

HARTFORD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, September 7

6:30 PM – City Hall Council Chambers

Present: Jeff Troeller, Amy Hoffmann, Joe Kohler, Scott Helms, Todd Rusniak

Excused: Dave Ziemer, Mark Kohnhorst

1. President Troeller called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM; "This is an open meeting under 19.81 to 19.98 of the Wisconsin State Statutes".
2. Approval of Minutes –
MOTION by Kohler seconded by Troeller to approve last month's Minutes.
MOTION CARRIED
3. Informational Monthly Staff Reports – Reviewed.
4. Communication and Correspondence – The Director informed the Commission that he has received two emails from members of the Community Choir expressing their displeasure regarding the increase in the Community Choir Fee. They had noticed in the Fall Activity Guide the Choir fee included a fee for non-resident which is \$15 more than the resident fee and what they previously paid. As approved in the 2016 budget, all programs include a non-resident fee. Prior to 2016 some programs were exempt such as youth league programs and choir. However, during the 2016 budget planning, staff, as approved by Commission and Council, set non-resident fees across the board for all programs, creating more fairness and uniformity in program fees. The non-resident fee is \$15 for most programs that meet 4 times or more and \$7.50 for those that meet 3 or less times. In one season, the Choir meets weekly for 3-4 months resulting in about 12-15 practices and 2 performances. In order to be considered a resident, the family must live and be eligible to vote in the City of Hartford. This fee is to help offset what residents pay in their property tax to support the Parks and Recreation Department. This non-resident fee for Choir should have been collected in the 2016 Spring Choir session, but was overlooked by staff. The Director has additionally had verbal communication on this matter with the Choir Director, Stephanie Klockow, who has indicated she has received many complaints on the fee and hoped the non-resident charge might be reconsidered. The Director asked if the Commission would like to re-assess the non-resident fee for Choir. President Troeller commented, and other Commissioners agreed, that if they were to consider not having a non-resident fee for one program, they'd have to review it for all. They were not in favor of doing this.
5. Appearances / Public Comments – None
6. Old Business – None
7. New Business

ADMINISTRATION

New Recreation Center Maintenance III Employee 3rd Shift –AJ Helgemoe was hired to fill the recently vacant Maintenance III position at the Recreation Center. This position does the daily cleaning and light maintenance Monday through Friday from Midnight to 6 AM with rotating weekend work of 2 hrs on each Saturday and Sunday for general cleaning and snow removal from September to May.

2016 Fall Parks & Recreation Activity Guide – The Commission received a copy of the latest Activity Guide which was distributed on August 23rd.

2017 Budget Meetings with City Council, October 11-13 – The Director does not know yet which night the Parks and Recreation Budget will be discussed but will have that date at the October Commission Meeting. At this time, the City Administrator has not made any changes to the budget the Director submitted.

9-11 Memorial Event – Park Fee Waived and Discussion on Location of Memorial at Bernd Park – Executive Summary – The Hartford Chamber would like to place a monument at Bernd Park recognizing first responders. As a final design for this memorial has not been created, the Chamber Director, Scott Henke, is looking for preliminary review and consideration with final approval from staff and the City to come once the memorial design has been created. To help cover the cost of this monument, the Chamber is raising funds through the “Always Community Proud” yard signs, as well as business and individual donations. In addition, the Chamber would like to hold a Community 9-11 Memorial Ceremony at Bernd Park which will include community members and elected officials, choirs, live broadcast by WTKM and more. There likely will be some activities offered by different groups to raise money for the monument during this 9-11 Ceremony such as a bake sale. Due to the nature of this 9-11 Ceremony, no park rental fees have been collected.

Alderman Kohler felt Bernd Park was a perfect location for the memorial monument and likes that it helps with the efforts by businesses and the City to help revitalize Downtown Hartford. Commissioner Helms commended Scott Henke on the work he is doing.

MOTION BY Rusniak, seconded by Troeller, to support the initial concept and placement of a First Responder Memorial Monument at Bernd Park pending final review of the monument and installation once the monument’s design is finalized.

MOTION CARRIED

RECREATION PROGRAMS / ACTIVITIES

Upcoming Programs Mentioned:

- Nutrition Coaching & Cooking Classes (New)
- After School Youth Program 5K-8th Grade, Starts October 4
- Story Time to Busy Time, Fridays, Age 3, September 16 (New)

ADULT / YOUTH SPORT

Upcoming Adult/Youth Sport Programs Mentioned:

- Lunch Time Hoops, Tues/Thurs, 11:30-1:15 (New)
- Flag Football youth – 5-6, 3-5, and 1-2 grades
- Youth Running Program, Tues/Thurs, Ages 10-14 (New)
- Fitness Classes, Session 1 Starts week of September 12

AQUATICS

2016 Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center Operations, Punch Lists, Closing – Preliminary numbers for the outdoor pool was over 24,000 daily paid admissions and 7,000 admissions from season pass holders. The first 2-3 weeks we averaged 750 swimmers daily and then attendance leveled off to about 400-500 daily. Total revenue looks like it will exceed expectations and the operations should be close to breaking even. However, there are still some payroll and utility expenses yet to be paid.

Now that the Aquatic Center is closed for the season, contractors will be back to work on 50-60 punch list items. Also, the contractor is responsible for closing procedures for the pool this first year. Our maintenance staff will watch and video tape the closing procedures.

Commissioner Troeller asked how the concession stand did. The Director said the revenue was around \$45,000 which is about \$12,000 more than expected. He said at times the stand would be quite busy and it did take a few weeks for staff to become efficient and comfortable with the operations. The Director also said he received good feedback about the food offered and pricing. The Director does not see staff changing the products much for next year.

Signicast Family Aquatic Center Operations, Swim Lessons, Open Swim – The annual maintenance for the Signicast pool included power washing with a higher pressure washer that really cleaned the overflow grates. A contractor was brought in to re-caulk the pool joints. The Director reminded the Commission that the 2018 CIP includes replacement of the Pool Pac – the pool’s dehumidification / heat recovery system. However, the Pool Pac has lost one of its two compressors. It can work efficiently with one compressor, however, should the other compressor go out, it will be approximately \$20,000 to fix one unit and take up to a week of the pool being shut down. Staff hopes to not to have to spend money on a new compressor before 2018.

PARKS OPERATIONS

Sawyer Park Veterans Group – Ron Schnorenberg appeared in front of the Commission to discuss current and future updates to Sawyer Park. The Director shared a park layout with some of those future improvements laid out.

The City has installed a driveway approach for the park off of Hy 83/Branch Street while the construction on Hwy 83 was done this summer. Staff is still reviewing the best layout for a small parking area off of that driveway approach but hopes to have that installed this year.

The veteran’s groups would like to see pathway from Branch Street to South Main as well as a pathway to the old cement drive. Ron envisions the pathway to be paved with asphalt. The Director indicated some of the work to install an asphalt path could be done by Park staff but there is no budget for materials. Ron offered some financial help from the VFW to help pay for the pathway.

The park layout shared with Commission showed possible locations for the flag sleeves for the Flag Memorial as done previously by the VFW Hall along Abbott Avenue. Ron shared pictures of this Flag Memorial. Ron explained that a family will give financial donations to embroider and display the flag they receive when a Veteran passes away. The flag is embroidered with the name of the deceased and years of service. The VFW stores these flags and at appropriate times throughout the year, such as 9/11, Memorial Day, and other occasions, displays them along a walkway.

Alderson Kohler would like to get a cost to install the pathway. Commissioner Rusniak would like to see the Vietnam Veterans Monument on the corner of North Main and Wisconsin Ave moved to Sawyer Park to make it one complete memorial park. Everyone is happy with how this previously under-utilized park is getting attention and coming together as a beautiful Memorial Park. Ron thanked the Commission and the City for their time and care they have been giving this park site and the improvements being done there.

Eagle Scout Projects – Over the past several months the Director has meet with a number of Eagle Scouts to discuss their Eagle Scout Projects. The Director gave the Commission this briefing:

Zach Michalak – river clean up and new park sign for Jordan Park including a Farmers Market sign

Michael Scepaniski – Libby Lagoon trail clearing and bench installation

Evan Biddulph – tentative Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center benches for the front of bathhouse and outside the fence by the lap lanes for watching swim lessons, swim team practices and potential swim meets.

Marco Kohler – tentative Active Duty Memorial Recognition Project or new flag pole.

Michael Montgomery – The Director just meet with him today and reviewed a number of potential projects in which Michael will consider and follow up with the Director.

Willowbrook Park Playground Proposals – Executive Summary – The 2016 CIP includes \$50,000 to replace the modular playground equipment at Willowbrook Park that has reached its life expectancy of 20 years. The \$50,000 includes a poured in place (PIP) surface material. Staff feels a PIP is best for this site due to the frequent river floodings that washes away the playground mulch.

Three playground companies submitted a total of 6 proposals to Staff. Proposals were to include play area(s) for ages 2-12 years as a single structure or two separate structures, be ADA compliant, and include climbing, spinning, sliding and overhead play features.

Alderperson Kohler voiced concerns with maintenance on the Lee Recreation Proposals as they involved many cables and ropes. He questioned if these would break or require frequent replacements. He also was concerned about the safety of the stand-alone spinning apparatuses.

Vice President Hoffmann commented her kids were intrigued by the stand alone spinners and also liked the slides offered in Option 2 by Lee Recreation.

MOTION By Hoffmann, seconded by Rusniak to approve the purchase the playground equipment and PIP surface material as shown in Option 2 from Lee Recreation LLC, Playworld Systems at a price not to exceed \$49,000 for Willowbrook Park.

MOTION CARRIED

Parks Project Report – Mowing, trimming, mowing and trimming and then some more mowing. The unusual wet late summer has not allowed staff to ease up on the mowing schedule. Loss of summer staff has also made it difficult to keep up with regular park maintenance. Special projects have not been touched.

Pokemon Go – The Director shared an article regarding the latest craze “Pokémon Go” that appeared in the August issue of “Parks and Recreation” magazine. Pokémon Go is the latest form in the evolutionary chain of augmented reality games. Pokémon Go forces players to walk in parks and public spaces to capture Pokémon’s – monster like creatures with various powers and attributes. Players must also hatch eggs, which only begin to open after walking certain distances. Pokémon Go encourages people to get out, be active and visit places they maybe normally wouldn’t.

OTHER REPORTS /COMMISSION REQUESTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Rusniak seconded by Hoffmann to adjourn at 7:52 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

Submitted by,
Sara Cummings

"Persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations for attendance at the meeting should contact the City Clerk at least one (1) business day prior to the meeting." Members of the Common Council may attend the above meeting. Pursuant to State ex rel. Badke v. Greendale Village Board, 173 Wis. 2d 553, 494 N.W. 2d 408 (1993) such attendance may be considered a meeting of the Common Council may attend the meeting without violating the open meeting law."