

**CITY OF GAHANNA
PARKS & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – June13, 2012**

SPECIAL MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jan Ross called the meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board to order on Wednesday, June 13, 2012, 6:06pm, Gahanna Senior Center

ROLL CALL

Present: Cynthia Franzmann
Eric Miller
Laurel Naegele – arrived 6:12
Jan Ross
Jill Schuler
Vincent Tremante

Absent: Luke Messinger

In attendance from the City was Tony Collins, Director, and Troy Euton, Deputy Director, Department of Parks & Recreation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Tremante made a **MOTION** to approve the May 6, 2012 meeting minutes; seconded by Miller. **On roll call vote:** Franzmann, yes, Naegele, yes, Miller, yes, Ross, yes, Tremante, yes and Schuler, yes. **Motion carried 6-0.**

OLD BUSINES

Continuation of the Soccer discussion

Gahanna Soccer Association – GSA
Gahanna New Albany Association – GNA
Schelotto & Padula Soccer Academy – S&PA
Central Ohio Elite – COE
Mid Ohio Select Soccer League - MOSSL
Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation - GDPR

Ross stated that it would be helpful to the Board to summarize the communications distributed to the Board since the last meeting.

Collins stated that staff received a letter from the GSA Board Vice President which in summary states that GSA is okay with S&PA, but not okay with S&PA at Headley Park due to the wear and tear on the fields. Staff also received an addendum from S&PA to their Program Agreement with the City; stating that S&PA is not forming a recreation league or planning to participate in MOSSL play. Both of the documents were forwarded to the Board.

Tremante asked for clarification on the field contract; item #3, it is unclear if S&PA is advocating practicing at Headley Park. Collins stated that the field agreement doesn't address the field issue at Headley Park. Tremante stated that it appears from the statement in item #3 that

S&PA will provide training, create teams for tournament play and may create elite teams for league play at facilities other than Headley Park. Euton stated that item #3 is intended for league play in the Buckeye Premier League other than Headley Park.

Collins stated the original discussion was that GDPR has a current policy to rent to outside groups if facility space is available. Staff works with the recreation leagues to determine facility space availability.

The question is whether or not GDPR continues with the policy of renting to outside groups. If it is decided to appeal the policy to only rent to specific recreation leagues, then staff will re-write and implement a new policy for 2012-2013 year. If the board decides to stay with the existing policy, staff will meet with GSA and talk about fall field space availability. Given the information received in the letter this week regarding Headley Park and because of growth in the number of registrations for S&PA, staff will try to accommodate a different facility for S&PA.

Staff is looking at a new procedure to better evaluate the fields.

Ross to clarify; it is not an issue of GSA wanting to train on the fields it is just they don't want S&PA on the fields. Collins stated he believes everyone would like to practice/train on the game fields; staff would like for that to happen. At this time it is not a possibility due to the current conditions of the fields. Staff believes that going forward in the fall that with the new system in place staff will have the ability to evaluate the fields more accurately regarding the number of touches. In the long run it should enable increased playability of the fields. The new system in which to maintain and evaluate the fields are an operational decision and not a Board policy decision.

Schuler asked if the fields were leased as a revenue generating mechanism for the City. Collins stated that yes; the policy was implemented based on the fee policy. Schuler asked if the money paid goes back into the fields and keeping them up. Collins stated that the funds received does not go into an escrow account, they go back into the general fund. Collins stated he shared with Council that part of the department's expenses is recovered revenue from field rentals. Schuler stated that the goal is to generate funds and have the recreational programs feed back into the system to grow them is a good investment. Schuler said it is her understanding that the issues regarding maintaining the fields; too much activity on the fields can trash the fields. Collins agreed, too much activity on any turf can have a negative effect. Schuler; we as a City and as a Board are not arguing that fact? Collins agreed staff have never disagreed on the field condition.

Ross wanted to know if the policy is appealed if it affected anyone else. Ross would like to have the items listed out. Tremante stated that a lot of the confusion and difficulty was trying to understand the groups that all use the facilities from those presented last week. It is understood that GSA has a blanket use and they sponsor other organizations; such as elite programs some are not; some are residents some are not; some are non-profits some are not. If one group is going to suggest eliminating another group's access to the city facilities, I want to understand all the components and the differences and the priority of one group over another.

Collins stated the agreements with the City are with the recreational leagues for field use. Because they are a recreational league it is open to all members of the community, it is typically a lower cost to participate, and it is lead by a non-profit organization. As a part of the field use agreement the league must provide certain documentation every year. The recreation leagues are 100% subsidized, the field space is free and the league collects a non-resident fee that comes back to the city. GNA is a select organization who has try outs, fees can vary, there are some parent coached teams that can cost \$300 - \$400. There are club teams that are usually around \$1,200, GNA is a non-profit. They have paid coaches, paid trainers and sometimes paid

staff. In Gahanna because of the way MOSSL operates, GNA has to be sponsored by a recreational league. GSA sponsors GNA. Due to the long history in Gahanna GNA also gets free fields; they pay non-resident fees to the City, GNA is also 100% subsidized. GNA has a non-profit parent board that runs it, per the field use agreement in order to get the 100% subsidy the non-profit parent board has to be a majority of City of Gahanna residents and all must be school district residents. They have to follow all the rules and provide the same documentation to the City.

In Gahanna there is also COE and S&PA. They are both private, not non-profit, they are select organizations with try-outs, paid coaches, paid trainers, and paid staff. A lot of the clubs will take every child; they will not cut anyone even though they have try-outs. These organizations both pay to use the City fields. COE pays the city for field use even though they are sponsored by GSA. They are sponsored in order to play in MOSSL. In order for an organization to play in MOSSL they have to be sponsored by a recreation league and the recreation league has to provide field space to play games on.

Ross asked that if the Board appeals the policy would it not affect COE. Collins said yes, if the policy is appealed the City could not rent to any outside groups. Euton stated that there are more clients than just those mentioned. The City rents fields to various organizations, the YMCA, churches, corporate businesses, local private schools, scouts, etc.

Tremante asked if the policy is broad reaching renting facilities to the outside or is it specific to renting field usage to outside does it differentiate between the two? Collins stated the field and facility rental information is in the same document, it would have to be separated out. We are not talking about creating the new policy tonight. What we are talking about is following the existing policy or changing it. If the decision is made not to follow the existing policy staff will rewrite the policy defining who could use the fields.

Franzmann questioned that in the beginning when staff met with GSA who knew that S&PA was only training. Was it not expected that the fields would be hurt by this? This was signed off on a couple of months ago, why the turnaround now? Euton stated that S&PA was just starting and we knew they would grow over time. It was also discussed with S&PA that if they grow in big numbers we will not be able to support larger number. GSA leadership felt that while S&PA was getting started and had small numbers it wouldn't be an issue to facilitate field space. They primarily practice and play in tournament and none of the other organizations are allowed to practice, Euton could not really speak to it. GSA has told staff they do not want anyone practicing on the fields at Headley Park.

Schuler stated that there are many unknowns; we do not know how many kids are practicing; what we do know is that a lot of practice on fields can damage the fields. I have to believe it is the compounding of not who is using but how many are using the fields. We need more information on how to best utilize the fields. It is a policy of the city to lease the fields upon availability. This is a great opportunity for our kids, by GSAs own sponsorship of GNA and COE they are saying GSA is not enough for some of our kids who want to go to the next level. If S&PA fills the same type of bill that COE does the bright side is there are more opportunities for our kids. It gives our kids more choice. I hesitate to remove the opportunity and choice for our kids. I don't think we just cut them out. How many is too many?

Collins stated there are many variations staff can proceed forward with; whether it is field allocation, moving S&PA to another site, looking at total touches. There are many solutions that are possible looking forward to the fall. To go that direction would mean that there is an open policy for open outside rentals. Do we as a department still allow open rentals based on available with the recreation leagues or not. Do we close down the facilities and only allow whatever the new policy states.

Franzmann believes it is unfair to change what has been working so far because we have this one situation. The situation should be looked at see how it can be worked out.

Miller requested clarification per his understanding S&PA is strictly a training academy, they have no teams. Collins stated no; S&PA explained that they would offer an academy that would train anyone, they would also offer teams that would go and compete in tournaments and Buckeye Premier. Miller asked where the kids are coming from for these teams. Collins; a percentage of the kids are from Gahanna, existing GNA kids, and from other communities. Ross states that the increase in S&PA numbers is not necessarily incremental.

Tremante believes the issues are field management issues that staff needs to work on. The issue of the Board determining whether or not to change the policy of renting to outside organizations certainly will affect it, but it is not the same issue.

Collins stated staff will provide updates to the Board regarding the solution to the field issues.

Tremante made a **MOTION** to rescind the existing field rental policy to outside organizations; seconded by Miller. **On roll call vote:** Miller, No, Naegele, No, Ross, No, Tremante, No, Schuler, No, and Franzmann, No. **Motion failed 6 – 0.**

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Parks & Recreation Board at this time, Naegele made a **MOTION** to adjourn.

The Parks & Recreation Board meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Ripley, Administrative Assistant

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2012

Jan Ross, Chair