

VERMILION PARKS & RECREATION BOARD
Minutes of November 16, 2021 - 6:00pm

Roll Call: Terry Parker (Chairman), William Warden, Brad Scholtz, Liz Elden, Kate Repola, Dennis Brudney, Jeff Keck

Also, Present: Marc Weisenberger, Parks Operation Manager; Chad Kuhns, Recreation Director; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Mayor Forthofer - Guest

Terry Parker, Chairman called the meeting of November 16, 2021 to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

J. Keck MOVED; B. Scholtz seconded to approve the meeting minutes of October 19, 2021. Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

COMMUNITY EVENT GROUP USE PERMITS:

Marilou Suszko asked for park permits for the following events:

Ice A Fair – February 5, 2022 (All Downtown Parks) – 8am – 8pm

All Washed Up – July 23, 2022 (Exchange Park) – 8am – 5pm with a rain date of July 30.

Chalk it Up – August 6, 2022 (Victory/Village Green) – 8am – 4pm

Hot Diggity Dog Day – August 27, 2022 (Main Street Beach & Park) – 8am – 3pm

Mayor Forthofer asked if the intent is to close Main Street Beach from Huron to the beach. M. Suszko clarified this is what they usually do. She explained they close it off at night, so no one parks there and then they are usually out of there by 2pm.

B. Scholtz MOVED, L. Elden seconded to approve the events as listed above. Roll Call Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Recreation Director's Report:

Chad Kuhns reported the basketball registration deadline for second – fourth grade and fifth – seventh grade will be December 23. He said the second – fourth grade teams will play on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the elementary school and fifth – seventh grade will be on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. They will have cheerleading signups starting as well. B. Warden asked how much it cost to participate to play. C. Kuhns said it is \$75.00 per person. B. Warden asked how much it is for families. C. Kuhns said it is \$75.00 for the first person and each additional child is \$50.00.

Service Director's Report:

T. Valerius mentioned that Edwards Tree Service is in town, and they are taking down several trees, including four parks' trees (one in Exchange, one in East Exchange, one in Village Green, and one in Victory Park).

Parks Supervisor Report:

Marc Weisenberger reported the fall tree planting has been completed by the Vermilion Tree Commission and two trees were planted at Village Green to replace the ones that were taken down, and three were added at Sherod park two weeks ago.

He said the parks department made the move to the old fire station and all phones and computers are in place. He said the office and meeting space is being utilized on the second floor, and downstairs they are housing their vehicles and equipment in the maintenance area. They are using the three bays across the front on Ohio Street and one bay on Exchange.

He said their focus this month is to mulch leaves in the parks and to finish putting up Christmas decorations.

He said they received the new blade for the truck from the Wastewater Plant that they will use for snow plowing.

B. Warden said he was approached by a neighbor who wondered what the policy or what the timeline is for the installation and removal of the porta johns at Showse Park. M. Weisenberger believed it was the end of September. B. Warden asked if this has always been that way and M. Weisenberger had believed so, but he would need to check with Anne Maiden who handles this. B. Warden asked if the porta johns were available for the ballfields in the back park. M. Weisenberger said yes as one handicap unit was located in the back between the two ballfields, and then they keep a regular unit up front.

Budget/Finance Subcommittee Report: No report.

Community Relations/Publicity: No report.

Erosion: No report.

Main Street Beach Revitalization Project:

B. Scholtz said they met last night with City Council to talk about the street phase to get them on board to support them with the street that will tie in from Huron Street down to Main Street Beach. He said Western Reserve did an amazing job of presenting and he felt it was well received by Council as they were unanimous in their support of the street. This was the final big piece that was in limbo. He provided the board members with a copy of the plans they provided City Council with. He said the Edge Group did a great job on the master plan for the park. He said this is a solid plan, but it is not final. They should be able to use the plan to do private and public fundraising, and to begin more closely on the budget.

He said they received a NatureWorks grant for \$40,000, which is a huge boost they needed. They also should be closing on the Stuchal property in the next week or so and then this house is scheduled to be razed in mid-December. Also, he mentioned the Erie County Metro Parks has stepped up financially. They participated in their subcommittee, but they are also stepping up financially to help them close on the Stuchal house, and probably to continue to support the project. He said they are working with the Public Art folks, and they meet next week to figure out what makes sense for the park from a Public Art standpoint.

He gave thanks to Tony Valerius and Chris Howard as they received budgetary numbers and he noted the parking lot seems to be within budget.

He explained that they need direction from the board as the subcommittee has worked really hard on the rendering of the restroom. Everything is in there that they want, and they included the Shore Thing, and received a lot of input from the community. As recently as of today, he and Marc met with the contractor and architect again in trying to get down as close as they could to the budget, but they will not get there as it is drawn as they are still pretty far out of the budget, and they would definitely exceed any contingencies, so he wanted to see how the board felt as far as designing it to budget, or do they really want to make this something special. Is it just a restroom, or do they want it to fit in the neighborhood? They could take out the Shore Thing's piece, but he did not think this was a good thing to do because of the value they bring to Vermilion since they are really kind of the Visitor Center, so he is not a proponent of this. Even the architect and the contractor feel that shrinking it a little bit will not get them within the budget. He asked the board for direction on whether they felt it should be redesigned or if they wanted to reallocate funds from other places, or to go back fundraising. It becomes a question of redesign by keeping it simple and very functional versus something a little bit more amazing.

K. Repola said they either have to find a way to put more funds into creating what the subcommittee has created and wanted, or they go back to the drawing board to a smaller scaled down Comfort Station similar to what they have at Exchange Park.

T. Parker said the cost of building materials has gone up and possibly by 40% at the beginning of the year. He said they have been working on this budget for a couple years and all of a sudden things are going up. The longer they wait the more the prices will increase. B. Scholtz said it could go either way but there are no guarantees. T. Parker said the board needs to give direction to the subcommittee. B. Scholtz said they do report to the Parks Board for approval, and they are trying to bring to the board the best recommendation, but he needs direction.

J. Keck asked how much money they would need over budget roughly. B. Scholtz said they are probably in the \$75,000 - \$100,000 mark over budget. T. Valerius said it is probably around \$75,000. He said this is something the Parks Board has been needing for years and they have been working on it for years. They are going to do this one time and he feels it should be what they want. Yes, it will probably cost a little more money, but you also have to remember how much money was saved in taking down the museum and the Wakefield Mansion. He thinks they are still ahead if they allocate more money to getting what they want and to what they

really need down there. He said this park is only going to grow and they will get more people down there every year, and he thinks they need a facility to accommodate all of the people.

Mayor Forthofer felt that some of the natural limitations on this building by different grants limits it to about 1,000 feet, so it will never be very big, so he does not think they can squash it down any further, so he thinks they need to fish for more money because they cannot minimize the functional use. They want it to be something they are proud of. L. Elden and B. Warden said they totally agree.

T. Parker asked what the square footage is that is up against the conservation easement. B. Scholtz said they are not quite against it – they are well below 1,000 square feet. T. Parker asked if it would be sitting further north so some of this square footage is off of the Reisinger property. B. Scholtz said not because of the restriction, but it is because of location and view. You will not be staring so much at the pump house.

D. Corogin said in speaking for Vermilion in Bloom they are interested in getting grant money for \$30,000 from the Lorain County Community Foundation to pay for the landscaping around the building. She wasn't certain where this money was going to come from, but if this gave the Parks Board the money to put towards this project ... B. Scholtz said it would because the budget has been set up for everything east of Main Street, excluding the parking lot. If they can get help with grants with anything, then it helps.

T. Parker said if you look at the street portion, the bottom end that is even with the new parking lot – the new parking lot is pervious pavers, and the bottom end of Main Street will also be pervious pavers. If you have ever been down there when it rains, it washes stuff out, so this will hopefully retard the flow of water and absorb a bunch of it. T. Valerius said it is a big help with the stormwater quality and quantity portion of the project. Additionally, the quote also included pavers on the western side of the parking area, so all of these spaces from Huron Street down to the beach will be pervious pavers to match what is already in place on Main Street. T. Parker said this will help with runoff down there.

T. Parker said he is hearing from the board that they want to do this right. K. Repola said they also want to do it now in her opinion. It is time to do it! It is time to have a facility that matches what they would like Vermilion to look like and not a porta potty behind a lighthouse. B. Scholtz said the rendering that Mark Wagner did gets you excited. K. Repola said it will be beautiful and they know what the Shore Thing does, and they know what their abilities are to be a welcoming committee to Vermilion, and what they will do with their space and their vending possibilities. She thought it would be very fantastic!

T. Parker asked the board if they were willing at some point down the road to put more money in so they can fulfill this budget. The board agreed. B. Scholtz said he would continue to dive down this number and he will see how the budget shakes out. He hopes to have a better idea by January. T. Parker said this budget also includes the boardwalk that goes across the end of the street. He asked if there will be new sidewalk on the west side of the street. T. Valerius said this is correct and the roadway in order to facilitate the two-lane traffic and to have the parking spaces as per city ordinance – they will need to bump to the west approximately eight

feet toward the hill. B. Warden asked if they would put in a retaining wall. T. Valerius said this is a question for the city engineer once the plans are drawn up.

B. Scholtz asked how far the board is willing to go. He thought they would have a scaled back version and then they could have it close to the rendering. L. Elden asked if they know what the numbers actually are. B. Scholtz said he is talking around \$150,000 more if it is as is. He said they are around \$350,000 and they would need probably \$450,000. T. Valerius thought they would need an additional \$100,000 as a ballpark. B. Scholtz said they will still need to revisit the amenities around it. L. Elden said it could be \$500,000 with the contingencies. B. Scholtz said it is a big question mark. T. Parker said Western Reserve is planning to go back to the state for capital budget money. They did get awarded \$75,000, and this and the NatureWorks grant are reimbursement grants, so they will end up fronting \$115,000 and then this money will come back to the city. B. Warden thought the passage of the infrastructure bill might even be able to float some money that they currently aren't aware of, and this is something he doesn't think they should overlook. Mayor Forthofer said he is waiting for his call from Marcy Kaptur, but there may be strings attached, but right now they just don't know.

Recreation and School Relations: No report.

Sherod Playground:

L. Elden said the subcommittee met on November 11 with the playground company. M. Weisenberger said it was a productive meeting and the playground representative put together a rough draft of a starting point and as a group they reviewed each piece and looked at the general layout, color schemes, and themes. The representative took the notes from the meeting to put together a more specific drawing for them. They will continue to adapt it to what they want at the park. The general layout is two main climbing play structures and features that you traditionally see in a playground. One will be more of a ropes climbing course, which is a newer concept in parks and playgrounds, and then the rest of it would be two sets of swings; one being handicap accessible and more for the age appropriate, and the other end will be more for the younger kids. He said they want to develop a specific area for toddlers. They are looking at implementing two or three different types of surface material, including traditional mulch. They want the playground to be inclusive or accessible as possible, so they are looking at some different pour in place – rubber type of surfaces that would be good for wheelchairs and strollers. Hopefully, by the next meeting they will have some drawings and costs they can share with the board members.

Vermilion Community Pool Subcommittee:

Dennis Brudney thanked the parks board for approving the steps for the pool because it will address a big safety issue. It takes about seven weeks to be built and Marc is in the process of ordering them. Also, they talked about checking some of the new equipment that has been put in the pool and it might need to be winterized. After the beginning of the year, hopefully they can talk about how they will fund the pool next year with operating expenses. They need to come up with a serious plan on how they want to do this.

Public Art Subcommittee:

L. Elden said the subcommittee under Main Street is going to meet on Monday, November 22. The subcommittee is anxious to be part of the Main Street revitalization and to have a site for public art.

OPEN TO THE AUDIENCE:

Dana Corogin thanked Terry Parker and Brad Scholtz for everything they have done. She said on behalf of the community, Main Street Vermilion, and Vermilion in Bloom, and from working with them while working for the city – and just the leadership and professionalism, the hard work, the fiscal responsibility, and the amount of work that has been done has been incredible. She said they all appreciate it. In getting the levy passed was huge – they have a self-sustaining parks department, and they were able to hire a full-time fabulous and outstanding Parks Director, and it has just been a remarkable experience. She said they did not even think they would have a pool anymore and they have been able to revitalize it. The revetment work at Showse park – when they first started there was so much vandalism and problems in this park, so this was huge. They made improvements in Sherod park, West Breeze, and Friendship park. There are so many things that she wanted to thank them for and told them they would miss them a lot, and the community would miss them on the parks board.

T. Parker said he and Brad Scholtz came on the Parks board 12 years ago and basically their meetings were reports from the Recreation Director and Dana would ask them for money, and they would approve Park Use permits, and then the Showse project started to roll. He said it has been satisfying, but as Kenny Rogers said, “You got to know when to hold them, and know when to fold them, and he needs to be done. He said he is so grateful for working with everyone and for Marc coming in and taking them to the next level and then some. He said they have received support from Tony and the Mayor – everybody has been cooperative, and it has been a pleasure and he thanked everyone very much.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

T. Parker reported that City Council on October 25, 2021 did pass the Ordinance for Marc Weisenberger to move to full-time and this will take effect on November 25.

Mayor Forthofer said the evolution since he was on the board 10 years or something like that has been remarkable. It has probably been one of the most premier boards and commissions in the city as far as having its own budget and being exceptionally well-managed. He said they have done a great job. He said in the infrastructure bill there will be push for charging stations for electric cars and he has received some word on this. In the city he was thinking of where they would put charging stations, which he is a strong advocate for. He thinks the

Parks system might be the best possible location. T. Valerius said he has four spots right between the new Fulper Lot and the Grand Division lot, which is behind the Jailhouse. When Satellite put the electric in for the lights for the Fulper Lot he asked them to make sure the electric was big enough to support charging stations in those four spots. Mayor Forthofer said the government is asking municipalities to put them by their fire stations and he knows that Chief Stempowski is not a fan of having anything around his station to block doors or anything like this. However, the old station on Ohio Street might be a possibility. He thought the Parks Board could give additional thought to this.

ADJOURNMENT:

B. Warden MOVED; L. Elden seconded to adjourn the meeting. Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday – January 18, 2022 @ **6:00 pm**
at the Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio

*~Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk
Vermilion City Council/Boards and Commissions*