

VERMILION PARKS & RECREATION BOARD

Minutes of November 17, 2020 - 6:00pm | Zoom Meeting

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

Also, Present: Chad Kuhns, RECREATION DIRECTOR; Marc Weisenberger, PARKS SUPERVISOR; Brian Holmes, COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Guests: Mayor Forthofer

Terry Parker, Chairman called the November 17, 2020 meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

B. Scholtz MOVED, D. Brudney seconded to approve the meeting minutes of October 20, 2020. Roll Call Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

OPEN TO THE AUDIENCE:

Homer Taft of 3972 Edgewater Drive addressed an article that was in the Morning Journal yesterday about the Main Street Beach area, and while this is all good news – he had minor concerns. It mentioned in Phase 2 a revetment and there was also discussion on a Special Improvement District. He said it was important not to just armor their shores, but to restore the beaches. This will be hard with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources as they favor erosion over beach protection. He said a lot of areas in Vermilion will not work for Special Improvement Districts, but he thinks the Main Street Beach area will work. There are only about four or five houses between Main Street Beach and Perry, and there are two streets ends that have public lands. He said the city might be able to work a Special Improvement District in there to improve public access and to build the beach and have a greater downtown area. He encouraged the board to look at this. He would like more conversation about beaches because along with the river these are the city’s greatest assets.

He said it was very difficult to comment on what is going on with the Parks Board because there is no notice on the agenda which tells them what is coming up. When City Council restricts audience participation it is after all discussion, director reports, and committee reports, if any. There is a complete disclosure on the agenda such as ordinances that are going to be passed. He said they do not have this opportunity on the Parks Board. All the proposals and discussion comes up after the public has been foreclosed, so this is why he

suggests the board change the way the public can comment because he doesn't feel it's helpful to the boards work.

G. Fisher suggested moving the 'Open to the Audience' portion down further in the agenda if the board agreed and directed her as such.

Mayor Forthofer advised Mr. Taft that the Special Improvement District will be presented to City Council in committee on December 14. He agreed this district might work in some areas. He said there are municipalities that can participate in Special Improvement Districts as well. However, he understands Mr. Taft's differentiation between erosion and preserving the beach in general. This may have to be done through organizations that are dealing with the renovation of Main Street Beach and they will have to include the Army Corp of Engineers. He said the Special Improvement Districts could be a real benefit to homeowners along the lake.

Homer Taft said he has seen the statute on recent Special Improvement Districts along the lake and has familiarity with SID's and what has been done in the past. In part, he wishes he could come to the meeting on December 14, but he is scheduled for surgery in December. He said if it is by Zoom there is a chance he can attend. He would hope to have a lengthier conversation on SID's at some point because he does have some knowledge that he would be willing to share.

Drew Werley said he noticed the 'Open to the Audience' portion of the agenda was before all reports and thought it was odd and coincidental that Homer brought it up. He said he would hope they would open the public participation to after the reports and comments as he thought it was silly to have open comments before all the reports are out.

T. Parker said they can move the 'Open to the Audience' portion of the agenda down after Director's reports and Subcommittee reports before they get to 'Old and New Business'. He said since they have a Budget/Finance Subcommittee he didn't think they needed to include 'Financial Reports' as an agenda item. G. Fisher noted the changes.

COMMUNITY EVENT GROUP USE PERMITS:

- Main Street Vermilion Ice Affair – February 6, 2021 from 8am to 4pm

Carolyn Hill representing Main Street Vermilion Ice Affair addressed the board to request the use of Friendship Park, Victory Park, Exchange, and East Exchange. They have plans to go ahead with the Ice Affair outside only, if in fact the Health Department says it is something they can do. They are looking at COVID cases and the numbers in the area. They want to be able to have 50 ice sculptures, which makes it profitable for Main Street. There would not be any events inside and they would be responsible for extra trash bags and helping to pick up trash after the event. They would assist in any snow removal and additional salt.

Mayor Forthofer asked if a written proposal for the Ice Affair is being presented to the Erie County Health Department. Carolyn Hill was unsure of this but said they could discuss this if there needs to be one. Mayor Forthofer said the Chamber of Commerce was very affective in writing a good plan for exactly how they were going to do the Wine and Chocolate Walk and the health department representative mentioned to him that this was a well and complete report that became instrumental in them giving the go ahead. C. Hill said she would work with Sandy Coe on this.

T. Parker said they have only approved two events for 2021 and in both cases, there was a COVID plan that was part of it. He assumed this will be required and they the boards approval would be contingent upon Main Street having contact with the Health Department.

C. Hill said the ice sculpture needs a great deal of lead time for carving and Main Street has a meeting set for early December, if in fact this would be plausible, so they would know early on in December if this will take place. If it does and it is still put off by the Health Department, then they would abide by their rules.

B. Warden noted that they mentioned that it would be entirely outside. C. Hill responded yes. B. Warden asked what the point is in having people come downtown to see the ice sculptures if they cannot go into any businesses. C. Hill said people can go into businesses on their own, but there would be no entrance into the Main Street office where they have the raffle baskets, cookies, and hot chocolate. If they do this, they will probably have it outside in Victory Park either in the gazebo or a tent. These things are still up in the air. Mayor Forthofer asked if there would be a warmup party. C. Hill said no as well as no Fire & Ice. B. Warden asked how many sculptures they are talking about. C. Hill said there would have to be 50. B. Warden said some of the businesses are hurting already and if they must buy an ice sculpture in front of their business, he thinks it would be creating more of a hardship. C. Hill said they already have the okay from about 45 businesses, so they are close to where they need to be profitable. Some businesses have said they cannot do it this year and they have respected that.

B. Scholtz MOVED. K. Repola seconded to approve the Community Use Group Permit. Vote 6 YEAS, 1 NAY (Warden). **MOTION CARRIED.**

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Chad Kuhns reported they are working on basketball to see if it will be a possibility. He spoke with the schools and their policy at this point is to not let any outside organizations go into the schools. However, he met with Lakeview Baptist Church this past Saturday and they will get back to him on what times they would have available and they will see if they can make this work to hold the league there. W. Warden asked if it was possible to do all the games at Lakeview Baptist. C. Kuhns said if he is given gym availability, then yes ideally this is what he would like to do. It depends on the time slots on whether it can work.

SERVICE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

T. Valerius reported that he spoke with Justin Miller today from Abraham Miller Contracting with regards to the Showse Park Revetment Project and he planned to start the project, but with the conditions of the lake/waves, he decided to hold off. He plans on being there tomorrow. He said Mark Haines has started the work on the house to the west of the park and those two have been coordinating their efforts so they can work together in the areas that come together. He said it probably will take him a week and a half depending on the weather.

PARK'S SUPERVISOR REPORT:

M. Weisenberger reported that the Erie County Metro Parks completed the clearing of the creek at Sherod and they have removed their equipment. The Parks Department will do some additional work on that area through the course of the winter. Also, in conversation with the Metro Parks they mentioned they had a 17' Batwing pull behind mower deck that they no longer use, which is considered surplus equipment and they wanted to know if the Parks Department would be interested in it. He talked with Tony Valerius and the Street Department and they said they could use it in conjunction with the Streets Department. It would be at no cost to the city and they would deliver it and it would hook to the city's John Deere tractor. If the board is willing to approve this, then they will be willing to donate it to the City of Vermilion.

He said the City contacted Pool Tech and Gross Brothers to re-winterize the main drain and the pool even though it was not used. They also checked the bath house to make sure everything was good.

They will be working with Dana and landscaping companies as there are two large oak trees that are 10' close to the shoreline at Sherod Park. In talking to the Tree Commission, Dana, and some other folks, it was determined that it might be a good idea to move these trees inward to the center of the park, so they don't lose these two nice trees. He said it will cost no more than \$300 to move these trees and they are hoping to do this within the month.

He said Robbie Brown from Shore Thing contacted him as they would like to upgrade some umbrellas at the Main Street Observation Deck. They have some fiberglass round wave type umbrellas that are 6' in diameter and they are designed for high wind areas. They would like to donate these for use at the beach.

T. Parker clarified that the monies for the tree relocation is coming out of the operating levy funds.

Budget/Finance Subcommittee Report:

B. Scholtz said he had the clerk send out the Five-Year Action Plan and the 2021 Proposed Operations Budget. He said the operating budget is straight forward and it was run past the Finance Director. There are really no changes from last year. T. Parker said the operating budget (218 Levy) becomes part of Council's appropriation every year. It is different than the Capital Levy that is managed by the Parks Board. This is one of the reasons they have gotten a head start on it.

M. Weisenberger said last year they put \$30,000 in the budget for equipment in the operating budget, but they did not purchase the used truck from the Wastewater Department, so they are hoping this is still a possibility. He said he would like to bump this amount up to \$40,000 which would cover the truck and with the trade in with the oldest mower they can get a mower for \$8,249. They can keep the mowers and equipment updated because they are depending on them a lot and they will be able to stay on top of the maintenance and the mowing. He said they applied for a Lake Erie Cleanup Grant last year and they had requested in the grant an attachment for the John Deere Tractor (Sand Cleaning Machine). He said they have one now but it is harder to maneuver the larger equipment on the beach, but this machine attaches to the back of the tractor and they can back right into areas and they don't have to make a full turn. It would allow them to upgrade the cleanliness of the beach. With state pricing, this machine is \$12,700, which would be part of the \$40,000 of the operations budget. T. Valerius reiterated on the beach cleaner as he feels it would be an asset. He said they received complaints last year regarding the condition of the beach because the beach cleaner was too big to take down there and maneuver, so being able to use a smaller beach cleaner that hooks up to the tractor will allow them to get down to the beach more often and keep it cleaner, so he thinks it is a good purchase.

B. Scholtz addressed the Five-Year Action Plan as they have been trying to put together a more cohesive plan over the years, so this plan focuses on the needs. He said they would like to talk more about the survey that is going out to the community as maybe they will get some feedback that will change this plan. However, for now the plan is focusing on a project or one park for a year or two, then moving to another park. M. Weisenberger said they are trying to put a little more money to playground equipment or a trail when doing one park at a time. However, he agrees the plan could change depending on the feedback they get from the survey. B. Scholtz said the budget numbers do not include the grants they would attempt to obtain, so this is the most conservative plan.

Community Relations/Publicity: No report.

Erosion:

Bill Warden asked Mayor Forthofer if the meeting on December 14 will be an explanatory meeting on the Special Improvement District? Mayor Forthofer said an attorney managing these processes will explain what the SID's are. He said there will not be any detail discussion on when or where. B. Warden said the article in the Morning Journal talked about 100 percent participation in the project to make it possible, so does this mean if everyone has lakefront property they must participate. Mayor Forthofer responded no, as he believes they need four contiguous parcels and four contiguous cities, so therefore they are going after Avon Lake, Sheffield Lake, Lorain, and Vermilion. B. Warden asked how this would affect people who have already invested in revetments and other improvements. Mayor Forthofer said they need to stay tuned on the 14th.

Main Street Beach Revitalization Project:

B. Scholtz said there is nothing new to report as they are trying to work on available money. T. Parker said they are attempting to move forward with the acquisition of the Stuchal property as reported in the Morning Journal.

Recreation and School Relations: No report.

Sherod Playground: No report.

Vermilion Community Pool:

D. Brudney said he has been working with M. Weisenberger on the Pool and Parks Project as far as doing the survey, and they have been working with the intern and Dr. Orr from B.G.S.U. They provided information to the intern who is developing an online survey. The survey was finalized yesterday. The intern developed two other files and one is an explanation of what the survey is and a flyer that will be provided to different entities. They sent the survey to the Parks Board and Pool Committee for review along with the Chamber and Main Street Vermilion for their input, which helped go into the final version of the survey. He said the software that B.G.S.U. is using allows the city to stop and start the survey, so the survey is not taken 10 times in one household. He said it will have a URL they can go to online or a URL code they can use on their phone. They received input from the Parks Board and they worked with Candy from the Photojournal as it will be put in the Photojournal this Thursday which will talk about the survey and then there will be a flyer that shows the URL and URL code. He said they sent the survey over to Mayor Forthofer's office and he will make sure it gets on the city's website and Facebook page by Friday. They also sent the survey to the Vermilion Local Schools (Cindy Akers, School Board Office) and they have already posted on the Vermilion Local Schools website, but it does say that the survey can't be taken until midnight on Friday and the survey will be online until December 6 until 11:30 p.m. The Vermilion Schools will also post it on their three Facebook pages on Friday. Their websites reach about 7,000 people in

Vermilion. He said they also talked to the Library and they will allow them to post the flyer in their computer room. If somebody does not have a phone or computer, they can use the Library's facility. He contacted 12 churches in Vermilion and 10 churches agreed to get the flyers out to their congregations via bulletin or email. They are asking everyone to take the survey starting at midnight on Friday because they are looking to get as much data as possible. The data will be collected by B.G.S.U. and it will be put into the proper format for the Parks and Recreation Board. Hopefully, when the survey closes on December 6, they should be able to get the data to the Parks Board before Christmas. They will then start doing local focus groups after the new year and they asked in the survey for members who are interested in participating in the focus group to put their name and number down. The focus groups can talk about other options, which is something they are developing now. They are working with the school district and contractors on the feasibility on repairing the pool, upgrading the pool, replacing the pool, or moving it to another location in town, or building something in another location. He said Marc has been sent possible pictures of what the pool could look like. They are also looking at a feasibility study by putting the pool on the school campus and what it would cost to build.

Mayor Forthofer said the website administrator has the post and it will go on the website on Friday, along with a post on the city's Facebook page which has over 8,000 viewers.

T. Parker thanked Dennis Brudney for all his efforts.

Kate Repola asked if there was any opportunity to take the survey via paper. She said an older resident contacted her who does not have internet access and is leery of going anywhere based on the COVID situation. She said she could even mail it to her. D. Brudney said they may provide paper copies to the Library, but he is sure they can come up with some paper copies to do it this way. They just need to get this data sent to the intern. G. Fisher offered her services in scanning paper copies.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS:

M Weisenberger said there is a ZOOM meeting tomorrow to have discussions on the Dog Park that is hosted by Main Street Vermilion and the Vermilion Chamber of Commerce.

B. Holmes reported that Finance Director Amy Hendricks had mentioned at the Council meeting on Monday that she would like 2021 budget requests submitted to her prior to the December 14 Finance Committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

B. Scholtz MOVED, B. Warden seconded to adjourn the meeting. Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday – December 15, 2020 @ **6:00 pm**
via ZOOM

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