Park and Recreation Commission

Andrew Cota, Chairman

Beverly Moran
James Benanto
Ronald Sill
James Butler Sr.
Bruce Sill
John Bittmann

Minutes

(meeting recorded)

Monthly meeting: Monday August 12, 2019 in City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

By roll call, members present: Andrew Cota, James Benanto, Ronald Sill, James Butler Sr., Bruce Sill and John Bittmann. Beverly Moran was excused.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell was present and Athletic Director Matthew Bradshaw was excused. Also present was Andrew Baklik, the Mayor's chief of staff.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:
Without objection the agenda was accepted as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Without objection the June 10, 2019 minutes were placed on file. The July 8, 2019 meeting was not properly posted and the meeting was not formally called to order.

PUBLIC PORTION:
Thomas Lionetti asked why the Payden Park procedures and policies are not being finalized. The chair invited him to participate in the conversation when the agenda item was discussed.

CORRESPONDENCES:
Nothing was presented.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:
Mr. O'Connell stated that the Board of Apportionment and Taxation approved $236,973 for the 2019-2020 Parks and Recreation department budget. He noted that in 2016 the Parks and Recreation Department budget was actually $258,562 which equates to a $22,000 savings. Separate to those figures is the Payden field house budget of $83,000. The proposed employee job descriptions for the new field house have yet to be approved by the Board of Alderman and as such the Board of Apportionment and Taxation has placed that funding in the special working balance.

The Summer Program will be finishing in another week. The enrollment numbers were down. The Valley United Way offered a free lunch at the Derby Veteran's Community Center but the program was ended early due to a lack of interest.

The fall sports have held registration. Youth Soccer will be starting at the end of August. Their numbers are down. Pop Warner is underway with only a U10 team this year.

Mr. O'Connell indicated that the City is undertaking a Lighting Conservation Program. The Derby Veteran's Community Center will have new upgraded lighting installed in the near future.

Mr. O'Connell explored whether insurance would pay for the vandalism at Witek Park. The cost was estimated at $4,300 and the policy has a $5,000 deductible.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Mr. Bradshaw was excused.

NEW or OTHER BUSINESS:

Update on the Football/Baseball/Field house Committees

Mr. O'Connell and the members discussed the anticipated function of the new facility. They noted the need to determine how outside group rentals will be managed. Fees need to be calculated taking into account the costs to the Parks and Recreation Department budget. Fees should cover the staffing costs as well as estimated utilities costs and any other incidental costs. Mr. O'Connell noted that revenue from the Derby Veteran's Community Center currently goes into the general fund and he anticipated that any funds from the new facility will likely also go into the general fund rather than being reinvested into the Parks and Recreation department. Members felt that there should be some accounting of the savings that are being realized with the new turf verses the previous grass surfaces. That would include all field maintenance costs that were spent by both Parks and Recreation and Public Works. Yes, there is new expenditures with the new field house and fields but there are also past costs that would offset those costs. Mr. Cota noted that Public Works Director Armeno has raised the fact that there are added duties that will befall his staff with the new facility. There are more areas of landscaping that will need to be maintained, the staircases will have to be maintained and kept clean to avoid any possible fall hazards and there are other new duties yet to be defined.

Mr. Cota indicated that there are ongoing conversations with the Board of Alderman Operations and Procedures sub-committee. The sub-committee intends to put on hold all the procedures and policies and only address the creation of the staff job descriptions for a custodian supervisor and custodian. Their feeling is that the facility will only be available for school or recreational programs for the next six months and during that time the logistics of the facility can be worked out.

Mr. O'Connell noted that the attendant position was written for that person to be on-site during events at the facility. That would not be consistent with the custodian duties. The custodian would be at the facility when it is not in use. The attendant would be observing and identifying any issues and serve as a supervisor so that the facility is well maintained and used respectfully. It was stressed that the Athletic Director will need to make the coaches fully aware of their need to insure that the facility is maintained in the fashion that it is when players enter the building. They must instill in the players a pride in this new facility.

As the building will be opening soon, members and Mr. O'Connell expressed concern that there are still questions as to the oversight of the facility. Many months have been spent drafting policies and it was understood from the City Charter that the Parks and Recreation Commission would have oversight of the facility. Now it appears that the Board of Alderman is stalling the process.

Mr. Baklik indicated that the Parks and Recreation Commission has done a fine job in coordinating the new facility needs and the Mayor's office recognizes their efforts. Discussions seem to be that the Great Room should likely be managed by the City similar to the way the Picnic Grove is scheduled. He is well aware of the timeliness of getting the issues finalized and will make every effort to assist in moving things forward.

Mr. O'Connell noted that there are a number of small projects that will be undertaken by Public Works and the Parks and Recreation Department. A javelin pit has been designed for the picnic grove. The contractor cost is not within the grant funding of the football project and thus the construction of the pit will be done in house. The fence along the Derby Neck Library side of the facility will be renovated by Parks and Recreation.

Bleachers were discussed. With limited funds, at the football field there will be four sections done with the existing metal seating being re-installed but one section will have to be done with wood as there is

not enough metal to complete all the sections. Bleachers have been purchased for the baseball field within the funding for the field house project and they will be constructed shortly. They will be along side the dugouts and will accommodate approximately 80 spectators.

Work on the new press box is ongoing. The area has been cleared and the footings are being installed. There is no date yet set for completion but the contractor is making every effort to finish before the first scheduled game.

MOTION by Bruce Sill and second by James Butler Sr. Move to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.