

VERMILION PARKS & RECREATION BOARD

Minutes of January 21, 2020 - 7:00pm | Municipal Complex Courtroom (687 Decatur)

Roll Call: T. Parker (Chair), B. Scholtz (Vice-Chair), W. Warden, D. Brudney, E. Cann. Not Present: E. Wakefield; J. Keck

Also, Present: M. Weisenberger, PARKS OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR; C. Kuhns, RECREATION DIRECTOR; Tony Valerius, SERVICE DIRECTOR

Guests: Mayor Forthofer

G. Fisher called the January 21, 2020 meeting to order.

G. Fisher entertained a motion to nominate a Chairman for the year 2020:

B. Scholtz MOVED; B. Warden seconded to nominate Terry Parker as Chairman for 2020. Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

D. Brudney MOVED; E. Cann seconded to nominate Brad Scholtz as Vice Chairman for 2020. Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

E. Cann MOVED; B. Warden seconded to approve the meeting minutes of November 19, 2019. Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

CORRESPONDENCE/AUDIENCE/COMMUNITY GROUP USE PERMIT:

Community Group Use Permits:

Ice A Fair – Main Street Vermilion - February 1, 2020 (Village Greens/Victory/Friendship/Exchange & E. Exchange) – 6am – 11pm

B. Warden MOVED; D. Brudney seconded to approve the Community Group Use Permit submitted by Main Street Vermilion. Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

Shore Thing – Main Street Vermilion - May – September 2020 (Main Street Beach) – Daytime Hours

E. Cann MOVED; D. Brudney seconded to approve the Community Group Use Permit submitted by Main Street Vermilion. Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

Chalk it Up – Main Street Vermilion - August 1, 2020 – 6am – 11pm

T. Parker asked if this event would be held only on the south side of the tracks. Pam Reese wasn't sure on this event, so she couldn't provide additional information. It was noted that parks property isn't used, so the board wouldn't need to issue approval. T. Parker advised Main Street to obtain clearance from the Service Director or the Mayor as it involves closing Main Street. P. Reese said she would relay this information to Main Street.

Light Up Vermilion – Main Street Vermilion – December 3, 2020 (Exchange Park and Friendship Park) 1pm – 10pm

E. Cann MOVED; B. Scholtz seconded to approve the Community Group Use Permit submitted by Main Street Vermilion. Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

3rd Thursday – Vermilion Chamber of Commerce – May 21, June 18, July 16, August 20, & September 17, 2020 (Victory/Village on the Greens/Exchange/ E. Exchange; Main Street Beach/Friendship Harbor View/Fulper’s Lot) 5pm – Sunset

B. Scholtz MOVED; E. Cann seconded to approve the Community Group Use Permit submitted by the Vermilion Chamber of Commerce. Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

2020 Community Prayer Gathering – Vermilion Chamber of Commerce – May 7, 2020 (Victory Park) 12pm – 1pm

E. Cann MOVED; B. Scholtz seconded to approve the Community Group Use Permit submitted by the Vermilion Chamber of Commerce. Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

Festival of the Fish 54th Annual – Vermilion Chamber of Commerce – June 18 - 21, 2020 (All Downtown Parks) All Day

It was noted there are fireworks at Harbor View Park on Friday night, so if another event is going to happen, they would like the Parks Department to let them know ahead of time. T. Parker noted this comment.

B. Warden MOVED; D. Brudney seconded to approve the Community Group Use Permit submitted by the Vermilion Chamber of Commerce. Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

2020 Concerts in the Park – Vermilion Chamber of Commerce – July 12, July 19, July 26, August 2, August 9, August 16, August 23, & August 30, 2020 (Victory Park) 6:45pm – 8:30 pm

E. Cann MOVED; B. Scholtz seconded to approve the Community Group Use Permit submitted by the Vermilion Chamber of Commerce. Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

2020 Woollybear Festival 48th Annual – Vermilion Chamber of Commerce – Tentative Dates October 3 & October 10, 2020 (All Downtown Parks) All Weekend

Sandy Coe said she is planning to avoid any September dates because of the Band Festival at Vermilion High School and the Erie Shore Watercross Tour. Therefore, they are focusing on the first two Sunday’s in October.

B. Scholtz MOVED; E. Cann seconded to approve the Community Group Use Permit submitted by the Vermilion Chamber of Commerce to tentatively schedule the festival on October 3 or October 10. Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

3rd Thursday – S. Coe of the Chamber of Commerce asked the Parks Board if they could add Rotary Park into 3rd Thursday. The Parks Board gave a favorable consensus.

S. Coe gave a big kudo’s to Marc Weisenberger the Parks Supervisor for doing a fabulous job in his position.

Erie Shore Watercross Tour – Edward Widok – September 19, 2020(Main Street Beach/Lighthouse Metro Park Area) 8am – 6pm

T. Parker conveyed this event would be subject to a \$200 fee for a one-day event as a commercial venture. He also noted he needs to submit his hold harmless and certificate of insurance prior to the event.

B. Scholtz MOVED; E. Cann seconded to approve the Community Group Use Permit submitted by Edward Widok. Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

DIRECTOR’S REPORTS:

Chad Kuhns, Recreation Director reported that basketball began two weeks ago, and they have 60 participants. Games will begin this week. He is continuing with baseball and football meetings throughout the year to organize with other communities for games and rules. T. Parker asked how the 60 participants compares to last year. C. Kuhns said they were around 60 last year as well. B. Warden asked what schools were being used for basketball and C. Kuhns said they use the elementary school and the field house.

Tony Valerius, Service Director mentioned the city hired a part time employee in the parks department (Paul Wearsh) who is a college student. He worked for the city this past summer and over the Christmas break. He’ll be able to work three days a week during the winter, so he should be able to get in 24 hours and the parks department will be able to use him. He conveyed that he’s a good employee! He will potentially go back to the street department in the summer time.

Marc Weisenberger, Parks Supervisor provided the board members with a list of winter 2020 projects/maintenance items. He highlighted the items in yellow that have been finished and highlighted the items in red they will be working on soon. He explained that earlier in June they approved funding to have Edwards Tree Service clean up trees at Showse park around the ball fields and at Sherod around the playgrounds. They have been trying to clear out brush on the west side of Showse Park along the fence and along back yards of some of the homes to open the area and make it look nicer.

He conveyed that on January 29 he has a meeting with Erie Soil and Water to look at the stream at Sherod Park to see what they can do to restore the area and clean it up. Thoughts are to have Erie County Metro Parks come over with their mini excavator to get into areas they can't normally get to in order to open it up. Additionally, he noted that he met with Jim Cartwright from Erie County Jobs and Family Services with regards to a Job Training Program they will be incorporating this year, and there might be a possibility for Vermilion to get some extra help at no cost to the Parks Department. These individuals would gain experience in different types of work.

He will provide numbers to the Parks Board in February on a second parks maintenance truck and heating for the maintenance garage. T. Parker asked if there has been any clarity on the trash hauling. M. Weisenberger said it will probably be closer to April when they will be talking about the upcoming trash contract.

Budget/Finance Subcommittee Report:

T. Parker conveyed that when they prepared their five-year capital budget, they set aside savings for the beach restrooms in the amount of \$60,000 from 2019 and \$60,000 in 2020, and then \$20,000 more in 2021. In speaking with the finance director, he felt it might be important for the Parks Board to encumber some of those funds at this point because as Western Reserve Land Conservancy is raising money, one of the things they need is local matching funds. If they officially set this money aside, then it counts towards the local match for some of the sources they're applying to. The ending unencumbered balance in the capital fund as of December 31, 2019 is \$202,410.00, which doesn't account for the \$38,000 in encumbrance, as the Showse Park Revetment is still opened. They will get part of the next half year's payment in late February and into March, which is usually around \$70,000. With the projections they have in place this year, they're covered even if they would set aside the entire \$120,000, but they can wait until February to do this. He suggested to the board at this time to approve the 2019 money in the amount of \$60,000.

E. Cann MOVED; D. Brudney seconded to approve the encumbrance of \$60,000 to Western Reserve Land Conservancy toward restrooms at Main Street Beach. Vote 5 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

T. Parker reported the Recreation Fund had unencumbered funds of \$4,295 at year end. The Operating Levy had \$144,622 in it at the close of the year. Again, in late February/early March they will get another \$140,000. He said they have a tentative budget for the operating levy, and they came up with \$234,000, which is still within what they will receive, plus the carryover.

Harbor View Project:

T. Parker reported that he along with representatives of the committee, the mayor, and Brad Scholtz have a meeting scheduled with Western Reserve Land Conservancy for January 31 at 1:00 pm as they will update the city of their efforts. They have made application for state capital budget money and they are pursuing

several grants. They must do some local match and there will be private donation fundraising. They will hit the heavier donors first and the intent is to start in February, so there should be a report at the February parks meeting.

T. Parker said a number of them from the subcommittee and administration had an informal conversation with the 'Concerned Citizens' who are working to save the mansion. It was a cordial meeting and they received their input and vice versa. He along with the mayor made it clear that they have a plan that is in motion and they asked them to submit some type of a business plan for what they are hoping to do, but to be aware that their plan is in motion. He said these are good folks who are working hard for something they believe in. Mayor Forthofer said where they are today didn't just happen – this is a combination about nine years of continuous meetings, plans, research, and architectural appraisals. It's sort of late in the game, but they're still interested in whatever anyone has to say as 'Concerned Citizens' have good hearts, but in the end, they need to know whether they can make it work or not. T. Parker said the decision for the complete demolition was made in December of 2017 in the Parks Board meeting. This has not been a secret and they have held public meetings. He feels the 'Concerned Citizens' activity was stimulated by their July discussion regarding fundraising. He said they're fighting the calendar and they've got a long way to go, but at least they are having good dialogue and they will continue to do so.

Vermilion Community Pool Update:

T. Parker announced that a subcommittee consisting of T. Parker, Mayor Forthofer, Tony Valerius, Brian Holmes, Bob Cunicella and Marc Weisenberger has been formed to deal with questions about the community pool and they had their first meeting this evening. They have a tentative plan to operate the pool this year with a minimum of capital expense, while they spend the next 12 months doing a strategic plan, gathering community input, looking at data trends in population, finding out what people are really looking for in a pool, and having it professionally evaluated so they have an idea on what kind of life span they can expect. They will meet monthly in advance of the Parks Board meetings. B. Warden asked what the story was behind the questionnaire they put together. T. Parker said it was an attempt to start somewhere and they have looked at things other communities have done, which includes their strategic process, plans, and data gathered from their residents. They want to get as much input as possible and they haven't determined the end-result yet.

Strategic Plan/Operating Plan:

M. Weisenberger provided the board members with a Strategic Plan. T. Parker said he would like the board to review the first four pages of the plan and then each month they can review additional pages and offer suggestions during the process. The first portion of the plan addresses Main Street Beach, the Victory Park gazebo, and the new playground at the community pool.

M. Weisenberger said this is just a starting point of the plan and he would like feedback on what the board members think. If there are things, they don't think should be in the plan then they can take them out. He said with a new funding source this plan could be useful and he would like to get an assessment of each park and prioritize what they want to do at each park. There are different visions for the parks department moving forward and D. Corogin had some thoughts of what she would like to see when they passed the levy, and with her hard work he would like to see that everybody's vision is the same moving forward. He said they also need to look at what they need to do on a park facility basis to support the recreation department and what the Recreation Director is trying to do. He asked the parks board members to take some time

reviewing the plan and make notes on what changes they would like to add or delete. B. Scholtz asked if his vision was a 10-year or 20-year plan and Marc said it's more like a five to 10-year plan.

Marc Weisenberger thought slogans like 'Parks Alive!' or 'Parks Make Life Better!' would be interesting terms to use. The second page of the plan addresses the downtown as to some degree it basically is a park. There is Exchange Park, E. Exchange Park, Victory Park, Village on the Greens, and Friendship Park, so they need to define the responsibilities of the parks department in helping to keep the movement moving forward and strong, which includes volunteer effort. He said Vermilion in Bloom and the Tree Commission all work together to keep the parks sustainable. Preserving and enhancing the positive qualities of Vermilion is part of the vision. The mission he suggested is: Maximize park usage, providing safe, clean, attractive, functional, well-maintained parks, beaches, and public areas to be enjoyed by all. He said if the members have other suggestions, he would welcome them. Values as they are making decisions could be centered around: Public Safety, Community Engagement and Collaboration, Accountability, Pride and Professionalism, Quality and Excellence, Integrity and Trust, and Sustainability. To sum this up he encourages Beautification, Quality Park, Development and Maintenance. T. Parker suggested adding something like 'Attracting Participation or Use'.

Mayor Forthofer asked Marc if he was suggesting that there be some dedicated effort at promoting the parks with his tag line suggestions on the first page of the plan. He said there was a promotional campaign surrounding the levy, so he thought this was a good idea as an ongoing thing. M. Weisenberger said they should use social media to their benefit to promote different projects in the parks moving forward, as well as different activities in the parks. They discussed possible website changes as they move forward with this plan. E. Cann pointed out that Dana Corogin is still shown as the Parks Supervisor on the website. G. Fisher said she would contact the web administrator to make this change.

M. Weisenberger addressed the third page of the plan by mentioning that Active Tourism is something Erie County publicizes on their website. It incorporates some of the new paddle boarding, kayaking, bicycling, trails, etc. He thought this was something they could incorporate into thoughts at Sherod Park when updating the park. He thought Residents, Parks Users, Park Board Members, City Employees and Administration, Visitors/Tourists, Community Organizations and the Vermilion City Schools, should be engaged to gather information to develop a Parks Master Plan and an Operations Plan that outlines the community's vision. He also listed items that jumped out to him from other master plans. He thought the parks board members could prioritize the different points on page three on a scale of 1-8. D. Brudney suggested adding promotion from visitors/tourists that come to the city. Marc said this is an interesting point and during certain times of the year they seem to do everything for the tourists, and they need to keep a balance between the residents and the tourists. He said tourists are important especially in a community like Vermilion and they want to make sure they offer them the amenities they are looking for, but they too can't forget about the residents. Keeping balance is important and vital and he agreed this should be a part of the plan.

M. Weisenberger said on page four under Key Department Priorities they could scratch out the first paragraph. He wanted to take some of the projects and prioritize the key areas. He said it includes a Disk Golf Course Design at Sherod Park, but he doesn't think this will fit the location as they like a lot of tree cover and wooded area. He thought a fitness trail at Sherod Park could be their number one priority, while they work on trying to find some bigger dollars to address the shoreline retention and parking lot. At Showse they have some of the same concerns as far as the playground equipment, basketball and tennis courts needing updated. He said he looked at some courts in Sandusky that were very nice because they weren't resurfaced but they poured a concrete basketball court and striped it and didn't put any fencing

around it, which makes it look very clean. He said long term this probably saves them \$20,000 a year because they won't have to resurface them every five to 10 years, so this is something Vermilion could consider moving forward with.

D. Brudney asked if they have an update on the lady who was trying to raise money for playground equipment at Sherod Park. T. Parker said she applied to Firelands Hospital and was denied, so she applied to Mercy Health to see if they would want to partner and their Director of Community Health is going to reach out to the Lorain and Erie County Health Department's Community Health person, both of whom have done a lot of good grant work. He personally will follow up with Mercy Health's Director again next week. They are willing to facilitate something.

M. Weisenberger said that Betsy Wakefield did a nice job in helping him develop a gift catalogue and brochure, which will be going to the printer soon. It lists costs for park benches and picnic tables, and trees in the parks if somebody wants to give a memorial gift or honorary gift. He said they started today in developing some options for the outdoor pool.

T. Parker asked the board to note their ideas on the pages they discussed tonight and to prioritize them as they deem fit and bring them back to next month's meeting.

M. Weisenberger said the next four pages of the plan breaks down strategic themes into specific core focus bullet points. T. Parker asked the board to review the next four pages before next month's meeting as well.

T. Parker asked Marc if he wanted to schedule a potential work session in February regarding Sherod Park. M. Weisenberger said he would like to schedule a work session the third week in February as Erie County Soil and Water would like to come to Vermilion to discuss as a whole what would work well at Sherod Park as well as reviewing the 1999 Master Plan and aerial photo of the park. He said they can jot down ideas of what they would like to see in the future. D. Brudney said he had an aerial photo of Sherod Park and the west side of the creek has a playground, fields, parking, benches at the beach, but the east side there is nothing really there, so there's no use for a parking lot if there isn't anything to go to, so they need to come up with a good plan on what needs to happen on the east side of the park. C. Kuhns wondered if it would be a potential area for a dog park, as it wouldn't bother neighbors. M. Weisenberger said they were looking at the area by incorporating a little bit of the hill where the ballfield sits and go down the hill and along the creek, as it's not an area that gets used. The existing shelter house could be part of the dog park as there is nice grade separation where the owner could sit at the top of the hill and throw a ball down for the dogs. He thought it would be a unique area for a dog run. He said they could leave enough room for a trail between the dog park and the creek. He said Dana's vision is that Sherod is more of a passive park, whereas Showse would be more of an active park with ball diamonds and courts. He said he will contact Erie County Soil and Water to see what dates work for them during the day to meet informally to brainstorm.

ADJOURNMENT:

B. Warden MOVED; E. Cann seconded to adjourn the meeting. Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday – February 18, 2020 @ 7:00 pm

-Gwen Fisher, Boards and Commissions