

ONEONTA, NEW YORK - OCTOBER 1, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION PG. 1

PRESENT: Chair Tim Catella
Commissioner Cynthia McCarthy
Commissioner Geoff Davis
Commissioner Stephen Pindar
Commissioner Gary Dilello
Council Member David Rissberger

ABSENT: None

Chair Catella called the regular meeting to order and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Chair Catella welcomed new City Manager Michael Long.

City Manager Long introduced himself and spoke briefly on his career background in planning including parks master plans and parks and recreation facilities, architecture and public administration.

PETITIONERS

Chair Catella recognized David Hayes of First Night and Julia Dostal, Executive Director of the LEAF Council on Alcohol/Addictions to talk about their proposed project sent in an email to the commission.

Mr. Hayes stated that the LEAF project being proposed was under the umbrella of First Night who would have the permit to operate in the park on July 4th as done in the past.

Ms. Dostal stated LEAF has been very involved with First Night and its mission of an alcohol-free family friendly celebration of the arts. She said one of the things LEAF was hoping to do in 2013 was institute a mud run, an obstacle run in the morning. She said obstacle runs have gotten to be just all the rage over the last couple years. She said one of the things that has begun to happen is that these runs have become synonymous with ingesting large quantities of beer so in keeping with bringing cultural and health-type things in conjunction with this First Night idea, the idea of instituting an obstacle run in Oneonta would be to have a run around Neahwa Park with something that would enhance the day. She said David and she have mapped out a 5K course and as stated in the proposal the obstacle ideas they had would either take very minimal building or construction or would be based on something that was already in the park, really fun stuff. She said they also looked around the park with an eye to doing minimal impact on the park and keeping people as safe as possible. She said they thought they had a course that would be interesting to people that would draw people from across the state and the region that make be interested in coming to a mud run on the 4th of July. She said they hoped that it would preload the park for this event that they hope would even be bigger than last year with more folks down in the park. She said the nice thing about it was that the infrastructure would already be in place, the porta-potties would be in place, there would be a lot of vendors and people who often come in for these races stay overnight, shop and be a boost to lots of commerce. She said the hope was always that if the commission approved this event that it would get bigger every year as they tend to do once they have a good reputation.

Mr. Hayes stated when First Night takes on an event they begin planning early and plan fully for it and a lot of conversations go on. He said as Julia mentioned this race would bring in a lot of people from out of the area who will come with their families and spend money here. He said that was one way of making Oneonta look that much better to the outside world.

Chair Catella asked if any initial contact had been made with local police and fire because he knew part of the event was to shut down areas outside of the park also.

Mr. Hayes replied no. He said First Night had a very good open dialogue with police and fire as well as the OPT and the Recreation Office. He said when they did the 4th of July there were very elaborate planning sessions and discussions.

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(Petitioners) continued

Chair Catella stated it sounded like where this was at was to start the ball rolling.

Commissioner Dilello asked about insurance.

Mr. Hayes replied First Night had multiple layers of liability and LEAF had full liability. He said they always do a certificate of insurance with the city when they do an event. He said all the participants will sign waivers.

Commissioner Dilello asked if there would be a place after the race for people to clean themselves off.

Ms. Dostal replied that they would have to either engage the Fire Department or someone with a really big hose because after the run someone usually hoses the runners down.

Council Member Rissberger stated having about 25 years of race experience including cross-country he would like to say he had discussion with someone recently and they agreed that there were not enough cross-country races because that was what people really crave. He said he thought this was fantastic but the question he had was about the millrace because the course goes through it. He questioned how deep the millrace was around July 4th.

Mr. Hayes responded they looked at that last summer around that time of year and there was mainly not much water over rocks and pebbles where if someone fell down they would not be submerged.

Council Member Rissberger stated with that number of potential people coming and hosing them off he questioned if that would be done in a parking lot.

Ms. Dostal responded a parking lot would be the best place to hose people down.

Recreation Director Andrews stated as far as the impact of this on the park he thought it was very minor. He said since they were in the planning stage of 6 to 8 months out they could work through any potential issues with the park and the fields.

Ms. Dostal stated that the runners get sent off in waves and it was important to not have people wait to get over an obstacle. She said she was planning to run in the first wave.

Council Member Rissberger asked about how big the wave typically was.

Ms. Dostal replied that at one of the runs she attended recently there were about 75 people per wave.

Mr. Hayes stated that at this event held in Saratoga there were about 600 people, which is what they could expect as the number of people to come to Oneonta.

City Manager Long asked about what their approach was to marketing to let people know about this.

Mr. Hayes replied First Night marketing was very aggressive with media advertising, lots of posters, a lot of word of mouth, and the whole range of social media.

Ms. Dostal stated it was also posted on very large running sites and local groups notified.

MOTION, made by Chair Catella and seconded by Commissioner McCarthy, that the Parks and Recreation Commission supports the idea of the mud race event by the LEAF Council under the umbrella of the First Night activities and that they further pursue the other approvals needed.

(Voting)

Voting Ayes: Chair Catella
Commissioner McCarthy
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Pindar
Commissioner Dilello
Noes: None
Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION, made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Chair Catella, that the commission approves the minutes of the regular meeting held on July 2, 2012 with the correction on page 7, 5th paragraph of “Neahwa” to “Wilber” Park.

Voting Ayes: Chair Catella
Commissioner McCarthy
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Pindar
Commissioner Dilello
Noes: None
Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE

Request from John Hurley to hold 3 road races in Wilber Park

•The following was received from Mr. John T. Hurley, 4 3rd street, Oneonta, dated September 14, 2012:

“Mr. Andrews

I would like to put on 3 small cross country runs in Wilber Park in October. In recent years I've organized several twilight track meets in the summer (at the SUCO track) but in earlier times I used to put on 3 road races per summer in Wilber and Neahwa Parks, working with Mike Davis. These are all free of charge and open to all ages. The path in Wilber Park is 1.2 mi. around and we do two loops for a total distance of 2.4 miles.

*Tues., Oct. 16
Tues., Oct. 23 All at 4:00 p.m.
Tues., Oct. 30*

The affair takes less than one hour. All finishers get an award and refreshments. I pay for it all. In good weather we use the lower grass field near Spruce & Center Sts. for the start and finish. If rainy, we move to the upper pavilion (usually few show up when rainy). Expected number: only 15 to 35.

Thank you.”

Recreation Director Andrews stated in the past Mr. Hurley has conducted organized road races in and all around Oneonta. He said the course Mr. Hurley has laid out for the three races in October

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(Correspondence) continued

were in Wilber Park, which he had done in the past with former Recreation Director Mike Davis and therefore has experience doing them. He said Mr. Hurley would want to take advantage of the city's waiver system. He said he thought it was a nice park event and the park was available at those times.

The commission held a brief discussion on the matter.

MOTION, made by Chair Catella and seconded by Commissioner Davis, that the commission approves the request from John Hurley to hold 3 cross-country road races in Wilber Park on Tuesdays October 16th, 23rd and 30th, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.

Voting Ayes: Chair Catella
Commissioner McCarthy
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Pindar
Commissioner Dilello

Noes: None

Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

OLD BUSINESS

- Survey Results
- Dog Park – Engineering Dept

Survey Results

Chair Catella stated a huge “thanks” to Glenda Bolton and her SUNY Delhi students that were involved in the survey. He said he was so pleased with the respondents and thought they exceeded the percentage. He said the survey results have been distributed. He recognized Recreation Director Andrews for a survey update.

Recreation Director Andrews gave the following update on the survey and spoke briefly on the highlights:

“Everyone has been distributed a copy of the survey results. I think this was a very successful project and a step in the right direction for determining parks’ needs. In my opinion the one thing the survey tells us is we’re doing many things right in the parks and many of our recreation programs are strong. One of the things that stood out to me was question # 7, as it indicated adding a spray park, walking/hiking areas, and a dog park were extremely valuable to respondents. These are all projects the city currently has in development. Again, I’d like to thank everyone who made this project possible, SUNY Delhi, Glenda Bolton and her students, Cassandra Conant and Dave Coury.”

Commissioner Davis questioned if the survey results would be part of the updated Master Plan or how would they be used.

Recreation Director Andrews responded he was currently looking at getting these results to the persons who would work with Parks and Recreation to update the Master Plan. He said he did not know how much of those survey results would be reflected in that.

Chair Catella stated as Recreation Director Andrews pointed out about results in question #7, which was what the commission was in agreement with, dog park, walking trails and spray park. He said another one showing a lot of interest again was bocce ball.

Dog Park – Engineering Dept

Chair Catella stated that the matter of the dog park has been moved to Engineering. He said the Mayor has taken the commission's recommendation and it was now with Engineering to confirm a couple things such as cost, location and to see if there were any costs that were not taken into consideration by the subcommittee. He said the Mayor had passed the full report to Engineering asking them to confirm certain things that were done. He said he thought once the confirmation was done the Mayor was looking to send it on to the Community Improvement Committee for approval to the next step. He asked Commissioner Davis if that was enough information to bring back to the dog park subcommittee.

Commissioner Davis asked about what would happen if it goes to the Community Improvement Committee.

Council Member Rissberger, Chair of the Community Improvement Committee, replied if the committee passes on the matter, it would then go to the Finance/Administration Committee. He said this was the first he was hearing that the report was going to Engineering. He said from the Finance/Administration Committee it would go to the Common Council for voting on by the entire Council.

Chair Catella briefly updated City Manager Long on the matter of establishing a dog park in the city and the subcommittee's report.

City Manager Long stated that the Mayor did brief him on the matter and was given information to read. He stated that if the Parks Master Plan of facilities was being updated he said often times it was a good idea to prioritize things, get cost estimates and then use that to go out and get grants to help pay for some of the capital costs of actually implementing some of these things.

The commission held a brief discussion on the matter with City Manager Long and Recreation Director Andrews.

NEW BUSINESS

- Recreation Director's Report

Recreation Director's Report

Recreation Director Andrews presented the following report and spoke briefly on the highlights.

“Volunteering/internships

I would like to recognize the efforts of our parks volunteers and interns who have helped in various capacities this summer and continue to work this fall.

- *Norm Anderson did some painting and staining at the Kiwanis Small Pavilion in Neahwa Park. Phi Kappa Psi students assisted with the 5th annual NFL Punt, Pass, and Kick this September.*
- *This summer Cassaundra Conant from the SUNY Oneonta Mass Communications Department worked on a variety of projects with great success.*
- *This fall we have two interns from SUNY Oneonta; Christina Crowell from the Geography Department and Jonathan Dwyer from the Business/Economics Department. Christina will be updating our living memorials program and creating GIS maps for the parks, while Jon will be researching municipal parks marketing strategies. Thanks to all our park volunteers and students.*
- *Johnathan Gell is constructing a small kiosk for his Eagle Scout Service project. This will be placed by the Wilber tennis courts.*

Program and parks update

This was a very busy summer as this department made the transition into parks maintenance. We

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(Recreation Director's Report) continued

had over 850 total registrations for our free summer recreation programs and we saw many positive outcomes. Attached you will find several correspondence from parents with positive feedback regarding our programs.

Pool attendance at Wilber was almost 21,500 patrons and is in line with prior years. This year's City Recreation youth events were very successful and widely attended. 131 children participated in the fishing derby. The big catch of the day was a 3.35 pound bass reeled in by 10 year old Zack Shaul. The 6th annual NFL Punt, Pass and Kick has 6 kids advancing to sectionals, which we will again host at Damaschke Field. Local PPK winners from Corning, Elmira, Binghamton and other areas throughout the southern tier will advance to the Damaschke Sectional which will be held on October 28.

The parks maintenance staff are into our fall work schedules and planning for winter and closing our facilities.

I have attached a copy of the 2012 revenues summary for your review. The parks budget was submitted to the Mayor and Director of Finance on September 21."

Recreation Director Andrews stated that he spoke with Rehab Building Specialist Jeff House and the city should be hearing shortly about the bathhouse funding for Wilber Pool. He said from there will be some decisions made and hopefully they could move forward with redoing the bathhouse.

Recreation Director Andrews stated there was a hole in the fence at Catella Park because a culvert was installed going toward Lettis Highway. He said there will be a gate put in the fence in Catella Park for bikers and hikers for access to New Island using the greenway trail.

Recreation Director Andrews stated he submitted his 2012 Recreation and Parks Departments Revenue to the Finance/Administration Committee for review. He said he was looking forward to 2013 and getting more done.

The commission held a brief discussion on some parks items with Recreation Director Andrews.

Chair Catella complimented Recreation Director Andrews and Recreation Clerk Coury on a great summer in the parks.

Commissioner Davis stated in regard to the presence of foxes in Wilber Park he questioned if that was something the commission should be concerned about.

Recreation Director Andrews stated that he has heard some complaints about foxes and he had spoken with the Police Department about a recent complaint. He said the police have contacted the city's wildlife management person, Doug Hulick, and he was aware of the problem.

Commissioner McCarthy stated she understood that foxes were all over the city.

City Manager Long stated probably the thing to do was contact the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation because foxes were probably something the city was not equipped to deal with.

Recreation Director Andrews stated he would follow-up on the matter with the police and Mr. Hulick.

Commissioner Pindar stated he wanted to thank Recreation Director Andrews and city crews for the tremendous job they did cleaning up the graffiti after the vandalism in Damaschke Field.

Commissioner Pindar stated he had been hearing for years about a small storage building that was going to be put in down past the batting cages in Damaschke and would be aesthetically the same as

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(New Business) continued

the club houses, etc. He asked if Recreation Director Andrews has heard about that and if it was ever going to happen.

Recreation Director Andrews responded he had heard about it and he did not believe it was going to happen. He said it was a \$50,000 line item from Senator Seward and it did not happen. He said he did not see any blueprints for the building, etc.

Commissioner Pindar stated there have been times when that small building would have been beneficial such as for storage of additional turf from what was stored under the grandstand because there had been times more was needed and they did not have the key for the big building. He said they could also put the groomer in there.

The commission held a brief discussion on the matter.

There being no further business to come before the commission, Chair Catella adjourned the regular meeting at approximately 8:00 p.m.

JAMES R. KOURY, City Clerk

JRK/pab