

VERMILION PARKS & RECREATION BOARD
Minutes of January 18, 2022 - 6:00pm

Roll Call: Kate Repola, William Warden, Bill Malin, Liz Elden, Jeff Keck. Absent: Dennis Brudney, Tina Swinehart

Also, Present: Marc Weisenberger, Parks Operation Manager; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Teresa Mayle, Council Representative. Mayor Forthofer - Guest

Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk called the meeting of January 18, 2022 to order.

NOMINATION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR:

B. Warden MOVED; J. Keck seconded to nominate Kate Repola as Chairwoman for 2022. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

L. Elden MOVED; B. Warden seconded to nominate Tina Swinehart as Vice Chair for 2022. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

K. Repola thanked the board for their faith in her and said she loves Vermilion and is proud to raise her children here. She looked forward to serving the community.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

B. Warden MOVED; J. Keck seconded to approve the meeting minutes of November 16, 2021. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

COMMUNITY EVENT GROUP USE PERMITS:

K. Repola advised the board they received a Community Event Group Use Permit for Lake Shore Corvettes for the park areas including Main Street, Victory Park, and from the railroad tracks to Ohio Street. The event will be held on July 16, 2022.

Mayor Forthofer said the city will decide whether or not they will close down the street between Liberty and Ohio. He said usually the decision is favorable.

B. Warden said one of the problems in the past was that the club set aside the tracks from Ohio Street and did not really utilize this space in the actual street, but really preferred to have the grassy area in front of Village Green where there were a lot of electrical things installed over the years. There was some question on the necessity of having to use the grass when the street was underutilized, which was an area of discussion. He thought it was more of a vanity thing than a necessity to use Village Green, when in fact the street was available.

Mayor Forthofer said in the past there were issues raised by merchants regarding blocking doorways, but from firsthand experience in attending these events, they have been exceptionally responsive in anything he has asked of them. They are a group of mature responsible people that they are happy to have in town, and he thinks they put those issues to bed pertaining to blocking doorways and things like that.

B. Warden MOVED; L. Elden seconded to approve the event as listed above. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

City Council Representative Report: No report.

Service Director's Report:

T. Valerius thanked the street department for removing the large blocks at Showse Park and taking them to the Service Center. They will make bins out of them to hold stone, topsoil, and compost.

He indicated that Mark Wagner from Poulos + Schmid Design Group approached him before Christmas to ask if he could submit an invoice for the extra meetings he attended regarding the Comfort Station. In addition to preparing the construction documents for permitting and bidding, Poulos' contract including him attending a pre-bid meeting and three periodic site visits. To date, M. Wagner has attended 12 in-person meetings and several phone conversations with committee members. He felt Mark's presence at these meetings were absolutely necessary and told him to submit an invoice but asked in the future that he inform the city when the city is asking more from him than what the contract allows for. He noted that Mark Wagner apologized and agreed and stated that if he had any idea that the project was going to require the need for 12 meetings, he would have accounted for more in his initial proposal. He asked the board to approve an additional \$4,000 to be added to Poulos' contract for the extra meetings that were attended.

Additionally, he announced that Poulos + Schmid submitted a proposal for the Main Street Beach Improvements on the west side of Main Street. This quote includes coordinating and developing a project with the Edge Group. He asked the board to approve a not-to-exceed price of \$45,500 for architectural services, which includes the Edge Group's fee of \$37,000.

Parks Supervisor Report:

Marc Weisenberger thanked the street department for their help in moving 14 concrete blocks that have been sitting at the Showse Park entranceway for a number of years. The blocks will be put to good use at the Service Center to organize their ground maintenance supplies.

The parks department is performing annual maintenance on the Sherod Park stream with the help of Erie Metro Parks. They are clearing brush and invasive vegetation to keep it open and improve its appearance. Today, they did a nice job in clearing debris from the mouth of the stream where it meets the lakefront as it was blocked heavily with materials. He appreciated their help and equipment.

He said he has talked with administrative members about Rec Software that includes things that would help them with regards to the pool, rec programming, parks, and calendars. It has a point-of-sale system that could be used at the pool, and it also would help track daily revenues. It provides email and text services that could be used for the pool members. It also has a format for a website they could establish and administer in-house that could link to the city's website. The cost for the first year is \$4,400, which includes the software, training, and setup. Action was not required by the board at this time as they would like to schedule a demo with the finance director, administrative assistant, and recreation director. L. Elden asked if the software would replace what the recreation director is using currently. M. Weisenberger said he needs to find out what he is using currently and if this would be a help to him. L. Elden hoped it would be a help and not a duplication. B. Malin asked if hardware would be needed to support this software. M. Weisenberger said they have a laptop for the pool and a computer available at the Parks office, but possibly they could use a printer to print receipts. L. Elden asked what the cost is after the first-year investment. M. Weisenberger said it would go to \$5,800 annually. This includes them hosting and managing the website. He will look at the program closer to make sure it helps in a number of ways.

M. Weisenberger reported that he and Jerry Western met with Shannon Miller the state arborer regarding the ODNR Forestry grant they received. They did an initial site visit to some of the parks. Shannon Miller pointed out different varieties of trees that she would recommend at different locations. They are thinking they will do 50% of the plantings in the spring and the other half in the fall to make it doable for the Tree Commission volunteers to water. He said she went over the specifications and requirements on how to plant the trees in addition to the maintenance. They are in the process of developing site maps for each park that will identify the type of tree and location.

He mentioned the new portable steps for the pool were delivered last week. They are assembled and ready for install in the summer.

B. Warden asked if they will be reseeding the area under the blocks at Showse. M. Weisenberger said they will put down topsoil and seed it.

Budget/Finance Subcommittee Report: No report.

Community Relations/Publicity:

K. Repola said they need to discuss appointing a new board member to this subcommittee.

Erosion:

Bill Warden said the ongoing erosion on the eastern end of Showse park has been a problem for years since the high-water mark. He received good news in cooperation with adjacent neighbors to possibly provide some solutions. M. Weisenberger noted they met with the residents at the first house to the east of Showse park and they are interested in helping to protect their property. However, they may need to incorporate some protection along some of

the park property. The resident is willing to incorporate some of this at his expense. The next step is for him to coordinate a meeting with Jim Park from Coastal Management, Chris Howard, City Engineer, Tony Valerius, Service Director, and the property owner to figure out what they can do there. They would be looking at the area of the storm drain spillway east to this person's property.

Also, along the lines of shoreline erosion and moving forward with the Main Street project and the Harbor View Park project, Western Reserve Conservancy is going to be working on a grant application along with the mayor with regards to the State of Ohio Capital Fund Bill. A project they are looking at is the potential shoreline erosion improvements that will need to be done at Harbor View prior to doing their walkways and other improvements at the park.

Main Street Beach Revitalization Project:

T. Valerius reported that construction documents are about 90-95% complete. They are waiting for geo-technical services to be performed on the site. It should be completed by the second week of February. As of right now, they can advertise and go out to bid on the project on February 24 and March 3, with a bid opening of March 10.

Mayor Forthofer noted the Western Reserve Land Conservancy completed acquisition of the Stuchal house, which was over \$400,000. It was done without anything from the general fund or the parks department. It was done with donations and a substantial one from the Erie County Metro Parks. They acquired the house and then proceeded to have it demolished with permits from the city. He said they turned it over to the city a week ago. He said having a relationship with Western Reserve has been an outstanding, not only on this past project, but on several others. The city could have not probably done everything they are doing there without them. He thanked them for acquiring the property, demolishing it, and turning it over to the city.

B. Scholtz said when T. Valerius mentioned the next phase of working with the Edge Group, the intent when they at least set this up was to not use city funds for this. In his opinion, the Parks Board has already stepped up substantially between the initial \$500,000 and the second \$100,000 on the restroom. The intent was to go out and fundraise for public and private for the balance of the project. He said they have not done all of the fundraising, but this was the intent. K. Repola agreed this is what she understood too from being involved in the meetings with the committee. They were completely anticipating raising those funds for this entire section of the project. T. Valerius asked if this was for the construction or the architectural side of it. B. Scholtz said the intent is there would be no more initial funds.

B. Scholtz said based on the timeline it shows they need to get the Edge Group starting to work on this. He asked the mayor if he knew the timeline on the west pier work. Mayor Forthofer said they are researching it this year and then actual construction is scheduled for 2023. B. Scholtz said their intent is to do Main Street the end of this year but based on this and knowing how they will gain access, then they will probably have to delay improving Main Street until they know more about the project. Therefore, they changed their focus to the west side. They can still do the restroom and in the meantime they can work on the Wakefield piece of the project. He said M. Weisenberger is starting to work on the shoreline first, and then they will start working south

from there. K. Repola clarified if the \$45,500 additional for the west side of the park needs to be paid before the fundraising and that it comes out of the money the Parks Board already allocated and then gets replaced with fundraising. B. Scholtz said the worst case absolutely, but in talking with Western Reserve they're pretty comfortable they should be fine as they would not be looking to pay this until July.

B. Scholtz asked the board if they had any concerns or comments in relation to the handouts he provided to them. B. Warden asked if the deck on the beach is not included in the future plans. B. Scholtz asked if he was talking about the current viewing platform. B. Warden said yes. B. Scholtz said correct it goes away. B. Warden said it appeals to a certain element and asked if there was a reason for this. B. Scholtz said not really as they are trying to gain a turnaround to have some access and parking. K. Repola thought the additional viewing area is provided with the museum coming down. She said there will be benches and viewing areas to sit in your car to watch the lake and the sunset. M. Weisenberger said it also gives them the access they will need for equipment for both the beach maintenance and the beach well. B. Warden asked if they could repurpose the deck. M. Weisenberger doubted it because it has been there for 30 years. Mayor Forthofer said before it is removed or demolished they need to get rodent control down there because it is pretty populated underneath the deck.

B. Malin said B. Scholtz had mentioned working on the Wakefield property and wanted clarification on this. B. Scholtz said he meant the west side of Main Street - the old Wakefield mansion.

Recreation and School Relations: No report.

Sherod Playground:

M. Weisenberger said they have met a couple times and they are getting close on a plan. The major change they are looking at is the location of the playground. Currently it is on the south side of the drive, and they found an area north of the drive that goes down the middle of the park – at the edge of the hillside where they can utilize the grade separation for some activities such as an inground slide and rock climbing – a natural play area going down the hill and then tying in near the creek area. He said they would tie the two play areas together as opposed to separating them. It saves redoing the parking because the previous plan was going to flip flop the parking, so you park on the same side as the playground. By moving it over to the north side they will not have to do this as the parking already faces that way. It's quieter and safer, and it keeps the kids away from the traffic and away from older trees. They will move towards some younger trees that will be there for a long time to provide shade. He said there is a lot of advantages to this area as it flows into the big open green area for additional activities. They are finalizing the equipment hopefully this week and then they will get the final pricing. They will work with the fundraising group and the funds they have through their main donor will pay for the equipment, and then some city funds the board has approved for this project would take care of the site improvements. They are hoping to raise another \$50,000 to \$100,000 that they

can utilize for installation of the equipment and other site improvements. They would like to do sidewalks and surfacing on some of the playground to make it an exclusive playground so that wheelchairs can have better access. They are looking forward to getting this done in 2022. K. Repola said this is an exciting project and she looks forward to seeing it.

Vermilion Community Pool Subcommittee:

M. Weisenberger said he has been meeting by teleconference with Dennis Brudney and Sheila Myracle to get the ball rolling for this next season. He said when their finance committee meets they have some numbers on paper they would like them to review, so they can bring it to the board in February. He said they have had good conversations and they had a good pool season last year, and hopefully they can grow on this. He thought the new steps will be an improvement. They did find 10 more deck recliners that have been assembled. He thought they were purchased through a recycling grant years back. He thought they could finalize the rates for next year and noted they are looking at a few changes on the hours to balance the budget as much as they can.

Mayor Forthofer said it is not too early to have awareness of the finances. He said the pool admirably operated last year. However, they came in \$6,000 short of expenses needed, which was with donations of about \$20,000. M. Weisenberger said actually with all the donations, and if you do not include the new vacuum cleaning machine they purchased out of capital, they actually covered all their expenses with the help of the Rotary fundraiser and the donations, and the additional revenue. Between that and cutting some expenses with chlorine and chemicals, they actually broke even. They have to figure out the gap of \$26,000, but they're getting there.

Public Art Subcommittee:

L. Elden said she attended a Public Art meeting last night via zoom and they have a lot of things going on with the postcards and categorizing all the existing public art in town. As far as the Harbor View project, they are in a holding pattern until they can get the master plan underway with the Edge Group. They really want to make a 20th Anniversary gift to the city in honor of Main Street Vermilion.

OPEN TO THE AUDIENCE: No participation.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

G. Fisher noted that T. Valerius had presented motions to the board and asked if the board was proceeding with them. T. Valerius said they need to proceed with the motion for \$4,000, which will come out of the park levy fund. He said in order for the Edge Group to start their work Poulos is going to want to see a signed contract before they begin work. K. Repola said this was her earlier question about whether they needed to borrow the money first. T. Valerius said even though Western Reserve is allocating some funds for this, he still thinks the parks board needs to

give the green light, so the administration can sign the contract and give it back to Poulos so they can get started on it. Ultimately, won't the parks board be responsible if Western Reserve doesn't come through? He said the only way Western Reserve is going to sign this contract to get the ball rolling is if it is a city project. G. Fisher clarified they would front the money and then get reimbursed. T. Valerius said they need board approval so they can get the contract signed so Poulos can get the ball rolling.

L. Elden MOVED; B. Warden seconded to authorize payment of the additional \$4,000 to Poulos + Schmid. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

L. Elden MOVED; J. Keck seconded to allocate \$45,500 so that the city can enter into an additional contract with the Edge Group and Poulos + Schmid to pull together the west side of the park with the understanding that Western Reserve and private entities will raise funds to reimburse parks for this amount. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**

Designate Representative (USACOE – West Pier)

K. Repola said she received an email from the mayor requesting the board appoint a representative with regards to the Army Corp of Engineers – West Pier project. Mayor Forthofer said the Army Corp is going to do the west pier and they request one contact point from the city side, but because this touches on so many different properties, they should have a representative from the Parks Board, the Erie County Metro Parks, and the Port Authority. Bill Malin volunteered to represent the Parks Board.

L. Elden asked how far along they will be with the improvements of Main Street next year. She worried about them destroying things. T. Valerius said they are waiting to see what the schedule is going to be and if they can gain access another way – maybe down Huron Street to the east and around the Wakefield property, then they can probably proceed with Main Street. L. Elden said the bathhouse will be done, so what will happen with the concrete/pavers, etc. T. Valerius said they will need to figure something out. Mayor Forthofer said in their one meeting with the Army Corp they said two things – they will need a staging area on the west side for their equipment and then they will need access, but they will not know this until they resume the meetings. He can't imagine it will affect the Comfort Station, but it may affect the Main Street renovation.

ADJOURNMENT:

L. Elden MOVED; B. Warden seconded to adjourn the meeting. Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday – February 15, 2022 @ **6:00 pm** at the Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street,
Vermilion

~Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk