

ONEONTA, NEW YORK - APRIL 2, 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION, made by Commissioner Pindar and seconded by Commissioner Davis, that the commission approves the minutes of the regular meeting held on March 5, 2012.

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

Noes: None

Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

PETITIONERS

The Chair recognized petitioners who wished to speak.

Mr. Larry Malone (2nd Ward Council Member) introduced himself, Kyle Davies and his son Theo Malone. He said Kyle and Theo approached him about the possibility of being young entrepreneurs this summer and operating the snack shop next to the tennis courts in Wilber Park for a very modest concession. He said if there was any growth potential there some of their young colleagues might help run it under the supervision of Mark Davies, Kyle's dad and himself. He said he was asking the commission how their doing that could possibly happen.

Commissioner Pindar stated that the commission was not sure if running that concession had to go out for a Request for Proposals but did not think it did.

Recreation Director Andrews stated that building had not been opened up for a few years.

City Clerk Koury questioned if those wanting to do this were looking to get paid.

Mr. Malone stated that Kyle and Theo were looking to earn enough profit to keep it going or break even. He said they were thinking of running the concession weekdays from about 10:00 am to 4:00 pm mainly during the Recreation Programs when the kids are playing tennis and the pool lessens.

City Clerk Koury suggested that the best place for Mr. Malone to inquire about this was with City Attorney Merzig regarding rules and regulations.

Chair Catella questioned if in the meantime Recreation Director Andrews could have the building opened up to see the condition of it.

Recreation Director Andrews stated the electric was still on and the water could be turned on when the weather warms up. He said the concession table in it was removed after it was last used as a concession. He said presently it was used for storage generally. He said it was relatively clean and thought it could be used for that purpose if all the other details could be worked out.

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(Petitioners) continued

Mr. Malone stated that the items sold would be mainly candy and anything sort of pre-packaged. He said there would be no cooking.

City Clerk Koury stated he believed the last time the Candy House was used was one summer when Peter Friedman oversaw the city's Youth Employment Program in the parks.

Chair Catella suggested that Mr. Malone and Recreation Director Andrews communicate on this and then let the commission know the outcome.

OLD BUSINESS

- Update from dog park committee
- Action item- parks and rec. survey
- Applebaugh funds update
- Playground equip. update
- Update from community and youth rec. meeting
- Wilber Park Bathhouse project
- Pool Fees Questions

Update from dog park committee

Chair Catella recognized Chris Moore and said that he had distributed copies of the 2012 Dog Park proposal for the city.

Mr. Chris Moore spoke briefly about the proposal prepared by the Dog Park subcommittee for a dog park to be located in a portion of Catella Park.

The following is the "Summary" from the 2012 Dog Park proposal:

SUMMARY

Successful dog parks have three things in common: cooperative city officials, involved citizens, and responsible dog owners. The City of Oneonta has all three and more.

The portion of Catella field being proposed is free from normal human traffic such as playgrounds, sidewalks, and high traffic areas. It presents no conflicts with activities that currently make use of the adjoining fields. Existing fencing provides a convenient cost reduction feature by requiring the construction of only one additional side. Coupled with existing dog waste bag stations and disposal receptacles, this choice offers an economic consideration favorable to the City.

This optimal choice is centrally located with easy accessibility and ample parking. Oneonta's nearby Susquehanna River Park Trail, part of the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway, will be an added convenience.

We, the members of the Dog Park Sub-committee of the Parks and Recreation Commission, urge the commission to accept our proposal and provide it to other appropriate parties for consideration with the eventual goal of presenting this proposal to Mayor Miller and Common Council members for their approval at the earliest opportunity."

Commissioner Davis and Dog Park subcommittee member, asked what the next step was and which city committee was the proposal going to be forwarded to from the commission.

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Council Member Rissberger stated he thought the proposal would go to the Community Improvement Committee before going to the Finance/Administration Committee. He questioned if the group was looking for the city to finance this or was it looking to raise the money for it.

Mr. Moore stated the group felt it could fund at least half of it but the city would probably have to finance the other half. He said he felt the process was to find out if the city really wanted and needed a dog park and then they had to talk about finances. He said the subcommittee's proposal indicated the need for a dog park and formally assessed it. He said the sub-committee would prefer to have some kind of initiative from the city before doing fundraising for the park.

The commission held a brief discussion on the matter.

Chair Catella stated that it appears the matter was handled smartly with a lot of detail and a lot of thought. He thanked the sub-committee on behalf of the commission.

Commissioner Davis suggested putting the dog park proposal on the commission's May meeting agenda for discussion after the commission had time to review it.

Council Member Rissberger suggested that a needs assessment for this could come from the parks and recreation survey that was being done.

Action item - parks and recreation survey

Chair Catella stated that a draft of Program Questions for the survey was distributed by Recreation Director Andrews. He said there had been some very good feedback so far. He thanked Recreation Director Andrews and Glenda Bolton of SUNY Delhi and her students for their work on the survey.

Ms. Bolton stated this had been a great learning experience for the students and a great opportunity to do this. She spoke briefly on the process and involvement by the students. She said this was the 3rd draft that Recreation Director Andrews and she had worked on.

Chair Catella stated the commission was very thankful to Ms. Bolton and the students. He said the commission will review this.

Commissioner Davis expressed concern about the length of the questionnaire and wondered if there was another format for a way to print it for it to appear shorter and be better for distribution.

Recreation Director Andrews stated that several methods were discussed about distribution and it was felt that mixed distribution would be good. He said the primary method would be using an online "Survey Monkey" distribution website and would send a link to a group of e-mail address they would compile and then compile results through the survey monkey. He said another method would be to have hardcopies of the survey placed at several locations for pick-up and completion, in places such as the library, the YMCA, City Hall, the Recreation Building, and other places.

City Clerk Koury stated that when the city did the survey for the Comprehensive Plan it was probably 10-15 pages long that was mailed out and there was a return of 40%, which was good.

The commission held a brief discussion on the matter.

Chair Catella stated that they hope to have the survey ready to go out in June. He questioned if the survey had to get Common Council approval.

Recreation Director Andrews stated he did not think it required Common Council approval but Council should be made aware of it. He said he thought the survey should go to the Community Improvement Committee for approval. He said he thought there would be a few small fees for the city to absorb.

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(Old Business – Survey, etc) continued

Council Member Rissberger stated that the Community Improvement Committee would forward it to the Finance/Administration Committee for approval of the fees.

Chair Catella stated the survey should be an action item on the commission's agenda for the May meeting.

The commission held a brief discussion on the survey questions and the survey in general.

Recreation Director Andrews stated in February the Office of Children and Family Services did give some guidance to some youth bureaus on charging fees for recreation programs where state funds were used to finance those programs. He said that he believed now the city could charge for any program that the city receives state money for. He said for this calendar year the city's recreation was cut another 8 percent from the 25 percent it was cut making the funding less than \$5000 from New York State for city recreation programs.

Chair Catella acknowledged receipt of Mayor Miller's Memorandum dated April 2, 2012 regarding questions he had about the survey. He said those comments would be applied to some of the other comments prior to the commission taking action on the survey in May. He asked Council Member Rissberger to let Community Improvement Committee that the survey was being discussed by Parks and Recreation Commission and at what point it was at on it. He suggested that those having other comments e-mail them to Recreation Director Andrews by mid-April.

Council Member Rissberger and Chair of the Community Improvement Committee stated he would put it on the committee's meeting agenda.

Recreation Director Andrews stated Ms. Bolton and her students have done a great job on the survey. He said he would appreciate any feedback in the next couple weeks and he would try to get something concrete for the commission to move forward on at the May meeting.

Applebaugh funds update

Recreation Director Andrews stated that no update was received on the Applebaugh funds.

Chair Catella stated that item would remain on the agenda.

Update from community and youth rec. meeting

Recreation Director Andrews gave the following report:

“Update from Community and Youth Recreation Program meeting held March 22, 2012. In attendance: Frank Russo, Executive Director at YMCA, Donna Dvorack, Executive Director, OCAY/Recreation Supervisor & Volunteer Coordinator with Oneonta Job Corps Academy, Joe Hughes, Athletic Director OHS, Gary Dilello, and Patrea Delberta, Oneonta Boys and Girls Club. After everyone introduced themselves we held a roundtable discussion about the group and what is our purpose. The group agrees there is a need for teen programming (both year round and in the summer). Donna discussed some of her program ideas with arts, music and dance. Joe mentioned the schools programs were well run and offered assistance to help Donna reach students. Steve mentioned area programs such as the Zone, in Richfield-Springs and local singer Dana LaCroix as potential resources. The group shared more ideas with Frank talking about programs for older adults at the YMCA and other local places (Healthlinks, Elm Park Methodist church, etc). Steve commented on his adult programming and he felt this demographic could have more programming for active older adults. He said this population and the “baby boomers” could be a segment that the parks could better serve. We all agreed that youth athletic programming is pretty extensive year

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(Old Business – Update from community, etc)

round and there are lots of program opportunities for youth. The group discussed in depth their particular needs and how we might possibly partner. Patrea and Gary discussed their youth softball program and the need for fields. Steve reported the needs assessment was being reviewed and he will get everyone a copy in early April. He mentioned he has an intern this summer and if Donna would help with the coding and calculation of the results survey that would be a tremendous learning experience for this student. The group continued to express interest in meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 26 at 10am in the Neahwa Park Recreation office.”

The commission held a brief discussion on the matter.

Playground equip. update

Recreation Director Andrews stated that there was a motion on Council’s April 3rd meeting agenda for approval to authorize the Purchasing Agent to go out for a Request For Proposals for the Neahwa Park playground equipment. He said the money was already budgeted. He said once the RFP was issued there would be a waiting period for vendors to respond, then those responses would be evaluated and if a vendor gets chosen that would be sent to the Common Council for approval to accept that proposal. He said once that was done he could then order the equipment, which would take about 3-4 weeks for delivery and then installation could begin. He said his target date was June 15th to have it completed. He said it was going to be a blended installation with some key volunteers.

The commission held a brief discussion on the matter.

Wilber Park Bathhouse project

Council Member Rissberger stated he spoke with Rehab Building Specialist Jeff House about this and he said he was looking to get the Bathhouse on the Historic Registry. He said he told him about the concern of whether that would work against the city to pay for the repairs and he said no and that it would actually help the city because once it was on the Historic Registry there may be other funding available to help pay for it. He said he thought doing that would help the city.

Pool Fees Questions

Chair Catella stated questions on this were included in the survey and the commission would have to wait and see what the responses were.

Council Member Rissberger questioned if question 10 on the survey should ask if they were a resident or non-resident.

Recreation Director Andrews stated question 9 did ask about charging non-residents a higher fee. He said he thought they could certainly entertain that for question 10.

Chair Catella stated that matter had been discussed in the past and it was found that it could get confusing with people who live on the boundary line, pay taxes to both town and city, etc. He suggested that Recreation Director Andrews put that on his comments for when he re-drafts the survey.

NEW BUSINESS

- Action Item - Neahwa swings project
- Fields Use Update

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(New Business – Neahwa swings project) continued

Action Item - Neahwa swings project

Recreation Director Andrews distributed copies of the proposed new swings and location and a compliance memo from Parkitects who came and looked at the equipment. He said essentially there were 8 bays for regular belt swings in Neahwa playgrounds and they were over 40 years old and not in compliance for safety servicing and the equipment has outlined their useful life. He said what he was advocating for was to put a brand new set of 8 swings in the similar location in Neahwa Park at a cost of between \$6,000 and \$8,000. He said the swings themselves would be about \$3,000 and safety servicing cost more than the actual swings of about \$4,000 using engineered wood fiber, which they currently had at the playgrounds. He said the city had gotten a lot use at of these swings and needed to have new swings in order to be compliant. He said one of the 2 bays had a handicapped wheelchair accessible swing at one point and he did not know what happened to it. He said that happened before he came but after talking to people he find that it had become unsafe and it was vandalized.

Commissioner McCarthy stated that Wilber Park had one and it got destroyed by too many teenagers and kids jumping on it.

Recreation Director Andrews stated there were handicapped swings that were accessible in the transfer but not wheelchair. He said in talking to all the vendors through this playground equipment process he found that they do not make anything like that. He said the one the city had was made pre-fabricated and took on a lot of liability having that type of structure. He said he was not advocating to replace it with a similar structure and since that had been modified that piece was also not good.

City Clerk Koury questioned if the swings were handicapped accessible that Recreation Director Andrews was talking about getting. He said the purpose of that handicapped swing was for somebody in a wheelchair who wanted to use the swing.

Recreation Director Andrews stated that handicapped swing was not compliant with Americans With Disability Act (ADA).

Council Member Rissberger stated Parkitects has an adapted swing even though it did not work for everybody who had a disability. He said there was one in Valleyview's playground. He said it was not the perfect solution but would just ask that they make sure there were belts on it. He said it was basically a swing with a high back. He said he did not think it work with a wheelchair.

City Clerk Koury stated he thought it was important to serve the need and that there should be a handicapped accessible swing.

Commissioner McCarthy stated she agreed with the Clerk but did worry about the vandalism with some of this equipment.

City Clerk Koury stated any swing gets vandalized.

Recreation Director Andrews stated he would see what the costs were and if a handicapped accessible swing could be added to the 8-bays.

City Clerk Koury stated when this was done initially the Catskill Center for Independence made a recommendation about some handicapped accessible swings. He said that Recreation Director Andrews might want to call Chris Zachmeyer at the Center and she could probably give him some good pointers too.

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(New Business – Neahwa swings project) continued

Recreation Director Andrews stated he would defer to City Clerk Koury and Council Member Rissberger regarding funding. He said he thought a recommendation from the commission would be beneficial to move this forward. He said he was planning to go to the Finance/Administration Committee. He said swings were needed at the park.

Chair Catella stated if this commission was supportive of recommending that these swings be purchased and installed he thought the commission should make a formal recommendation.

City Clerk Koury suggested that the recommendation be made to the Common Council and then it would get forwarded to the appropriate committees.

Chair Catella entertained a motion to make this recommendation to the Common Council.

MOTION, made by Commissioner McCarthy and seconded by Commissioner Davis, that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends to the Common Council that eight (8) new swings be purchased and installed in Neahwa Park playgrounds.

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

Noes: None

Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fields Use Update

Recreation Director Andrews stated that the fields were very close to being all completed and ready for use. He said softball fields 1 thru 4 were going to continue to be closed while the city works on re-grading the fields with the flood money received. He said that project would start Wednesday, the 4th, and he was hoping that would be done within 2 weeks. He said for all the other ball fields that were used by the Oneonta Little League or Oneonta High School he was allowing them to use the grassy areas for practice but not use the infield areas until the leveling of those were done and the bases were put up. He said that work was being scheduled. He said the soccer fields were scheduled this week to be rolled, prepared and checked. He said he was hoping to have Swart-Wilcox and Susquehanna River Fields prepared and ready to go. He said once there was no chance of frost the bathrooms will be opened. He said once everything was taken care of he would do an official update.

Recreation Director Andrews stated that the Parks Facilities Usage Calendar – Fall, 2012 was done and all the groups that requested use of facilities were accommodated. He said there was nothing new or any large events coming through his office for the fall. He said he had copies of the Calendar for review.

City Clerk Koury asked Recreation Director Andrews if he programmed the Summer Music Series.

Recreation Director Andrews replied yes.

Commissioner Davis stated that the garbage in Wilber Park outside the Middle School fence was a problem again.

Chair Catella stated he would talk to Nancy Osborn at the Middle School about it.

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(Discussion) continued

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 8:10 p.m.

JAMES R. KOURY, City Clerk

JRK/pab