed that basketball courts and tennis courts were on the plan a long time ago.

Ms. Corrao noted that plan was before the Every Child's Playground was planned.

Ms. Brady inquired about Pickle Ball as it was discussed at the last meeting.

Ms. Berges stated that Mr. Weigman brought it up at the last meeting that he had a chance to play it and how much fun it was to play. She said Mr. Weigman asked about the gymnasium at the Board of Education building being used for Pickle Ball. Ms. Berges advised the YMCA now offers Pickle Ball three days a week and there were four playing and four people waiting to play Pickle Ball on one court.

Ms. Corrao advised they looked into using the Board of Education gym and Superintendent Laub has made it available to the Parks and Recreation Department. She said she then looked into it with Art Gibbs, an Avon Lake resident, who was the Avon tennis coach for years. Ms. Corrao stated it is Mr. Gibbs opinion that we would need to have two courts or more and two courts would not fit in that gym.

Ms. Brady suggested the old cafeteria could be converted.

Ms. Corrao stated the former cafeterias have been converted into offices. She indicated they have started some Pickle Ball at Avon Oaks and it has been at full capacity. Ms. Corrao said however, Mr. Gibbs is no longer a part of the program at Avon Oaks and he was the impetus behind getting it started. She said if some Pickle Ball courts became available Mr. Gibbs would be the first one she would call.

Ms. Berges felt it was interesting that Pickle Ball ranked low on the survey, but she said it is not that expensive to put in place as you just need a gym and the paddles and a ball.

It was noted that Pickle Ball would not work outdoors.

Ms. Brady inquired if the City could just have one court at the Board of Education gym to see how it goes. She felt if there was enough demand that it might open up other areas for Pickle Ball.

Ms. Corrao said she would not want to be responsible for manning that court at the school. She felt it is something where there has to be set courts and people could come and go as they please. Ms. Corrao stated at the YMCA when there are people waiting to play, they take turns and rotate in and out of play. She said it is a different sort of program and the reason she feels it scored so low on the survey is because of the lack of knowledge about the game. Ms. Corrao advised it would be nice to see us have room somewhere sometime for some Pickle Ball courts.

- Park Director – Diane Corrao – stated fall programs are starting and they are very busy.
- School Board Representative – John Weigman was absent.

#### COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Belardo had no additional comments.

Ms. Berges advised Saturday (9/16) is Super Hero Day in Avon and it starts at the Avon Isle and will go to different areas of the City. She said in the past the City of Elyria hosted the day and this year Avon was lucky enough to host the event. Ms. Berges stated the event is for local children battling severe illness or adversity and they will be honored as real life heroes. She said the event's final destination was at the Aquatic Facility and opens to the public from 2:15 to 4:00 pm.

Ms. Brady had no further comments.

Ms. Cianciolo had no further comments.

Mr. Mitchell had no further comments.

Mr. Weigman was absent.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Mr. Belardo and seconded by Ms. Brady to adjourn the meeting, all in favor and motion passed.

Transcribed by Barbara Brooks, Clerk of Council  
City of Avon