

**RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES**

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

(PENDING BOARD APPROVAL)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jeff Battles, Carl Brown, Sherisse Malone, David Miles, Irene Pate, Ryan Stanford, Rodney Lawrence

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Lonnie Boyd, Jay Wilkoff, Brantley Pittman

VACANT POSITIONS:

District 3

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

Holli Browder, Tommy Groce, Teresa Snellings, Carson Revell, Samantha Thies, and Ryan McCann

A meeting of the Recreation Advisory Board was held on Wednesday, September 29th, with the meeting being called to order by Irene Pate at 12:06pm.

ROLL CALL WAS COMPLETED by Ryan McCann

Ms. Pate mentioned to the meeting attendees that Holli had received accolades from the National Recreational Professionals Association and was elected to be the president of the organization. Ms. Pate had previously emailed the advisory board members and staff in more detail and expressed her pride in Holli's accomplishments.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

Ms. Pate called for a vote to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded and a vote was taken to ratify the minutes from the meeting held August 25, 2021. The vote was unanimous, 7-0, voting in favor of accepting the minutes as distributed.

STAFF UPDATES:

Athletics- Includes Cooper Creek: (Carson Revell)

No updates were provided

Aquatics: (Matt Lensch)

No updates were provided

Community Schools: (Samantha Thies)

No updates were provided

Park Services- Includes Memorial Stadium and Golden Park: (Tommy Groce)

No updates were provided

Recreation Services- Includes Britt David and Lake Oliver: (Teresa Snellings)

No updates were provided

Director: (Holli Browder)

Holli thanked Ms. Pate for her kind words and expanded on what was said to include her selection to a national conference of parks directors for which only 44 directors were invited to attend. With the best of the best in attendance Holli expects to come back with a multitude of new ideas that could be put to use in the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department. One such idea is the renovation of the bathrooms at Cooper Creek to include doors that would automatically close and lock during certain hours for security and the safety of patrons.

On Tuesday, September 28, council voted to continue to keep Carver Park closed for an additional 30 days following a shooting incident. This will allow more time to address possible preventive measures.

Parks and Recreation continues to suffer from a severe reduction in the number of inmates assigned to Park Services that help with the cleaning and grounds maintenance of all the parks. The number allotted has gone from 64 inmates to 10. This is causing a large backlog of work on the parks. Requests to increase hired staff to offset the loss of inmates has been previously denied by council if it can't be done in a budget-neutral manner. Budgets cuts in preceding years has not left Parks & Recreation with enough funding to hire staff in a budget-neutral manner.

Passing of the TSPLOST would have a huge financial impact on the department- \$48 million dollars is allocated for Parks & Recreation. The amount of work on the condition of parks would not be restricted to just the park projects listed in the actual proposal. They were unable to list all of what is intended due to the number of parks and projects planned.

Although the TSPLOST would be a 10-year tax proposal, Holli feels certain the impact to the city's parks structure would last 20 years past that. In addition to the parks improvements

under the TSPLOST, regional businesses and the economy in general would also benefit from the activity and financial inflow to the area.

Covid-19 protocols continue to impact area activities including the Spooktacular that Parks and Recreation was working on in conjunction with Uptown Columbus. It was determined that the largest demographic of Spooktacular participants would be children too young to be vaccinated and the risk to their health was too great a risk. As a result, the entire event was cancelled for 2021. Covid-19 concerns have also led to the cancellation of the Thanksgiving, Veteran's Day and Christmas parades due to the proximity of both the crowd and the float riders to one another.

After a meeting with the mayor, city manager and other city leadership, it was decided that park hours will remain the same. Covid-19 protocols are still in place at parks.

Call for New Business; (Irene Pate)

Carl Brown asked if Parks and Recreation had much influence on the decision to open or close Carver Park. Holli responded that the department did not have much influence.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:47 pm.

Minutes recorded by Ryan McCann.