

## **FAIRFIELD PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD**

### **MINUTES**

**TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 2014**

The monthly meeting of the Fairfield Parks and Recreation Board was conducted on Tuesday, September 16, 2014, at the Fairfield Community Arts Center. Chair Doug Meece called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Board Members in attendance were: Bob Breen, Doug Meece, Bob Myron, Debbie Pennington, Craig Keller, and Billy Smith. Board Member Rodney Spencer was excused from the meeting. Staff members in attendance were James Bell, Parks and Recreation Director; Robert Schappacher, Facilities/Operations Manager; Heidi Schiller, Arts/Programs Manager and Ben Strickler, Community Events Coordinator. Also in attendance was resident Marc Conter.

**COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:** Chairman Meece recognized Marc Conter and invited him to address the Board during Comments from the Audience. Mr. Conter requested to defer his comments until later in the meeting following the report from the Director on the item of his interest.

**MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** The August 2014 meeting minutes were approved as written.

#### **REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR:**

Jim Bell updated the Board Members on the funeral arrangements for a staff member's husband. The Board expressed their sympathies and asked that their condolences be passed along to the staff person.

**Village Green Park Smoking Issue:** Jim Bell reviewed with the Board the June citizen request to prohibit smoking at Village Green Park, the subsequent July email from Councilman Oberson and the Board's request for staff investigation and report in September. Mr. Bell introduced Ben Strickler, Community Events Coordinator, who had conducted the research into the matter. Mr. Strickler distributed copies of Ordinances, Policies and/or Resolution that either prohibited smoking on all public properties and/or specific parks outdoor spaces. The review included information from the Chicago Park District, Cincinnati Park Board, Minneapolis Park Board, Delaware State Parks, and various Parks and Recreation Department within the state of Ohio (North Royalton, Oxford, Strongsville, Oberlin, Worthington, Brecksville, and Sylvania Township). Mr. Strickler also distributed a copy of the City's policy as it relates to smoking in/around public buildings, which is mirrored off the state law. Mr. Strickler stated that although many of the communities have prohibition policies, most do not enforce such with citations, etc. Also, several of the communities without a specific policy found that educational signage was effective. The Board discussed the sensitivity of this issue and concluded that an educational route should be pursued. The Board directed staff to implement a signage process, announcements at events, and education of staff for dealing with the public for the 2015 Village Green Park events.

**2015 Operations Budget:** Jim Bell updated the Board on the 2015 Parks and Recreation Operating Budget Process. Mr. Bell reviewed the General Fund, Recreation Facilities Fund and Recreation Activity Fund; as each fund relates to the overall operation of the Parks and Recreation Department and the City. Mr. Bell stated that it was the goal to keep the budgets as flat as possible; but several issues would make that challenging, health care costs and negotiated wage increases. Mr. Bell stated that the Department's overall 2014 budget was approximately \$4,764,000.00; and its preliminary 2015 budget projections were

\$5,064,00.00. Mr. Bell stated that the staff was continuing to discuss budget reductions, prior to the final submittal. The Board would discuss the 2015 Operations Budget further at the October Board meeting.

**Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update:** Jim Bell informed the Board that the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands/Indiana University team was prepared to make its final report at a joint meeting of City Council and the Parks and Recreation Board on Monday, December 8, 2014; as part of City Council/City Manager Briefing that evening. The Board concurred with the joint meeting format.

**Veterans Memorial Park – Gold Star Family Memorial:** Jim Bell updated the Board on a pending project at Veterans Memorial Park and distributed copies of the “council letter” that would be included in the agenda packet for the September 22<sup>nd</sup> City Council meeting. The project, which was included in the 2014-2018 CIP, identified a memorial that would recognize the families that lost a loved one in the service of their county. The Gold Star Family Memorial is the vision of Hershel W. Williams, Iwo Jima Medal of Honor Recipient and the Hershel W. “Woody” Williams Medal of Honor Foundation. The Gold Star Family Memorial recognizes families collectively, rather than individually, who have lost a loved one. In order to have the project completed by the 2015 Memorial Day remembrance ceremony, it is necessary to begin this process in the fall. Mrs. Pennington asked if Fairfield families that had lost a loved one had been contacted regarding this project; Mr. Bell stated that the Fairfield Fire Chief had been involved in the process and was making contacts with the local families.

**Fairfield Greens/South Trace Irrigation Project:** Jim Bell updated the Board on the South Trace golf course irrigation system project, which had been previously discussed at the July Board meeting. Mr. Bell distributed copies of the “council letter” that would be included in the agenda packet for the September 22<sup>nd</sup> City Council meeting. As discussed at the July Board meeting, the system has become antiquated and a maintenance burden; a portion of the system is pre-City owned (prior to 1978). The project will renovate the system from a hydraulic controlled system to an electrical controlled system. This project is being completed in phases, so as not to disrupt the golfer (late fall/early spring); phase one includes the purchase and installation of one (1) Toro E-OSMAC Field Controller and fifty-five (55) Toro Infinity Series Rotors. Phase one will renovate holes #2 (green), #3 (tee, fairway and green) and #4 (tee, fairway and green). The funds for this project had been included in the 2014-2018 CIP.

**Marsh Park Phase 2 Update:** Pursuant to Board Member Breen’s question at the August meeting regarding any planned meetings with Martin-Marietta Aggregates in the near future, Jim Bell reported that City administrative staff (the Parks and Recreation Director, the Assistant City Manager, the Public Utilities Director and the City Engineer) had met with representatives of Martin-Marietta on Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the meeting was to receive an update on Martin-Marietta’s future plans regarding the conveyance of the Marsh Park Phase 2 property to the City. The meeting was positive and Martin-Marietta shared that the mining operations on the property would cease this year. There is a surplus of aggregates materials on the property that must be addressed prior to the property being conveyed on to the City. Martin-Marietta expects to begin implementation of their exit strategy in early 2015.

#### **REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES:**

**City Council Update:** Debbie Pennington reported that City Council had approved the Winton Road improvements project at the last meeting. Mrs. Pennington also reported that the Fairfield Historical Society was hosting the Butler County Historical Collaborative on September 17<sup>th</sup>, at the Community Arts Center. Mrs. Pennington distributed a copy of the Fairfield Historical Society’s fall newsletter to the Board.

**Planning Commission Update:** Bob Myron reported that the Planning Commission and City Council would have a joint public hearing on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The public hearing is in regards to a proposed change to the Village Green PUD; a developer has proposed a condominium project on the vacant parcel on Corydale Drive. At the last Planning Commission meeting, the Commission had review signage requests and a proposed neighborhood Pub on Nilles Road.

**Environmental Commission Update:** Bob Schappacher reported, in the absence of Rodney Spencer, that the Wendi Van Buren (State Urban Forester) met with the Environmental Commission at their September meeting. Ms. Van Buren updated the EC on the upcoming Tree Commission Academy and thanked the EC for sending two members to the Academy. City Councilmember Chad Oberson was in attendance at the September meeting and reported on his intentions of securing funds from City Council for the replacement of trees throughout the city and that the EC would be an integral part of this project. There was discussion amongst the EC regarding the mechanics of such a project. Finally, Mr. Schappacher and Mr. Bell reported that the Parks Department and the Public Works Department would be removing a large number of dead and/or EAB infested ash trees from Harbin Park within the next few weeks.

**Cultural Arts Advisory Commission Update:** Bob Breen deferred to Heidi Schiller, who reported that at the August meeting the CAAC had reviewed the upcoming 2014-2015 season at the Community Arts Center. Mrs. Schiller also reported that the Community Arts Center had been nominated and was a finalist for the Cincy Magazine's Best of the North awards, in the arts center category.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:** Mr. Marc Conter addressed the Board on the Village Green Park smoking issue; stating that in his opinion the signage/educational option would only be effective when combined with public announcements prior to the events; signage alone may be ineffective.

Mr. Conter stated that he had met with the Public Utilities Director on Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, and was excited about the progress being made with Martin-Marietta. Mr. Conter asked what the total number of acres being conveyed by Martin-Marietta; existing Marsh Park and Marsh Park/Phase 2? Mr. Bell stated that he would forward that information to Mr. Conter, since he did not have the plats at the meeting. Mr. Conter commented that it was important to have a local, regional, state and federal partnership in order to secure grant funds for this project. Mr. Conter asked the Board what "tools" he would be provided by the Board and/or City to assist in his solicitation of corporate donations for the project. Mr. Conter stated that he had googled available grants and found that there were federal Mine Reclamation Grant Funds available that may be applicable to this project. Mr. Conter commented that the comprehensive master plan process is flawed, since it will not take into consideration the updated information from Martin-Marietta. Mr. Meece responded that the update would not affect the process and once completed the master plan would allow the Board and/or City to set priorities on capital projects. Mr. Conter commented that the expansion of Marsh Park would allow for the following recreational activities; small boat access, camping and extension of the bike trails; he also has the energy to make the expansion a higher priority with the Board and/or City. Mr. Breen agreed that those recreational activities are important; but there is a process and/or priority to the capital improvement program; but he appreciated Mr. Conter's enthusiasm. Mr. Conter asked the Board what would be his role with this project; since he really likes Marsh Park and his goal is to insure that the Marsh Park/Black Bottom project remains in the forefront of all parks projects. Mr. Conter asked the Board if it had been involved in the comprehensive parks and recreation master plan process? Mr. Bell responded that the Board had been involved since the

project began in January and had been involved in the surveying, stakeholder interviews, public meetings and Board member interviews. The Board thanked Mr. Conter for his comments.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM. The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, October 21, 2014, at 6:00 PM, at the Fairfield Community Arts Center.

Cyndi A. Kreke,  
Secretary