



Park & Recreation Commission Minutes of the Meeting
John P Murzyn Hall - Senior Center, 530 Mill St
May 24, 2023

Call to Order/Roll Call

Tom Greenhalgh called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm

Members present: Teresa Eisenbise, Tom Greenhalgh, Andrea Ostergaard, Nicole Peterson

Staff present: Jim Hauth, Interim Public Works Director; David Cullen, Streets & Parks Superintendent; Keith Windschitl Recreation Director; Deanna Saefke, Recreation Secretary; Amada Marquez Simula, Council Representative

Motion by Eisenbise, second by Peterson, to include the premeeting discussions regarding the availability of the Hylander Center and bike racks throughout the City, in the minutes of this meeting under Letters and Requests. Upon vote: All ayes. **Motion Carried.**

Motion by Eisenbise, second by Peterson, to add a community forum section to future Park and Recreation Commission agendas for public discussion. Upon vote: All ayes. **Motion Carried.**

Consent Agenda

Motion by Ostergaard, second by Eisenbise, to approve the consent agenda. Upon vote: All ayes. **Motion Carried.**

Eisenbise asked how often the beer lines are cleaned and how many taps there are. Windschitl replied the lines are cleaned quarterly. The cleaning fee has increased significantly with the current company, and he is checking with a new company to get a quote. He indicated the ice machine also gets cleaned quarterly and has gotten really expensive as well. Eisenbise asked if this is solely a cleaning service or do they provide CO2. Windschitl replied it is only for cleaning. However, the CO2 is ordered through the same company, but we will be changing companies shortly.

Eisenbise thanked staff for presenting the budgets in the current layout in the agenda packet. Windschitl replied the finance department and Saefke put together the new format. Ostergaard stated that was exactly what they were looking for. Windschitl indicated if any Commission Members ever have questions on a specific item they are invited to email or talk directly with him.

Eisenbise asked what the line item of minor equipment entails. The line item indicates that 100% of the budget has been used for it. Windschitl replied it is generally for equipment throughout the facility. In this case the refrigerator in the JPM kitchen went out and he was able to purchase a new one via the state contract for \$5000. The fridge that went out was nine years old and the condenser was replaced once in that timeframe. Windschitl stated it is expensive to run a commercial kitchen and that is why when future plans for Murzyn Hall have been discussed, whether having a full catering kitchen is needed in our facility or not. Many renters don't use all the equipment in the kitchen, and even most caterers that are hired by the renter will cook at their

facility and bring the food in hot boxes or only need to use our warmer. If someone wants to cook in our kitchen, they need to provide a copy of their catering license and their business insurance listing the City of Columbia Heights as additional insured. A refrigerator is important but not all the other commercial equipment. An oven or large warmer would be sufficient. Ostergaard asked if any caterer is allowed. Windschitl replied any food can be brought in as long as it has been prepared offsite. If they are preparing and cooking food onsite than they need the license and insurance from the caterer. This is one of the main reasons Murzyn Hall is in such high demand.

Eisenbise asked where the coyote warning signs are located. Cullen replied at Sullivan Lake Park at the entry points on existing poles or signs to speed up the installation process and save on equipment. A few were also placed at LaBelle Park due to reported sightings.

Greenhalgh asked what the credit card fees line item means. Windschitl replied that is a processing fee for credit card purchases. Greenhalgh asked if the fees are being absorbed by the City or factored into the charges to the clients. Windschitl replied it is calculated into the fees. The finance department negotiates the contracts.

Letters and Requests

Greenhalgh asked Marquez Simula how the Cheers For Beers event went. Marquez Simula replied it was fantastic with approximately 180 in attendance. There were 72 tickets presold. In 2019 \$1200 of tickets were sold at the Top Valu Liquor Stores, where people could pay without credit card fees. That was not an option this year. She mentioned a missed opportunity from the previous event was not handing out a coupon for Top Valu. HeightsNEXT covered their expenses and made a little profit. They are looking forward to next year and very much appreciate not having the added expense of the rental fee. The HeightsNEXT board is looking into giving a donation back to the recreation programs. Greenhalgh replied that would be appreciated. Windschitl replied it is unfortunate that a liquor vendor cannot cover the liability insurance for the event. Marquez Simula replied yes because it was over \$500 just to purchase insurance. She thanked Greenhalgh for asking about the event and for the rental fees waived.

Discussions prior to calling the meeting to order.

A resident in attendance is requesting for the Hylander Center to be open more often. Windschitl explained why the changes to the hours were made. There are more Recreation programs being offered that use the one gym the city owns, there had also been vandalism and safety concerns with users. Prior to the Hylander Center being built the city programs did use the gyms within the school district and were often bumped out due to school district programs like band/choir concerts. This occurred often at short notice or on the day of. The resident asked if there is another gym in the city that can be utilized. Windschitl replied this is the only gym owned by the city. Currently the Recreation Department runs programming on most weeknights; Monday evenings Ladies Night Basketball, Tuesdays Adult Co-Ed Open Volleyball, Wednesdays Drop In Family Basketball, and Thursdays Basketball Skills for 2nd – 6th Graders, Saturdays Youth Soccer Drop In, and Sundays are not available due to the school district not having any custodians on site.

Another resident in attendance would like to see more bike racks throughout the City. He indicated there aren't any at Murzyn Hall and most parks. Windschitl replied there is a bike rack at the back entrance of Murzyn Hall. Greenhalgh suggested creating a list for residents to reference and posting it on the website. Cullen replied that staff will look into adding bike racks were absent.

Old Business

None at this time.

New Business

Tour of the Public Works facility for the Park & Recreation Commission Members and Staff.

Hauth and Cullen presented a tour of the Public Works facility and discussed vehicles used for various departments.

Reports

A. Recreation Director

Windschitl reported Candy Lack the new Senior Coordinator started on May 10. The senior programs didn't skip a beat because Lack and Mulligan were able to overlap and train together. We are happy to have Lack on board.

There are several events coming up. Saefke made a list of upcoming city events. Pets in the Park, the Arts & Info Fair, and several music in the park nights that if any members want to volunteer at, to contact Will Rottler.

The Beautification Committee, Saefke coordinates the group of volunteers to plant, water, and weed at various locations in the parks, at City Hall, Murzyn Hall, and various sites around the city. They do a fantastic job. We are always looking for new volunteers. Windschitl complimented Saefke on a great job working with Lynde's Greenhouse to coordinate the order and planting. Many plants have already been planted today. Saefke added to thank Public Works employee John Nordlund who helps with planting some of the larger sites, helping the volunteers, getting the flower beds prepared, and assisting with the delivery of the flowers. Ostergaard asked if the sites are pre-established beds or how do the sites get chosen. Windschitl replied that most are annual pots that get planted like the pots outside Murzyn Hall. Saefke added the park signs at Ostrander and Prestemon park get planted. There used to be more parks where volunteers would plant around the signs, but as volunteers have moved or become unable to plant, we have used Nordlund to help plant perennials such as daylilies. Compliments are received regularly on how nice the plants look throughout the city.

Windschitl reported the Recreation Open House was held on May 19 with approximately 200 people at Huset Park. Thanks to the CH Lions Club for donating \$1,000 for the inflatables, the spin art machine, and tabletop games for the event. Saefke indicated the event was very fun and families were spending time together just hanging out while their kids went from activity to activity. There was a climbing slide inflatable, four sport themed inflatables, the Three Rivers Park District, Bach To Rock, our basketball coach had a station, and the Lions Club was there with a station and face painting. We gave away a lot of popcorn.

B. Public Works Director

Hauth reported on Monday night the City Council approved accepting a donation by resolution from a company called Canvas LLC out of Rocky River Ohio. The donation is for eight sustainably sourced functional art pieces. The pieces are shown in the council agenda packet. The art pieces are made out of recycled wind turbines, recycled rubber from tires and shoes, recycled textiles from surplus clothing and they use some recycled film plastic. Their business model mission is to recycle as much as possible, reuse products, and find donors to support giving the art pieces to places like cities, schools, and organizations like that. The next steps are June 1st they will start matching donors with recipients. The city council asked for staff to engage with the community on ideas of where they would like to see these pieces installed. Staff will work with Rottler on the best ways to engage with the community. Ostergaard asked if the art pieces are large. Hauth replied yes, very large. The design of them definitely looks like a wind turbine turned into a piece of functional art. The blades are bent into shapes, and the blades are huge. So, if the blades are unable to be used for something else, they often get taken

to the desert and laid on their sides because there is no landfill that can take them due to their size. So, this is a very interesting and sustainable way to reuse them. Marquez Simula displayed examples of the pieces. Hawth replied they can be planters or types of seating, and each piece has a QR code that will tell you where the blade came from. We will receive eight pieces that are primed and ready to paint.

Hawth indicated the splash pad will open next week. The wading pools will open when they pass inspections. The pools are required to be inspected by the county because chlorine residual is added to the water. Staff will fill the pools, add the chlorine residual, let that settle, and schedule an inspection. Greenhalgh added the City is grandfathered into the operation of the wading pools even though they are not up to current codes. Eisenbise asked how so. Greenhalgh replied they are not ADA accessible. Eisenbise asked if the pools could be adapted. Cullen replied no, they would need to be completely torn out and redone. After the winter season it is never known if there will be maintenance issues with the pumps and pipes of the pools. Eisenbise asked how long the process takes with county approval. Cullen replied inspectors are busy with numerous sites at this time of year, but last year it took about a week. Eisenbise asked if a temporary sign could be posted while they are waiting for inspections. Cullen replied there are pool closed signs that they will have posted for the few days.

Hawth reported the softball field at Ramsdell Park is coming along nicely. Windschitl indicated they have not played there yet, and the first game will be in June. There was a water main break in the middle of the outfield.

C. Commission Members

Ostergaard was going to bring up bike racks and that was already discussed prior to the meeting being called to order.

Eisenbise asked for any updates on broken playground equipment. Cullen replied at Huset Park West where the swing was broken the quotes came in and is waiting for a purchase order to come back. The piece was over \$5000. There has been a little bit of vandalism that has been taken care of. The Bruce Nawrocki building at Circle Terrace had recently been vandalized. Today he was informed that at Keyes Park the fencing ties at the backstop were cut. Eisenbise asked if the playground repairs are figured into the budget. Cullen replied they will show up as a line item for the expense, but it is not planned for. Hawth replied it is anticipated there will be repairs needed in the budget, but depending on how you look at the budget there could be repairs under various categories. One common category would be maintenance and construction materials. That particular category has a budget of \$26,500 and nothing has been spent out of that year to date. There is some budget for repairs to our infrastructure; being our buildings in the parks or playground equipment. Eisenbise replied thank you.

Greenhalgh asked if trash cans can be placed at Keyes Park in the parking lots. The only receptacles are near the ballfields and a lot of trash ends up in the parking lots. Cullen replied the trash cans are placed in the park where there is intended use, so by the ballfields and playground. If trash cans are located near the parking lots, they end up being used as dumping sites and collect more trash than if there wasn't a can there. Hawth replied they will look at the area and see if there is a solution that is for the betterment of the park and for the cleanliness. Cullen reported the Commission will see this on the tour but there is a new garbage truck that is a custom minitruck. He is trying to get garbage cans that will attach to the mechanism on the minitruck, and it is really hard to get those specific cans right now. Hawth replied the City purchased 3000 cans this year but there are more than 3000 cans like at Keyes Park that need to be replaced. These are the curbside cans that can be picked up with the arms of a garbage truck. This takes out the repetitive motion risk to employees or other risks when a person has to physically lift a bag out of a can. Staff would like to replace all of the old style cans with liftable cans. Cullen indicated it was approximately \$60,000 to replace all the cans so they are trying to phase it in. Marquez Simula had a meeting with a company similar to the Canvas LLC program where this company brings in

benches and garbage recycling containers at no cost to the city. The city can choose what type of advertising they want on those benches. She mentioned during her meeting that she personally would not want to see advertising in the parks, but Central or other bus line areas that would be appropriate. The company indicated the City would choose the type or style of the bench, the cans, and give parameters for the advertising styles. The only cost to the City would be emptying the garbage and recycling. She asked the company to be in contact sometime in June. Cullen replied that he would like to be a part of that meeting. Marquez Simula indicated the company also handles any vandalism and repairs. She indicated we could advertise our own programs and special events on the benches too. Sullen mentioned a hiring ad.

Marquez Simula had a citizen approach her about the clock tower and that it should be playing music. Hauth replied they will check with Hansen on the maintenance of it.

Greenhalgh adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm.
Deanna Saefke, Recreation Secretary