

**CITY OF WOODSTOCK
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

November 10, 2015
City Council Chambers

The regular meeting of the Woodstock Parks & Recreation Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Mike McCleary on Tuesday, November 10th, 2015 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

A roll call was taken.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mike McCleary, Steve Erwin, Bruce Farris, Pete Riis

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Recreation Director Dave Zinnen, Public Works Director Jeff Van Landuyt, Parks and Facility Superintendent Ernie Nelson.

OTHERS PRESENT: Deputy City Clerk Amy Weber

C. FLOOR DISCUSSION:

1. Public comments

Erick Thurow from the Woodstock Girls Softball League updated the Commission. They had a good year despite the June rain. They would love to have all the fields done before next season, and they are working with Ernie and John on some changes for next year. He noted some safety/clean up issues, including some deteriorating netting, more stone in the dugouts, and some backstop fencing. Ernie noted that they hope to dig post holes for a new electronic sign for Hancock Field, and they hope to expand the concession stand at Bates Park and possibly add an equipment shed. They are also considering additional foul ball netting on a number of the fields. He stated that overall, it was a good year, tournaments were successful, a lot of rain days but they made up the games at the end of the season. The Commission discussed some options for future plans, including taking down the netting after the season, how much concrete is needed to be ADA compliant, and how to prioritize the 10-year plan. Mike McCleary thanked Erick Thurow for his comments. M. McCleary asked if there was any vandalism or break in's into the concession stand. E. Thurow replied that they didn't have any this year. M. McCleary inquired on the netting and asked if they get damage from sun exposure and if they should be taken down after game season. E. Thurow replied that it's feasible but more practical to leave the netting up.

Glenn Wilson, 2300 Serenity, Woodstock, spoke on behalf of Woodstock High School to thank the Commission and City for their continued partnership. He noted that for the cross country sectional, the course looked great, and they received many compliments. He then noted that the backstop on the field the high school teams use is only 12 feet high and that foul balls and errant throws can easily go over it. He and the school district would like to partner with the city to improve the situation before someone is hurt. He would like to investigate a possible solution utilizing netting on flag poles, a possibility the school district and city can share in. M. McCleary asked if there have been any incidents that have prompted the request. G. Wilson said no, but

there have been some near misses and they won't let children sit in certain areas because of the inadequate netting and back stop. M. McCleary thanked G. Wilson for his comments.

Tim Omen of the Woodstock Avalanche Baseball Program gave an update on their program and thanked Dave, Ernie and Jeff for all that they do. They had another successful year, with 90% of their participants being Woodstock residents. A number of maintenance projects were completed. The Summer Slam tournament brought in 40 teams, several of which stayed in local hotels for the weekend. Everyone seemed very pleased. They already have rosters set for the coming year and are looking forward to working with Ernie and staff—the 13 and 14-year-old boys always help out with various maintenance and repair work. M. McCleary thanked T. Omen for his comments.

D. Zinnen reported that he received an email from the president of the Woodstock Thunder, whose team is in the Super Bowl so he could not make the meeting. The email stated that there was a rumor that football would be eliminated at Creekside and Northwood, but he confirmed this was not the case. M. McCleary asked if a representative from the Thunder could attend the next meeting.

2. Commission Member comments for any item not on the agenda

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Bruce Farris, second by Steve Erwin to accept the September 8th meeting minutes as presented. Ayes: Chairman Mike McCleary, Steve Erwin, Pete Riis, Bruce Farris. Nays: None. Absentees: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Motion by Pete Riis, second by Steve Erwin to accept the October 13th meeting minutes with the following changes:

The meeting was called to order by Steve Erwin as Chairperson Mike McCleary was absent.

Page 1, under public comments, "Mike McCleary asked for comments..." change to "Steve Erwin asked for comments..."

Ayes: Chairman Mike McCleary, Steve Erwin, Pete Riis, Bruce Farris. Nays: None. Absentees: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

E. TRANSMITTALS: (No discussion or action requested)

1. Recreation Department Report for October 2015

D. Zinnen said this was a typical first year, with some miscommunications on course changes that wound up impacting football. This was further impacted by rain. B. Farris felt that the field was in pretty good shape. The IHSA will be back in 2018, but the event might happen at Woodstock North High School as the parking is better out there. B. Farris added that the city was great and it speaks well of their efforts that when other communities come to Woodstock they say, "What a great park."

The commission discussed the possible acquisition of the Belcher property, a parcel of land adjacent to Emrikson Park. The purchase has been added to the Department's Capital

Improvement Program (CIP), with the thought that the city might purchase the land, but leave it as farm land and lease it out until they are ready to develop it as part of the park. M. McCleary asked how long the offer of the Belcher property was available and D. Zinnen replied that the City did not know. He added that he felt the price was high for the property. S. Erwin felt the purchase should be looked into right away, rather than waiting for the CIP process.

2. Parks Division Report for October 2015

The Commission discussed the impact of the cyclocross event on the field at Emricson Park. M. McCleary asked about the impact of the new smoking ban on the amount of cigarette butts in the downtown area. E. Nelson replied there are still butts, but they haven't yet installed the cigarette butt receptacles. M. McCleary asked if the bars have been contacted and if any citations have been written. Jeff Van Landuyt replied that some contact has been made with bar owners and a few citations have been written. There was further discussion of the backstop issues and possible field renovations, including anticipated costs. M. McCleary asked if the city will be revisiting having alcohol in the parks or if that was strictly taboo. D. Zinnen will bring it up when he goes through his plans with the city administration. B. Farris noted that this has been successful in McHenry. S. Erwin noted it can be a lot more work, but felt it was a good idea. J. Van Landuyt noted that the city doesn't have security in the parks, so opening them up to alcohol could be a problem. B. Farris and M. McCleary suggested that alcohol in the park could be a revenue stream for the city, if it were done right.

F. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of Park Master Plan- Chapters 1 & 2

The Commission reviewed Chapters 1 & 2, agreeing to go page by page. P. Riis suggested adding in Grants and thought it looked great. M. McCleary felt page 2 was okay. On page 3, P. Riis felt that when they talk about supporting pedestrian access, they should also discuss extending bike trails. In general, he suggested using "supporting access and activity" instead of "pedestrian". For figure 1, M. McCleary questioned the date of construction listed as 1975, believing it to be earlier. J. Van Landuyt will check on the date. For the history section, J. Van Landuyt noted the Plan does not have a conservation area being added in 2008, they will add that in.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Request by Woodstock Girls Softball to Erect Scoreboard on Barb Hancock Field

WGS would work with Ernie to figure out best place to place it. Probably right field for a manual scoreboard, but wherever least expensive if it is electrical. M. McCleary asked if the scoreboard that Little League is using is within their budget. E. Thorough said that it was, as they have secured some sponsorships. There was further discussion of finances and the possibility of the city waiving some fees for WGS. M. McCleary noted there is no immediate need for action from the Commission at this time and thanked E. Thorough.

2. Discussion of Bicycle Trail Project

P. Riis asked if this is something they want to include in the future. M. McCleary stated that Woodstock High School Engineering and Design has two groups of students working on projects, one is working with the Transportation Commission and the other is working on the bicycle path project along Route 14. The DIVY program is Transportation. P. Riis commented

that they did talk about bicycle lanes in one area in the city that had space to do a bicycle path. M. McCleary stated that a budgeted bicycle path extending west on Route 14 including building a bicycle path over Route 47 through to Dean St. is being planned. He added that these may not be built and currently it's in the planning stage. B. Farris commented that's one thing left out, develop a plan for bike trails. M. McCleary stated that there is an existing bike trail within city of Woodstock. B. Farris asked if that is something that's important to us to expand on and wondered why it is something that is tough to do because of the size of our streets. M. McCleary said it would be nice to have the students come to the next meeting. At the last student meeting the students had a bicycle representative come talk to them. They have a lot of research left to do but they have some great ideas.

3. Request by Avalanche Baseball Program to Display Sponsor Banners at Merryman Field
T. Omen from Woodstock Avalanche noted that every year Woodstock Little League puts up banners to thank sponsors that help pay for programs. They've have had requests by larger sponsors for similar types of banners. He added that 95% of sponsors are community based organizations. P. Riis asked if the signs can be taken down. T. Omen replied they are 3 foot by 8 foot, heavy vinyl banners that are secured with zip ties. They can be taken down at the end of the season. B. Farris asked if we allow teams to bring their own banners and D. Zinnen replied we do if the team is having a game. M. McCleary stated he has no problem with the banners if they fund programs and help the city. D. Zinnen noted that he is the "sign policeman" and censors banners as necessary. M. McCleary asked if a banner has ever been denied. D. Zinnen said there haven't been any denied, but if it's a restaurant/bar, they have to advertise as a restaurant. T. Omen added that they are very aware that they are a youth organization. Steve Erwin made a motion to approve Avalanche's request to display banners at Merryman Field with Pete Riis seconding. The motion carried unanimously.
4. Request by Avalanche Baseball Program to Waive Team Fees for Projects Completed at Merryman Field.
T. Omen handed out copies of an invoice for fence toppers and requested a fee waiver of team fees for just under 600 dollars. The commission had some questions regarding funding and sponsorships. Pete Riis made a motion to approve Avalanche's request to waive team fees for projects completed at Merryman Field with B. Farris seconding. The motion carried unanimously.

H. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Tentative agenda items identified by Administration
 - a.
 - b.
2. Requested by Commission: Any member may suggest an item to be considered by the Commission at a future meeting, but must be approved by a majority of the Commission to be included as a future agenda item.
 - a.

I. ADJOURN:

Bruce Farris made a motion to adjourn, Steve Erwin seconding. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm to a Regular Meeting December 8th, 2015 @ 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Weber – Deputy City Clerk