

Recreation Advisory Board
March 21, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Mark Ferguson, Brandon Thompson, Travis Gatling, Nic Palmer, Alan Swank

City Staff: Mayor Patterson, Director Terri Moore, Andrew Chiki, Intern Reece Kotaka

Guests: Rob Delach

Call to Order: The March meeting of the Recreation Advisory Board was called to order at 5:31 pm.

Director's Report: Prior to the regular session of the meeting, Director Moore began with a list of items that are currently being worked on by the department.

- At ARTS/West an after school program is being worked on for Fall 2019. In addition work is being scheduled to replace the rear awning. Finally, the annual Cat's Pajamas clothing exchange is coming up soon.
- In the parks grills are currently being installed at Richland Avenue and West State Street and water fountains are being installed at Sells Park and Highland Park.
- Cleanup has recently occurred at the West State Street dog park and the same work is scheduled to be done at the East State Street dog park.
- The riparian project behind the community center and along the river is also being worked on. Right now work is being scheduled with HAPCAP to remove trash from the site. The project is a work in coordination with ODNR and is anticipated to be a 10 year project. Then next meeting date for this is TBA
- The maintenance staff has aerated the soccer fields for the first time in many years. The department is considering over seeding. In addition there is a need to give the fields a "rest."
 - Alan brought up that ODNR has recently released a permitting process for geese control through nests and that geese at the fields are an issue. More research will be done on this.
- For seasonal hiring, the maintenance staff has one person hired and will be hiring an additional four to work outside this year.
- There is a waterline repair being scheduled for the water fountains behind the community center.
- The multipurpose room wall dividers are now 100% complete.
- The community center security system is at 85% complete.
- L2 level electric charging stations have been ordered and are being scheduled to be installed in front of the pool.
- An awning for the concession stand at the pool has been ordered and is being scheduled to be installed before the season begins.
- Replacement of the flooring at the pool has started. This is to address the slipperiness of the current flooring in the locker rooms.
- The community center recently had an assessment of the roof. The current roof is coming to the end of its warranty.
- The boilers at the community center are going to need a bid package put together and the goal is to have it installed by September of 2019.
- It was noted that we need to do something with the tennis courts. Terri has been in contact with EPW director Bob Heady about possible FEMA money due to the issues being created because of flooding.

- The Start Smart basketball program has been scheduled and is nearly full. There is one spot still open as of right now.
- Summer camp registration is open and is doing online registrations this year. All of the weeks are already at least half full and many are already full.
- Terri hopes to have a field use policy draft out in April for the board to review.

Sandlot Update: City Law Director, Lisa Eliason was instrumental in getting the MOU signed by working with Judge George McCarthy. Lisa has advised that we sign this year and revise it for next year. Terri would like to incorporate a participation fee.

- There were strikethroughs/changes to the document on Sandlot's part and these included:
 - Changing the number of days to produce liability insurance from what was written as 30 days to 60 days.
 - A requirement that tools be left at all ballfields. This is an item that Terri is working with Labor Supervisor, Kevin on.
 - A requirement that maintaining the playing surface turf – mowing grass is the main priority while the season is going on.
- Terri plans to draft a letter response to the strikethroughs even though it is signed.
 - Mark: What are the items at issue?
 - The mowing schedule and priority seems like it is a primary problem. The feedback was that there were times when the playing grass was too high.
 - Brandon regarding grass: It doesn't seem that the grass was ever not playable.
- Terri also reported that she has heard but has not discussed with Sandlot that they would like to install artificial batting boxes to two fields.
 - This needs to be a request in writing.
- Alan: We need to start the MOU conversation for next year much earlier. September at the latest.
- Mark: Suggestion that Sandlot not be permitted to do any improvements without written permission.
- A question was posed about meeting with Sandlot. Terri responded that the department has not formally met with Sandlot. Andrew with members of Sandlot after the last advisory board and had a conversation with them.
- Mark: We have not received their season schedule yet, which is a requirement.
- Mark: It is progress that it was signed.
- Brandon: It is a win for liability and insurance.
- Nic: It is head scratching that they need 60 days instead of 30. We should see incident reports when injuries happen too.
- Terri: There was one known injury from a set of bleachers tipping over last year. But to her knowledge she did not see an incident report from it from Sandlot.

January Minutes follow up: The minutes from January were tabled and readdressed. It was agreed that a note be added to the January minutes that a conversation was had about attributing who said which things to the minutes for January and that the minutes would then be approved.

February Minutes: The board said that they did not have a copy of the February minutes and could not approve them. They requested that the minutes be sent out and once all received them and confirmed that they reviewed them, then the minutes could be approved. Andrew agreed to send out the February minutes to them.

Other Old Business:

- Pool survey notes: Alan shared that under the recommendations that we not change fees this year is wise, but should be reconsidered for the next year. Under question 26 he would like to see the breakdown of responses by residency. Andrew said that he could re-run the statistics and get that information to them.

New Business:

- The ARTS portion of Arts, Parks & Recreation should be addressed – the board description does not include language about the arts. What does that look like for the board and how should it be communicated? How does this work with the Athens Municipal Arts Commission (AMAC) and how do the two boards work together?
 - Mayor: The Athens Municipal Arts Commission has been around for a long time and their charge is for city wide arts. At some point one of the goals is to parse out the Arts portion from parks and recreation and create a cultural arts department. In addition, one of the intentions of asking Travis to be on the advisory board was to be a liaison with the arts and AMAC. It would be great to have the two boards meet once or twice a year.
 - Mark: So where are we as a board for art?
 - Mayor: AMAC will maintain the arts for Athens. The advisory board will advise related to art related projects in the parks.
 - Brandon: Joined the board for the art component. There doesn't seem like there is a champion for ARTS/West. There also has not been any real discussion about ARTS/West at the advisory board meetings. Would like more engagement in this area.
 - Mayor: It would be helpful to have Emily Beveridge attend these meetings.
 - Alan: The community center sign should incorporate information advertising for ARTS/West.
 - Travis: It seems like because the arts component is out of sight it is out of mind. There needs to be more integration of art with the community center at the facility. The advisory board also needs to have more meetings at ARTS/West.
 - Nic: We need to look at recreation in a different way. We need to think of arts as a type of recreation. We need more related to a vision for the board.
- Board Vision: There is a desire to understand what is next for the board in relation to planning for the department and the community.
 - Mark: Would like an extended work session for looking at projects list and the full scope of what's there.
 - Andrew: Has been working on a more comprehensive list with Terri and would like to share the information once it has been reviewed by Terri and it is broken down a little better.
 - Mayor: Would be willing to pay for lunch for a retreat or extended deeper dive. Would like to see more events at all of the parks and would like the board to dream about what that could look like.
 - Brandon: We need a "Friends of Arts, Parks & Recreation." Is this something that is allowable? Can groups and individuals donate money for a specific project.
 - Mayor: Just like the pool project, anyone can donate for a project. Friends of groups have been looked into.
 - Andrew: This is a typical thing for many parks and recreation departments and is something that Terri has discussed.

- Brandon: How can citizen's help the city and find things that need to be done? We can help if we know what we need to do.
- Andrew: One way that could be addressed is to reinstate a strategic vision/plan for the department that outlines what those needs are. The department has a very general comprehensive plan, but not a breakdown of it. The department had strategic plan that went through 2011 but nothing has done in this regard since.
- Request to look at accessibility and the community center. Message from Dr. Bailey-Lewis, Disabilities Commission.
 - Andrew brought up a message he received from Dr. Bailey-Lewis about issues she has experienced at the community center. People have been parking in the loading/unloading zone and making it difficult for people to be let off at the building. The multipurpose/senior center access doors do not have automatic door openers either, which means that someone in a wheelchair must wait for someone to help them. The path to that set of doors is also restricting.
 - Rob: Is parking an issue at the community center?
 - Alan: When there are bigger events there is no extra parking available. After 3 pm would it be possible for the maintenance area to be available for public parking?
 - Mark: Is there signage at the loading/unloading zone?
 - Andrew: There is not.
 - Alan: The 30 minute parking is a problem too with people parking there to long.
 - Travis: How could the signage be enforced though? Would signage be effective?
- Pool Season planning is currently going on. The Pool Manager has been hired on and improvements are being worked on. The city is allowing 16 year olds to apply to work at the pool this year. The City is also partnering with a company called Digiquatics for logging and monitoring chemicals, clocking in and out, and a number of other things for running the facility.

Staff Report

Andrew shared that much of the information had been covered by Terri. In addition, the COMCorps wellness series is ongoing. The position for COMCorps has been applied for again and a second position is being requested for the upcoming year. Spring soccer is getting ready to kickoff. Renew Active and Healthy Contributions have begun as a supplement to the SilverSneakers program the community center offers.

Other

- Alan: We have a vacancy on this board. The Mayor advised that if there are interested people, they should contact him with a letter of interest.
- Alan would like to see the previous 3 years of usage at the community center and how it compares to the next month with Planet Fitness opening down the street.
- Rob: Has been using the City Source App and has been glad at the quick response from the parks and recreation staff to address concerns. He even received a call from Kevin letting him know the status of a request. Would like to have the tunnel at 682 monitored for gravel and debris buildup.

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm.