

**CITY OF GAHANNA
PARKS & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – October 1, 2008**

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Eric Miller called the meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board to order on Wednesday, October 1, 2008 at 7:08pm at Gahanna Senior Center

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Diane Cantrell
Cynthia Franzmann
Windy McKenna
Luke Messinger
Eric Miller
Laurel Naegele
Vincent Tremante – arrived 7:20pm

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes should reflect that the notice to the Junior League Football is 45 days instead of 21 days.

Messinger made a **MOTION** to approve the September 3, 2008 meeting minutes; seconded by Naegele. **On roll call vote:** McKenna, Yes, Messinger, Yes, Miller, Yes, Naegele, Yes, Cantrell, Yes, and Franzmann, Yes. **The motion carried 6-0.**

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Aquatics Advisory Council

VISITORS IN ATTENDANCE

Miller invited the Dog Park Advisory Committee to attend the Board meeting for their input on the off leash law.

Casey Cannon 950 Venetian Way, Gahanna, OH, 43230 – Dog Park Advisory Committee
Lynne Vermillion 647 Ridenour Rd Gahanna OH 43230 – Dog Park Advisory Committee
Donna Brown 396 Winding Willow Way Columbus Ohio
Zoe Bennett 725 Ronson Way Gahanna Ohio 43230
Karen Bailey 476 Coronation Ave Gahanna Ohio 43230

OLD BUSINESS:

563.19 Pet Ordinance

Collins explained that Ordinance 563.19 allowing dogs to be off leash in Pizzurro Park with or without the confines of fencing expires on December 31, 2008, unless it is brought back to Council for further approval.

Collins stated the new playground is almost complete. Park staff have expressed concerns regarding the off leash dogs at the park and playground and the conflict of users.

Casey Cannon stated that his sense from the committee is that they prefer to keep the off leash ordinance at Pizzurro Park. It was discussed at an Advisory Committee meeting to place a fence around the playground. The Committee does not see a problem extending the ordinance for at least a few years and recommends a fence around the playground.

Lynne Vermillion agrees with Cannon and stated that part of the justification and advantage of moving to Pizzurro Park was for the entire park to be off leash and it was envisioned there would be walking trails where owners could walk their dogs and have creek access. Also not a lot of people take advantage of having their dogs off leash. Vermillion has not heard of any problems with off leash dogs. Vermillion recommends to make the off leash ordinance at Pizzurro Park permanent.

Zoe Bennett stated that her family used the original dog park and recently checked out the new dog park. She is concerned about the safety of dogs not leashed getting out of cars and in the parking lot. Also, there was a dog just running off leash, not even near the owner. Bennett stated that as a responsible dog owner she picks up after her dog; however, when she was at the park and before she could get to her car to get a bag, she was scolded that she didn't pick up after her dog. The accusing woman was defensive and not helpful. Bennett's family uses Alum Creek Dog Park; not because of the water, but because they have found it friendlier, safer and a better environment. With dogs being permitted off leash, Bennett is concerned for the dogs; if they are loose in the creek they can run to the Airport Golf Course or onto Hamilton Road. Bennett would like to have a leash law in place outside the gates at the dog park.

Karen Bailey stated she is at the park almost every day and has not seen or heard of any problems with dogs being off leash. Whether off or on leash, it is very important to have control of your dog. She allows her dogs to swim in the creek. It would be nice to have a fenced in playground area; she has not seen many people playing on the basketball court. It seems that the off leash is working and would like to see the park left off leash.

Donna Brown stated she is at the dog park almost every day has not seen any problem with dogs off leash at the park. Most people have their dogs on leash; those running loose are very minimal. Brown is concerned with kids playing on the agility course. Brown recommends leaving the park off leash.

Cantrell asked if there are plans to put up a fence around the playground once it is completed.

Euton stated staff has had discussion about the motion and movement on the playground and the basketball court. There is concern with dogs off leash and kids swinging or people running up and down the court are going to attract the dogs. There was some discussion about fencing the playground, currently there is only the playground and basketball court, and eventually the multi-purpose trail will be completed. With all the dynamic motion in the park you can't fence every activity off to let the dogs stay off leash. Staff recommends that the park does not remain off leash.

Cantrell stated she feels this is a trial period. There have not been any issues so we should extend the off leash at the park for another year, then review again before making a permanent change to the ordinance.

Messinger asked if there is a procedural difference in getting legislation approved to keep it as is for another year versus permanent. In each case does it have to be presented to Council? Also, have there been any complaints or response regarding the issue?

Collins stated that the procedures are the same for both; either recommendation has to be taken to council for any changes to ordinances. The department has not received any complaints or any additional responses on the issue of off leash at the park. When the new playground opened at Friendship Park there was a drastic population change at the park. The Master Plan called for addressing our community parks, which includes Pizzurro Park. Once the park is completed population increases are expected, it is a multi use park; different features for different users.

McKenna stated that until the park is completed all the rules and regulations put in place should be temporary.

Tremante agreed that since changes are still being made to the park, this is a trial time period.

Collins stated staff has had several conversations of concern regarding the conflict of users especially with the new playground and the park being off leash. There are no plans for fencing in the playground and there are no funds to put a fence around the playground. It would have to be a chain link fence since a split rail fence would not work; it would cost approximately \$5,000 for the fencing.

Tremante requested what Phase II construction includes? Euton responded that Phase II funding for the dog area includes completing the second paddock area, playground, creek access point, and portable water (temporary seasonal water line). The bike trail will be coming through the park; fencing in the people to let the dogs run free will not work once the bike trail comes in. The biggest concern is children on the playground. Staff are concerned that if we fence in the playground area that the dog owners will put their dogs in the playground area.

McKenna asked if the existing fenced in area and the new area to be fenced in will be a big enough area to have as the off leash area?

Collins stated that the actual dog park has two large fenced in areas that the dogs can be off leash in and currently the areas outside of the fence are off leash. The total area that will be fenced in is approximately 4 – 5 acres of Dog Park.

Cantrell made a **MOTION** to recommend to Council that the current legislation 563.19 Pet Ordinance regarding off leash at Pizzurro Park be extended for one additional year; seconded by Franzmann. **On roll call vote:** Naegele, Yes, Tremante, Yes, Cantrell, Yes, Franzmann, Yes, McKenna, Yes, Messinger, Yes, and Miller, Yes. **The motion carried 7-0.**

Adult Volleyball

Collins updated the Board regarding open gym volleyball; the schools are in agreement to extend the season and there are discussions about using volunteers to staff.

Ambassador Commons

Collins updated the Board that staff cleaned up the debris around the pond, painted and made repairs to the playground. The playground is scheduled for replacement in the 2009 budget. The pond does not serve as a stormwater pond; it was originally dug by City staff. The pond has been and continues to be an eyesore; staff is researching the possibility of filling it in.

Youth Sports Reports

Collins shared that the Youth Football League turned in a signed Field Use Agreement and is aware they have 45 days to be in compliance with the agreement. Staff is waiting on their tax 990 verification and the issue with the residency of their board. They were given the option of renting the fields at a cost of \$4,500 for the season.

NEW BUSINESS:

Donation Request

Collins explained staff received a request from a recent Swim Club Board Member for a donation of a Family Pool Membership for a St. Matthews fundraiser. Collins explained this is outside the realm of normal donation policy.

The Board discussed the issue of memberships for donation.

Tremante made a **MOTION** to accept the donation request of a Family Pool Membership to St. Matthews; seconded by Cantrell. **On roll call vote:** Tremante, No, Cantrell, No, Franzmann, No, McKenna, No, Messinger, No, Miller, No and Naegele, No. **MOTION DENIED.**

Aquatics Advisory Committee

Collins shared that when the City purchased the Gahanna Swim Club (GSC) the commitment was made to create an Aquatics Advisory Committee that would have representatives from the GSC Board and resident members from Hunters Ridge Pool. This advisory committee would be like a booster committee that would run hot dog night, program activities, swim team and other types of family community activities and have input on policy recommendations and the overall guidance of keeping the pools community oriented. Staff will send out a letter to the previous GSC Board and resident members of the Hunters Ridge Pool to get committee members.

After some discussion, staff will make the recommendation of the number of members and the structure of the committee. Franzmann volunteered to be the Parks & Recreation Board representative on the Aquatics Advisory Committee.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Collins shared the department's highlights from September with the Board.

COMMITTEES' REPORTS

BAC

Naegele shared that she and Lee Tucker presented the Big Walnut Multi-Purpose Concept Trail Plan to City Council. The plan was adopted by City Council. The committee is working on the bikeway plans and trails to send to MORPC.

Collins stated that the Safe Routes to School grant meeting has happened with Mr. Morris and meetings are scheduled with the principals of the affected schools. Patricia Kovacs was hired as the intern to work on the grant program.

CIC

Cantrell stated the committee is working on its strategic plan. The committee voted to suspend the grants programs until after the strategic plan is complete.

DPAC

Naegele shared the next meeting is Thursday, October 9th.

Parks & Recreation Foundation

Tremante stated the Foundation is currently setting policies and procedures, working on getting a logo and discussing a gala.

NRAC

Tremante shared that the committee met to complete the Price Road inventory, however the ground was too wet to complete. They committee will hopefully complete at the next meeting.

Veterans Memorial Committee

McKenna shared the next dedication will be on November 11, 2008, at 11am. This is the 90th Anniversary of WWI.

School Board Report

McKenna stated the Alternative Community School has 26 kids in the program. Homecoming Parade is Friday, October 3rd, at 2:10pm. The Kroger property was closed on and an RFP was issued with 13 bids returned.

Collins shared the school will be using City golf carts for the Homecoming Parade and Diane Cantrell and Collins are on the Alternative Community School Board.

MEMBERS COMMENTS

Cantrell attended the Central Ohio No Child Left Inside Coalition meeting; 125 people attended including Mike Musser from Parks & Recreation.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

The Parks & Recreation Board meeting adjourned at 9:03pm

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Crossmock, Administrative Assistant

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2008

Eric Miller, Chair