

CITY OF VANDALIA

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

September 16, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lenny Maenza, Corey Follick, Tara Landis, Lydia Baker, Rick Scherer

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Larry Taylor, Rodney Washburn

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve Clark, Joe Dranschak

- Chairperson Lenny Maenza called the regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to order at 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- The minutes of the February 19, 2020 meeting were presented to the board. Tara Landis motioned to accept the minutes as presented and Lydia Baker seconded the motion. Motion carried all ayes.

COMMENTS FROM INTEREST CITIZENS

- Lenny shared a concern brought to him by a resident about one of the playground safety surfaces at the Sports Complex being pulled away from the edging. The resident was concerned a child could trip or get their foot caught in the space. Steve mentioned that Rudy's report listed patching work for poured in place safety surfaces so it is possible it has been repaired but he would have Rudy check into the concern.
- Lenny shared a request from several residents that we consider placing a doggie waste station at Helke Park. Steve indicated that he would discuss this with Rudy.
- Lenny shared his concern that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was not involved or consulted in COVID-19 related decisions involving Parks & Recreation events and facility closures. He feels the Advisory Board should have been involved in providing information to City Council in reference to these decisions. He ultimately supports the decisions but would have liked to be asked for input. Discussion followed. Lenny also inquired about the status of the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. Discussion followed.

PARK MAINTENANCE REPORT

Steve Clark presented the Park Maintenance Report.

- The Covid pandemic required us to focus on adjusting the work environment to create as safe as possible climate for completing tasks. We adjusted schedules and based on the reduction of events and

facility closures we were able to proceed through the late spring and summer with a reduced seasonal staff. Most years we have as many as twelve seasonal staff June through August. This year we had three working a reduced schedule. They concentrated on mowing, trash, restrooms and landscape maintenance. Currently we are at two seasonals and plan to have them with us until the end of October. Full time staff have done a fine job in working through this time and have been able to complete a few projects besides normal maintenance activities.

- Patched playground poured in place surfaces as needed during the time play structures were closed for use.
- During a dry period in late spring we were able to make improvements to areas in the disc golf course that stay too wet to allow play in the rainy times of the year. We moved soil that had been removed at the sports complex where we had improved pathway drainage. The soil was added to low areas at disc golf and grass seed was planted. The course continues to see increased play.
- Added 22 tons of sand to the Helke Park sand digger, balance beam play area.
- Patching work in the shallow end of the main pool took place this spring in preparation for the floor painting. The painting was eventually postponed until a later date due to the pandemic.
- Baseball field preparation took place as needed and soccer fields were laid out and prepped for play.
- Building maintenance staff were able to complete some improvement projects at the recreation center and senior center while these facilities were closed. Wall board panels at the recreation center in the special events room and west entry foyer will make these areas easier to maintain into the future. A contractor was able to do some painting work at the Senior Center and building maintenance and Toni were able to do some additional painting and wall maintenance as well as some additional interior work.
- The exterior lighting at the Recreation Center and Sports Complex is now LED. This was a capital project that was completed this summer. The lighting quality is much improved and our maintenance on the lights over the next decade will be reduced substantially allowing us to focus on other maintenance tasks. Reduced utility costs will also be of benefit.
- Seger Park Gazebo also received some improvements. Building maintenance staff replaced the existing handrail at the deck area and painted the deck floor and steps.

CITY TREE REPORT

Steve Clark presented the City Tree Report.

- Street trees along National and Dixie received some structural pruning in March. Low limbs encroaching on the roadway and overhead wires were pruned. Proper pruning cuts will aid in faster wound coverage. This type of pruning will be needed on occasion into the future as most trees are less than four feet from the street surface.

- Nine trees were planted this spring at the following locations. Brown School Woods Park- white pine (commemorative), Historical Grounds – two Baby Blue Spruce and one Yellow Buckeye (commemorative), Copperfield Park – Jane Magnolia (commemorative), Helke Park – Sterling Silver Linden. This tree was ordered for our Arbor Day Celebration that had to be cancelled. National Road south side east of I-75. Three Mushashino Zelkova were replaced with Chancellor Linden. Two of the Zelkova were under warranty. The Linden are rated as a very good street tree. We will be looking at replacement options into the future as we lose the ornamental pears along National. The pear has been deemed an invasive species and will no longer be sold after year 2021.
- Removed five dead or dying trees from the following locations: An oak, maple and pine from the sports complex, a spruce from Copperfield Park.
- Environmental conditions are creating problems for some of our trees. Our Austrian Pine trees at the sports complex are under attack by a blight that will overtime result in the loss of these trees. Three separate Chemical applications are needed at critical growth points during the spring. The applications are no guarantee of sustainability as other factors out of our control are weakening these trees, weather conditions, soil ph. We did experiment with an arborist making those applications in the spring of 2019 with no visible improvement in the tree canopy. We will plan to prune dead from these trees in the fall and winter as this will help slow the spread to living branches, we will look to replace those we lose with the native Eastern Red Cedar or other better suited tree varieties. The Austrians were planted prior to a concern about a disease problem, since approximately 1995 we have not used this tree in the landscape. We have a total of (30) at the complex and Robinette park (6).
- Tree pruning work and landscape maintenance tasks such as weed control, pruning and watering of young trees and landscape beds has been underway since spring.
- Dixie median #3 was redone this past week, the plants selected will remain low to not block the view of vehicles entering Dixie and turning left from Crest Hill. They are Crimson Pygmy Barberry, Blue Pacific Juniper and Autumn Joy Sedum. Selected for their ability to survive in the streetscape. The initial planting of this bed was in 2010, the cotoneaster had experienced a down ward spiral in the last few years and needed replaced. They had developed problems with mites, bagworms and caterpillars and were not manageable in this location.

BEE CITY REPORT

Joe Dranschak presented the Bee City Report.

- Bee City members participated in Summerfest 2020 at Seger Park events until the event was postponed due to the Department of Health and Governors Mandates for events of this nature. The few weeks the event was held was lightly attended.
- Bee City members tilled and planted a 3-40 foot arc on either side of the Art Park/Historical Society Rotary Bridge with pollinator seeds and it looks very nice. They plan to do the same next year.
- A local Boy Scout group is planning to honor the memory of Dr. Wright with the planting of 2 or 3 trees on the Historical Society grounds, near the Rotary Bridge. They plan to plant the trees in October and are looking to purchase from Brown's Nursery.

- Joe and Al Tuttle had a Bee City booth at the Anthony Trissell Talent Show held at the Methodist Church. They plan to participated in the same manner at the Anthony Trissell Christmas event on December 13 at the Methodist Church.

RECREATION REPORT

Steve Clark presented the Recreation Report.

- Due to Covid, most events were cancelled from mid-March till now.
 - o Camp Rec
 - o Corporate Challenge
 - o Numerous small events
- New events that we were able to offer:
 - o Neighborhood Splashtacular Events: Many thanks to Chief Follick and the Fire Department for their role in the event.
 - o 2 Splashtacular events at the Sports Complex and 1 at Robinette Park: over 100 kids attended each event to enjoy an afternoon full of laughter, slip and sliding, Kona Ice, water balloon warring and dunk tank fun.
 - o Due to Governor's orders, we had to stop offering our Splashtacular events.
- We were able to run several Adult and Child cooking classes. These classes continue to be well-attended.
- On Wednesday, April 22 kids were able to chalk in front of the VRC positive messages, pictures or whatever chalk creation they wanted to make, for people to see as they walk by. We had 8 children participate in our "Chalking Up the Positivity" event.
- We were able to offer the Rose for Mom contest. Aaron personally delivered prizes to the winners' houses on Friday, May 8.
- We ran a couple of Essential Oils classes
- Pickleball and tennis courts have received a great deal of use this summer.

ATHLETICS REPORT

Steve Clark presented the Athletics Report.

- We were not able to finish all 2019-20 youth basketball tournaments due to Covid. The last date of games on March 14th to finish the 5/6 Girls Tournament were cancelled.. John expressed how thankful he was for all the great coaches and players that he got to work with.
- We continued with planning and registration for youth baseball/softball during the early stages of the covid pandemic with hopes to proceed with our season. Unfortunately, we were not able to offer the program. We processed 450 refunds.
- Pee Football cancelled their season
- Butler United cancelled their Spring season. They are utilizing our fields for their summer/fall season.
- St Chris has scheduled 8 soccer games at the Sports Complex this year.
- We had 16 Adult softball teams for Monday Men’s league and Friday coed. We had 20 teams in 2019. We have not offering Fall leagues because the summer leagues extended into the Fall because of starting the summer season late due to Covid. Monday’s league ended 9/14 while Friday’s coed league will wrap up on 9/18.
- We have 235 local youth participating in soccer this year. Last year we had 379.
- We have 126 kids participating in Flag Football this year compared to 142 last year. With pee wee cancelling their season, many cheerleaders asked if they could cheer for our Flag program. Players and families are enjoying the league and the cheerleaders.

RECREATION CENTER REPORT

Steve Clark presented the Recreation Center Report.

- Closed in March and reopened on May 26
- Our phase reopening has gone extremely well. Although the attendance was very low for the first couple weeks, it has increase.

First 2 weeks after reopening

Average attendance	Past 10 weeks average attendance	
Monday	132	335
Tuesday	136	315
Wednesday	143	285
Thursday	138	280

Friday	147	246
Saturday	80	153
Sunday	40	100

- Swim lesson restarted on September 12.
- Butler Swim Team began practices the week of September 1.
- We had numerous birthday party refunds due to Covid.
- Pickleball continues to play M-F
- Senior Volleyball continues to play on T and TH.
- Medicare Monday's continue on Monday's in the lobby from 9:00-11:00
- Group Fitness classes have been very well received in the gym since reopening. In August of 2020 we had 2,086 class participants compared to 3,015 in 2019.
- Our Fitness Floor counts for 2020: 4,810 compared to 8,837 in 2019.
- Senior Incentive winners (required to have 10 visits to be eligible to win).
 - o August:
 - ☐ Nancy Boedeker 22 visits
 - ☐ Kenneth Davis 10 visits
 - ☐ Ned White Jr 19 visits
 - ☐ Joy Wahl 24 visits
 - o July
 - ☐ Judith Smiley Josselyn-10
 - ☐ George Grampp-26
 - ☐ Carl Bauer-13
 - ☐ Don Hoendorf-15
 - o June
 - ☐ Michael McAtee (19 visits)
 - ☐ Wayne Floyd (10 visits)
 - ☐ Harold Brusman (13 visits)
 - ☐ Bobbie Edwards (18 visits)

SENIOR CENTER REPORT

Steve Clark presented the Senior Center Report.

- Governor DeWine order the closing of the senior center at 4:00pm on Friday, March 13th and we plan to reopen on Thursday, October 1st. Phase 1 of the reopening will look very different than before. We are forced to scale back on programming and the number of folks permitted in the center at any given time. Staff continues to navigate through the Governor's orders to ensure a safe smart opening.
- We reinstated Van Tran transportation services on Monday, July 6. Six of our volunteer drivers agreed to drive since reinstating the program. We are very thankful and proud of our volunteers and our transportation program.

CASSEL HILLS POOL REPORT

Steve Clark presented the Cassel Hills Pool Report.

- Due to Governor DeWine's stringent reopening orders, we were not able to open Cassel Hills Pool for the 2020 swim season. We are very much looking forward to the 2021 season!

OLD BUSINESS

- There was no Old Business presented.

NEW BUSINESS

- Steve asked for discussion by the Board the idea of conducting meetings on a quarterly basis instead of the current 8-9 meeting schedule. Corey mentioned that other city boards and commission do not meet as often and was interested in hearing the thoughts of Board members on this idea. Steve mentioned that staff could still provide monthly reports to Advisory Board Members and the quarterly meeting could be geared toward discussion topics placed on the agenda in advance. Discussion followed. Corey suggested having staff determine which months would be best to conduct the meetings based on program/event schedules. Lenny Maenza made a motion to change the meeting schedule to a quarterly schedule if permitted by City Charter. Lydia Baker seconded the motion. All in favor. It was

determined that Steve will check with the City Managers Office to determine what process needs to be followed and report back at the October meeting.

- Corey notified the Board that he and Steve have been discussing the desire to conduct a Parks & Recreation Needs Analysis/Master Plan for certain facilities in the Parks & Recreation system including Helke Park, Cassel Hills Pool, Sports Complex and Recreation Center. Discussion followed. Board members were in favor of moving forward with such a plan. Corey explained this topic will most likely be discussed during the upcoming budget process.
- Joe Dranschak wanted to share that the pillars at each end of the Rotary Bridge at the Art Park are leaning and should be looked at to determine necessary repairs.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, Tara Landis made a motion to adjourn and Rick Scherer seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion carried all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m..

Lenny Maenza, Chairperson

Rick Scherer, Secretary