

VERMILION PARKS & RECREATION BOARD

Minutes of June 21, 2022 - 6:00pm

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

Also, Present: Marc Weisenberger, Parks Operation Manager; Chad Kuhns, Recreation Director; Teresa Mayle, Council Representative. Mayor Forthofer - Guest

Kate Repola, Chairwoman called the meeting of June 21, 2022, to order. She asked for a moment of silence to honor the gentleman who passed away in Lake Erie off Showse Park. On behalf of the board, she offered their deepest condolences to his family and friends.

Approval of Minutes:

B. Warden MOVED; L. Elden seconded to approve the meeting minutes of May 17, 2022. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Recreation Director's Report:

C. Kuhns updated the board members on baseball and noted they had fifteen teams this year with 180 participants. He thanked the baseball sponsors, which include the Vermilion Rotary Club, Dewey Furniture, Firelands Chevrolet, D&J Handyman Services, Brad Schwab Insurance Agency, Vermilion Township Fire Department, Safe Harbour Security, Ondus Auto, and the Fraternal Order of Police.

He said signups for football will begin June 26 from 1-3 p.m. at the Fieldhouse. Registration deadline will be July 15 and registration forms are available online and at the city offices.

Correspondence: No correspondence.

COMMUNITY EVENT GROUP USE PERMITS:

Harbourtown Fine Arts Center:

Cleveland Ballot Performance – Friday, August 26, 2022 – 12:00 noon – 11:00p.m. (Village Green)

Mayor Forthofer mentioned there will be two performances and one will be held at the former Brown property, which is a higher ticket event, but they want another one that is available to the

public at Village Green. He said there are two trees that are going to be moved to make room for the stage that was there last year.

K. Repola MOVED; L. Elden seconded to approve the Community Event Group Use Permit for the 'Cleveland Ballot Performance' as presented. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

City Council Representative Report: No report.

Service Director's Report:

M. Weisenberger stated that on behalf of T. Valerius' absence he wanted to report that they broke ground on the Comfort Station. Mayor Forthofer said the anticipated completion of the project is in October. B. Malin said with the project proceeding in phases and since there will be no turnaround installed, will there be temporary access to the Comfort Station. Mayor Forthofer said the plan is still to have a parking lot with a turnaround done and funds have already been provided for this. However, it is the resurfacing from Huron down to the beach that they will hold off on until the Army Corp of Engineers decides to bring in their equipment.

T. Swinehart said she spent the night at the Gilchrist Guesthouse last night and had been made aware of ruckus in the parking lot, so she watched and listened during her stay. However, there were 15+ young adults that were playing music, talking, and hanging out, then they had screeching of tires and skateboards, and someone hanging onto the bumper of a car and going through the parking lot, which was unsafe. She said by midnight everybody was gone and the police came through around 11:00 p.m. She mentioned she lives by Nakomis Park, which has a sign stating what time the park closes, but there is not a sign that addresses the park closing time at Main Street. She questioned how the police can have teeth or say on whether people can be there. She said there is a sign on the building that says the park closes at 11:00 p.m., but it is not near the parking lot. She thought the board should consider a way to close off that parking lot area at a reasonable time with a gate and signage. She thought this would be easier on the neighbors and safer for everybody. K. Repola said they received correspondence and complaints from the neighbors regarding this issue and they will discuss this under 'New Business.'

Parks Operation Manager Report:

Marc Weisenberger said his items will be discussed under the various committees.

Budget/Finance Subcommittee Report: No report.

Erosion:

B. Warden said he was concerned about the drop-off at Showse Park on the eastern side due to erosion. He said in this area it was graded once upon a time, but now it is a serious drop-off. He suggested looking into putting up some type of a barrier or sign warning people to stay back from the edge, so nobody falls off the side. He would hate to see the city face litigation over a potentially dangerous situation. T. Swinehart said they had a sign at Nokomis as well, but it fell into the water due to erosion. They brought in four large cinder blocks to make sure cars do not drive into the lake because it is a cliff that drops off. K. Repola asked M. Weisenberger to investigate signage at both parks. Mayor Forthofer said he had asked the service director to start on signage that says, "Lifeguard Not on Duty – Swim at Your Own Risk," so they can put them at the city beaches. B. Warden suggested a sign that provides a caution or warning. T. Swinehart said Linwood has these signs, but they do not have drop-offs. B. Malin said if they are exploring signage, then they need to look at Sherod because it has cliffs as well.

Main Street Beach Revitalization Project: No report.

Recreation and School Relations: No report.

Sherod Playground:

M. Weisenberger indicated the playground has been ordered and the expected delivery date is right around Labor Day. He said between now and then they will finish their fundraising. He mentioned they had another \$13,000 donated towards the project and they have three local excavators who have expressed interest in helping, which is part of the project they were trying to raise money for. He said the project has two phases with the second phase including hillside slides. They plan to break ground after the Beach Market in August. The dirt they will remove in phase one can be pushed over to do phase two to reshape the hillside for the inground slides. It will be a unique playground and in September the plan is to have Snyder Recreation install the equipment, which may take a couple of weeks. It may take a couple of weeks to do the surface material, and sometime in early October they should be able to have an opening for the project. B. Warden asked what they planned to do with the current playground equipment. M. Weisenberger said the plan is to take it to the scrap yard as it is 30 years old and there is nothing worth saving.

Vermilion Community Pool Subcommittee:

D. Brudney reported that the pool is operating well through teamwork. He said a new person hired is working well with Garth Grob, and as an example, Bob comes in the morning to test the water and takes the vacuum out of the pool, and Garth comes in at night to test the water and puts the vacuum back into the pool, so working together makes things better to take the excess work off certain people. He said they had many issues with oak tree debris, but Garth purchased a blower to remove it. He said the lifeguards are working out well. They started off with training twenty guards and four guards had issues, so they now have sixteen guards. In other

communities there is a shortage of guards, and Maude Neiding in Amherst only has five guards, so their hours of operation have been restricted. In fact, they contacted Marc to see if they could borrow Vermilion's guards, and he advised if they have candidates then Vermilion would be happy to train them at their cost. M. Weisenberger thanked Dennis for finding the program they used this year as it has made it convenient for these kids to become lifeguards. They do not have to go through the Red Cross Program and pay \$270. He said Jean, Christy, and Addy are certified to train guards.

D. Brudney provided the board members with pictures of the new steps that are in the pool, which is working out great and everybody likes them. The lady injured last year is thrilled with them as well. They have minor issues with the steps, but he is working with VIP Solutions as they were sent the wrong side panel that protects the kids from getting underneath the steps. In the interim, they plan to make a frame on the inside so the kids cannot get into that little space.

He said last week Rotary swim lessons were completed and a success. The June swim lessons are happening this week. He said at the beginning of the year they decided not to proceed with the 7-9 p.m. swim and the plan was to close after the 6 p.m. adult swim, but they had a lot of upset people who didn't like the fact that the evening swim wasn't being offered, so T. Valerius granted approval in the interim to open up the evening swim times. However, he asked for board approval by motion to continue the 7-9 p.m. swim. He said they have had a couple of nights where they almost needed another guard to come in as they had almost fifty people in attendance. K. Repola asked if they have lifeguards that are willing to take this shift. D. Brudney said yes as they have plenty of guards.

T. Swinehart MOVED; B. Warden seconded to approve the evening swims on Monday-Friday from 7-9 p.m. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

D. Brudney said the vending machines are going well and the vending company (Lakeside Vending – Avon Lake, Ohio) has been fantastic. They should have their first statement by the end of the month on how much money the city has made as they get a 10 percent kickback. He mentioned that Jean Habermehl wanted to provide umbrellas on the tables on the west side of the pool, so people can sit and eat. He contacted the vending company to see where they may be able to purchase umbrellas, and after talking with Stan from Lakeside Vending, he informed Dennis that he called in a favor from another business, and they provided four 9' new umbrellas at no charge. He said if the city needs business from a vendor this company is fantastic, and they are great at maintaining and filling their machines.

He reported that as of June 10, they have sixty family memberships, thirty add-ons, and seven individuals. This is less than last year, but they are charging more. The theory is that some of these people are taking family members that should have bought a family membership and adding them to their add-ons, so they are trying to work this out, so this does not happen anymore. They are still getting memberships as it is early in the season.

He said the Rotary Fundraiser is proceeding and they received equipment for basketball and pool volleyball. They have one basketball hoop, and the volleyball equipment uses that basketball pole and hoop as well. They cannot go side to side with basketball, so they will have to do a half court. Once they find out what the interest is this year and what they want to charge the kids, they will purchase another basketball hoop for next year. They will have a 60th Birthday for the pool and Garth Grob and his band will be there, and it will be for adults only. He said J. Habermehl is working on this. They will have movie nights at the pool which will be announced in the papers. Additionally, there will be adult exercise classes at the pool, and there will be swim classes in July and August. He said Jean Habermehl is a dynamo with everything she is planning. He said hopefully soon they will get a rendering of the financials from the finance director.

M. Weisenberger said the contractors that donated concrete and concrete work, which was the crossroads in getting the pool back open, has four families that would utilize the pool, so he talked with the finance director in the possibility of offering them each a family membership in exchange for all the work they did at the pool, and she said they could do that with the board's approval. K. Repola said this seems like the least they could do as this was a big turning point in getting the pool open.

L. Elden MOVED; B. Warden seconded to offer memberships to the contractors who provided in-kind donations in 2021. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

Rotary Pool Fundraiser:

Tina Swinehart distributed flyers from the Rotary Club for the Pancake Breakfast they are organizing at the Historic Firehouse on Saturday, July 16 from 8-11 a.m. Donations will support the Vermilion Community Pool. She said they also offered to help with the Putt for the Pool fundraiser, which will be held at Putter Port on Sunday, July 31. They are hoping to get seventy-two teams of putters and they will have four tee times (1:00, 2:00, 3:00, and 4:00 p.m.). They are hoping to receive team sponsorships (\$100.00 per four-person team). They would like to give an individual pool membership for next year, with the hopes of it becoming a family membership. They are going to ask for donations to putt or donations from businesses to give away prizes during the event. She said they need volunteers on this day, and she hoped that the parks board members could help. She said the flyer will be out tomorrow and they will start pounding the pavement to get donations and putting teams together. K. Repola thanked her and the Vermilion Rotary yet again for their support. B. Malin asked who they should contact to let them know they are available to help. T. Swinehart said they can let her know. Mayor Forthofer asked if they could provide a digital post so he can add it to the city Facebook page. T. Swinehart said the Rotary is managing this, so she will let them know. K. Repola said they can put this in the Photojournal as well.

West Pier Project:

B. Malin said the city is in receipt of the paperwork for the Recreational Use that is being reviewed.

Public Art Subcommittee: No report.

Miscellaneous:

Mayor Forthofer said the fireworks have been rescheduled for September 3. Also, he reported that fireworks in the city are not prohibited, and Council passed legislation last week at the encouragement of Chief Hartung.

He thanked the Chamber of Commerce and Sid Jordan for Third Thursday and the Festival of the Fish that ran flawless.

OPEN TO THE AUDIENCE:

Denver Schaffer of 1122 Jackson Street addressed a PowerPoint presentation he prepared to propose a sand volleyball pit and net to be installed at Sherod Park. He included additional locations, such as Main Street Beach and incorporating one on school property. He said Vermilion is a small town on a great lake and they do not have any sand volleyball courts and other communities do. He said Lorain and Huron has them, so he thought it was a great thing to add. He noted that Vermilion just had a good volleyball team, but they do not have any local area to play. They either must play in gyms outside the city or go to other beaches and parks. He feels they have plenty of space to have one. Reasons to have a volleyball net is to give kids and summer visitors something to do in town and it makes the parks more attractive to have events, such as picnics, reunions, and group gatherings. In addition, it is family fun and exercise and a place for the local teens to practice in the summer months and a gathering place for kids to interact using a game, and the potential to grow the site and make it better by adding another court and lights. He felt Sherod was a great space and feels it is underutilized. He reached out to community members and talked with ADT Construction who would be willing to donate his equipment and dig the area out. He talked with Rudy and Sara from Rudy's Bar and Grill who were interested, and Cliff German too was interested in helping. He is not sure what the help entails as they did not get into specifics, but they would help in getting the site prepared at least. He said supplies needed for the project is sand, posts, hardware, and out of bound lines. Concerns that may come up is maintenance of the court, so they would need garbage cans and they would need to keep the sand cleaned and replenished. He said the responsibilities would fall on the help of the Parks and Recreation Department. He asked the board if they can give the kids the chance to play locally within a reasonable timeframe.

K. Repola said this is a popular sport and her son is playing sand volleyball as they speak in Lorain, and her daughter is on the school volleyball team, and this is something she would like to investigate. M. Weisenberger said they could look at West Breeze Park as there was a court there at one time. D. Schaffer said he would be willing to do research into equipment as he wants to get the ball rolling.

B. Warden said within the last 10 years there was a sand volleyball court at Showse Park east of the lift station and it was well used at the time, and this area is still there. The poles and sand are gone, but the areas are level. D. Schaffer thought with the tie in with the playground at Sherod, he did not think it would entice the teenagers, so tying them in together this could become an attractive park for people to come to (young and old). K. Repola asked M. Weisenberger to have a conversation to see if this is something they could work into their agenda and budget. B. Warden said once you establish it there is little expense as replenishing the sand every year is about it, along with repairing the net if it gets ripped. L. Elden asked M. Weisenberger if he had previous sand volleyball maintenance experience from his former municipality positions. M. Weisenberger said yes.

D. Schaffer said in addition to the businesses he listed, he thought Marc could get with the school teams as in the spring, they could perform community service at the sand volleyball court.

B. Malin asked the board to include this topic on next month's agenda under 'Old Business.'

L. Elden said she has had people ask her about Pickle Ball. She asked if the tennis courts on Sailorway are owned by the school. M. Weisenberger said yes and next year they can look at the courts at Showse Park which could be resurfaced for Pickle Ball. Another area they had thought about is West Breeze because it is well-protected from the wind. L. Elden said Pickle Ball is a growing sport. B. Warden said there is a smaller basketball court at Showse that is not used, which would be perfect for Pickle Ball. T. Swinehart suggested putting this on 'Old Business' too for next month.

Sid Jordan spoke on Third Thursday and Sunset Concerts on Sunday nights. He was before the board in February and March to get approval on the permits to do music at the Lighthouse and he got the sense that there was unanimous excitement about this area being used. Subsequently, he saw the preliminary plan for a walkway through this area and he marked it up to redirect the sidewalk because it would be detrimental to the concept of where they want to do music. It was forwarded to Brad Scholtz who is the head of the committee, but he was disappointed to see a plan announced publicly that still showed the walkway in the same place. The greatest disappointment is 16 years of heart and soul volunteering at Third Thursday, which no one can argue has brought more money to downtown businesses than any other event. He did not get a response or dialogue about his idea. He said he is disappointed and would like to have audience with somebody or the architect before the plan is finalized. B. Warden asked him

to elaborate on what the problem is. Sid Jordan explained the sidewalk goes south of the lighthouse, which is right where the music would be using the natural grade as an amphitheater. This is how they laid out the music and if this sidewalk goes right through there, then there is not a place for a performance. B. Warden asked if they could set up on the sidewalk. S. Jordan said they could if there was a space that was converted other than a 5' walkway to a 10' x 16' pad. He said he just wanted a callback to talk about his ideas. B. Warden asked if they would prefer to be on the grass. S. Jordan said no, and he did not think the sidewalk for a pathway should be going right through or in between where the performance and audience is. B. Warden said they could block it off during those times and S. Jordan agreed this could be done. S. Jordan said he would like to be invited to be part of the group that is finalizing this layout. K. Repola said she did not see his correspondence regarding this. S. Jordan replied that he did not send it to her because he thought it was in the committee's hands before it came before the parks board. K. Repola explained there is nothing set in stone. The project is on hold with the architect for fundraising and then once they have secured a certain amount of money, they will go back and do final revisions. She said she would be happy to add him to this committee and asked if he would want to be a part of this. S. Jordan replied, of course. K. Repola said she would add him to the Main Street Beach subcommittee, but nothing is being done until the finances are secured through fundraising. She apologized that he did not receive a call or correspondence when he reached out. B. Warden said they have been going through potential design ideas and modifications, and concept drawings for the last half dozen years. What started out was an amphitheater with actual seats. K. Repola mentioned that it is constantly changing. She encouraged him in the future to copy her on any emails or correspondence and she will make sure they get back with him.

B. Malin said during Third Thursday he was happy to see the lighthouse provided a natural shade for the band that was playing.

S. Jordan thanked the team who provided the electricity. There is now significant power. M. Weisenberger said one thing the committee discussed was paying attention to where they thought a concrete pad (stage) would work, so they could put it into the plans as they move forward. K. Repola said this summer of concerts and using the area will help them find a right place for this. S. Jordan said feedback they received when they announced they would have concerts at the lighthouse on Sunday's, is what they would do for seniors who do not have mobility when they had good parking access when it was at the Gazebo. He advised them they could be there early and isolate spaces that are designated for these people, especially at the top of the hill. Where the concrete is for parking at the top of the hill right now is a perfect spot for those people and they can put their chairs in front of their cars, which gives them an angle to see down the hill.

OLD and NEW BUSINESS:

K. Repola said last month they had her look into the matter of naming the park (Main Street) and she did investigate other communities and how they named their beach/park combos, and it was all over the board. She personally preferred naming it Main Street Beach & Park and L. Elden said she was leaning towards this too. K. Repola said Beach Park sounds a little choppy to her.

K. Repola MOVED; T. Swinehart seconded to name the park Main Street Beach & Park. Discussion: B. Warden said he did not like the *and*. D. Brudney said his first thought was Beach and Park. K. Repola said they can use an ampersand, which would look better than *and*. B. Warden said if you think of somebody coming from out of town and they are sitting at Main Street and Liberty, and there is a sign that says Main Street Beach that is fine, but they wouldn't have any idea there is a park there, so they should include the word park, and he would agree with the ampersand. B. Malin asked if there are any commitments by the Wakefield's or anyone. K. Repola said there were no commitments made and phone calls have been made. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

K. Repola said they have been receiving complaints both to her and the police chief about misbehavior in and around Main Street Beach & Park. The hours per ordinance say the closing time for all public beaches and parks in the City is hereby established at 11:00 p.m.; with the exception of Nakomis Beach Park, West Breeze Park, and Hanover Square Park that will close at dusk. The Director of Parks and Recreation shall have the authority to extend such closing time in the case of a softball or baseball game in progress at Sherod Park, after such hours, until such game is terminated, or upon any other limitation the Director may establish. She thinks this probably extends to special events. They can always offer additional hours for special events. She asked the board how they should curb some of the complaints that the neighbors are voicing, which include screeching of tires, vehicles driving down the hill to the lighthouse, violence, suspected drug use, and cars driving around speed bumps onto the grass at high speeds. She thought the board needs to establish a firm closing time and signage. She asked the board if they wanted to keep the 11 p.m. closing time, which is many hours after it becomes dark even in the summer, and more hours in the winter. She asked if the board wanted to close Main Street Beach & Park at dusk because of the surrounding residents. T. Swinehart thought the sign at Nakomis says 30 minutes after sunset. M. Weisenberger said the sign says 7 a.m. to dusk. T. Swinehart asked what dusk is considered. K. Repola explained that dusk is the hour between sunset and complete darkness. M. Weisenberger said Main Street now says 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. K. Repola did not know if anyone needed to be there at 11 p.m. T. Swinehart said in sitting at the Gilchrist House there was much activity and kids, and it was relatively quiet – some squealing tires and skateboarding. She watched what time the sun set and what time it got dark, and it seemed like by 10 p.m. that was plenty of time because it was really dark. B. Warden asked if the problems were at the high parking lot or down below. T. Swinehart said it was the high parking lot. K. Repola questioned if they could block this off. Mayor Forthofer said he attended a party Saturday night in Harbourtown with all those neighbors and he got an earful, but in speaking with the Police Chief this morning in length, they immediately established a surveillance camera,

and they will be putting up additional cameras around the area. He said previously they had chained off the area before the building was taken down. He talked with the owner of Chez Francois who has valet and employee parking there and he agrees to attend to the chain for his people and they will close it up when they're done. In the meantime, the police have already initiated increased activity. He said the board makes a good point about signage and he would be interested in hearing what they have to say about closing at dusk versus continuing to 11 p.m. He said the Chief asked that the board not initiate or enact a time change until next month. He advised a time change would have to go before Council as the ordinance would need to be amended. B. Malin asked if the chief was going to bring them additional information to help with this decision. Mayor Forthofer said he wants to do some things before it is changed.

L. Elden said M. Weisenberger has a long-term plan such as a physical gate rather than a chain and boulders going down the hill to solve the driving around problem. M. Weisenberger said the Edge Group is coming in on Thursday and one of the thoughts is to take them down there to meet with Dave Dunn from the Quarry. One of the thoughts was to have him look at the area and suggest what the city could do to make it look nice as well as contain the traffic on the driveway. He said in talking with the service director they thought they could potentially fabricate some nice-looking gates as opposed to a chain to make it a much more controllable situation. T. Swinehart thought this was a good idea and mentioned the fact that they have a lot of skateboards up there, so she is thinking how those will be used. Mayor Forthofer said in the meantime they may want to discuss temporary posts or whatever to remediate some of the complaints. K. Repola said they are taking the neighbors concerns very seriously and as soon as possible they would like to install additional cameras, signage, and maybe use the chain again even if they know it is not the perfect solution. It is a good faith effort, and it is something they have. Certainly, they can receive additional information from the Edge Group to look at different gates and changing the hours. T. Swinehart said if the hours are till 11 p.m., then they should be able to put a gate up and close the parking down at 11 p.m. K. Repola said they have done this before. T. Swinehart felt they should do it immediately if they have the ability to do this. Mayor Forthofer said as a board they can close the gate anytime they want. The park can still be open, but you cannot park there or drive down the hill. B. Malin asked who would put the chain up at dark. Mayor Forthofer said it would be Matt Mars' responsibility after the last of his employees left after their closing. The next morning the police would open it up. T. Swinehart wondered what the logistics would be in closing it with Chez using it for their employees. K. Repola said at a minimum they need to do what they can and if they can start now, then they should reenact this.

B. Warden said Cleveland Quarries has a wonderful selection of all assorted sizes and shapes of blocks that can be arranged nicely every 5' or so. It would even serve multiple purposes – you can sit on them, or you can put flower beds between them. He said for years they had problems in VOL with people parking and fooling around near the lakefront portion of the parking lot, so they installed two big gates and the police would close them at night, and within six months people stopped hanging around there because they could not get to the parking lot.

Mayor Forthofer said he would give the police enforcement a chance with their cameras, but in the meantime, it is good to give thought to changing the closing time to dusk. M. Weisenberger addressed the park rules and thinks everything is covered as far as being able to enforce the rules.

T. Swinehart said there were kids down there that were really enjoying the park as well. K. Repola said she is a big proponent that teenagers are citizens too and they can certainly use the park if they follow the rules. They are welcome there as anyone else.

B. Malin asked to include this discussion under 'Old Business' at next month's meeting. His thought on dusk, plus 30 minutes is fantastic except for wintertime. He and his wife enjoyed the park at 6 p.m., so they need to watch themselves in their wording. They want people to enjoy the walking paths. K. Repola said this is a valid point and therefore they do not want to rush into a decision.

ADJOURNMENT:

K. Repola adjourned the meeting upon no further discussion.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday – July 19, 2022 @ **6:00 pm** at the Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street,
Vermilion

Transcribed by ~ Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk