

DRAFT

Chairperson Sugrue called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

- Members Present - Tammy Sugrue, Chairperson
Matt Bauer
Carol Jarczyk
Meichle Latham
Caron Morris
Michael Smolen
Robert Breidenstein, Councilmember
Lauren Masset, Recreation Supervisor
- Absent - Marisa Fallacaro-Dougherty
Brian Adams, Highway Superintendent
Judith Kindron, Director of Finance

MINUTES TO BE APPROVED

Motion by Chairperson Sugrue, seconded by Ms. Jarczyk, to approve Meeting Minutes of the May 15, 2024, meeting.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Motion Carried

CONTINUED BUSINESS

A. Playgrounds Initiative – Phase II

1. Fisher Court Community Build – Chairperson Sugrue stated Ms. Latham, Mr. Bauer, and Mr. Smolen attended the event. Ms. Latham reported the build went well and commented that a participant named Logan attended and was able to speak with Highway Superintendent Adams about Carriage Park. Chairperson Sugrue questioned if there were many Fisher Court residents in attendance but did not receive an answer.

B. Playgrounds Initiative Phase III

1. Firemen’s, Dorrance, and Harlem Road – Chairperson Sugrue reported while Firemen’s Park and Dorrance Park were approved by the commission, Harlem Road Park has been added due to grants and the deterioration of equipment. Additionally, Highway Superintendent Adams advised that he received initial designs for the playgrounds but requested some changes and he is awaiting the updated designs and will then forward them to the commission.

Recreation Supervisor Masset relayed the following information from Supervisor Dickson:

The commission should solicit neighborhood input for playground design for at least the smaller neighborhood parks like Dorrance Park, Knox Park, Westgate Park, Children's Memorial Park, and Carriage Park. Harlem Road and Tim Russert Park are in the disadvantaged census tracts. Once the update to the Comprehensive Plan for recreation is finished, the Supervisor would like to apply for a large grant to update the Harlem Road playground to a similar standard as the Veteran’s Park playground, wait to plan work for that playground.

Councilmember Breidenstein stated that following conversations with Highway Superintendent Adams

they would like the commission to recommend the next two playgrounds to be addressed. The town has the capacity to address 4 – 5 playgrounds per year due to accelerating the bonding.

Chairperson Sugrue suggested the commission may want to revisit the parks to view current conditions. Ms. Latham agreed and stated the results of the survey should be considered. Chairperson Sugrue queried the members about the strategy they should use to review the parks and suggested using a rubric to remain consistent. Ms. Latham recommended checking with Highway Superintendent Adams as he may already have a rubric for this purpose. Chairperson Sugrue stated she will contact Highway Superintendent Adams and then follow up with the commission members to select the parks they will each review.

C. Commission led events

1. Scavenger Hunt - Chairperson Sugrue reported she has communicated with the Burchfield Nature and Art Center and August 10th is still a viable date for the event. The location lends itself very well to a scavenger hunt. Once the details are confirmed the event can be publicized and feels that a 1 P.M. start will work well with families.
2. Field Days – Chairperson Sugrue stated she understands that this event is not moving forward at this time. Mr. Smolen reiterated the lack of commission member participation and the fact that the Recreation Department is holding field day events and confirmed the event is on hold.

Mr. Smolen stated the Town Board is reviewing the Town Code regarding the Recreation Commission. Councilmember Breidenstein stated the proposal is revising the Recreation Commission law. A revision made to the law in 2022 was not sanctioned by NYS due to a procedural issue. Currently, the Town Board is addressing questions that have arisen with regards to the roles of certain members, the number of members, and the frequency of meetings.

Chairperson Sugrue stated it is necessary for the commission to meet on a timely basis, quarterly meetings do not allow the commission to accomplish things such as addressing the playgrounds. Councilmember Breidenstein stated he agrees that the commission successfully addressed the playgrounds and can change their focus now that there is a plan being followed.

Chairperson Sugrue stated Ms. Fallon's comments during the public hearing at the Town Board meeting reminded her that the purpose of the Recreation Commission is to gather public feedback and provide recommendations and the Recreation Department is staffed to facilitate the recreation programs. While it is the nature of the commission members to want to participate, Chairperson Sugrue acknowledged the members have taken on too much responsibility in planning and running events. Councilmember Breidenstein stated the original intent of the commission was to provide more activities, but to put the responsibility on a group of volunteers was not the ultimate goal. Councilmember Breidenstein stated he supports Ms. Fallon's suggestion that the commission should not be running the events, instead the commission should be making recommendations to the Town Board who in turn can make recommendations or directives to the Recreation Department. The Town Board does consider the budgetary implications for recommendations and more expensive items will require long term budget planning. The Town Board will most likely be voting on the revisions to the local law at the next Town Board Meeting.

Mr. Smolen stated he does not have a problem with the Recreation Commission hosting events, but

this requires participation from the commission members. Chairperson Sugrue stated the commission members participate in different ways even if they cannot be present at meetings and events. Mr. Smolen stated he attempts to keep events as inexpensive as possible and will do the legwork to keep costs down.

Chairperson Sugrue requested Recreation Supervisor include the commission on correspondence for with events. Recreation Supervisor Masset confirmed that she is including the commission on correspondence.

Mr. Smolen questioned if any members wanted to volunteer to help with a field day event or if the event should be tabled. Chairperson Sugrue stated the Recreation Department has two field day events scheduled and questioned what days they are scheduled. Recreation Supervisor Masset stated she does not have the schedule with her but believes they are scheduled for Saturdays and commented that the Recreation Department staff is scheduled Monday through Saturday through the summer. Chairperson Sugrue suggested scheduling a field day event in the fall if they follow through. Mr. Smolen requested a motion to decide if any commission members would like to hear about his vision of the field days event or to table the event. Chairperson Sugrue and Ms. Latham stated they are interested in learning about the event. Councilmember Breidenstein questioned the commission's intentions, are they seconding a motion or choosing to form a sub-committee to pursue the event.

Motion by Chairperson Sugrue to move forward with the field day event. No second was received.

Mr. Smolen stated the motion should be to table the event as there is no additional interest from other commission members. Chairperson Sugrue questioned the need to vote to table the event. Councilmember Breidenstein suggested the commission bring details to the next meeting and referred to the process of planning the Scavenger Hunt and Trivia Night events. If any members are passionate about an event but there is a lack of interest from the public, it can be cancelled. Both he and Recreation Supervisor Masset can advise if there are any conflicts with ongoing activities. There is no need to table the item.

Mr. Smolen again asked if a motion was needed to query the commission members' interest in his providing a presentation about his vision for a field day event. Councilmember Breidenstein stated a motion is not necessary and Chairperson Sugrue can add the item to the agenda.

Recreation Supervisor Masset offered to schedule Recreation Department staff to work depending on the date of an event.

3. Walk in the Park – Ms. Latham stated the Joe Kirchmeyer of the West Seneca Chamber of Commerce has offered the Chamber's support and would like to participate with the planning advising October will be the ideal time for the event. Commission members, including Ms. Fallacaro-Dougherty, Ms. Morris, and Mr. Smolen, have volunteered to help and Councilmember Breidenstein indicated he would like to attend the meeting with the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Latham will schedule a meeting in July. Walk in the Park can include other town service organizations and departments and be scheduled for the same day as Field Day.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairperson Sugrue stated the public comments will remain at 3 minutes per speaker.

Katie Adrian stated she has seen social media posts from West Seneca residents that have hidden items at the Burchfield Nature and Arts Center and suggested the commission members connect with the residents for the scavenger hunt. Chairperson Sugrue requested the contact information. Recreation Supervisor Masset stated she can provide this information to Chairperson Sugrue.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Skate Park – Councilmember Breidenstein will follow up with Christopher Holmes and confirm Mr. Holmes’ attendance at an upcoming meeting.

- B. Recreation Supervisor’s Report – Recreation Supervisor Masset provide the following updates:
 - ✓ Registration is open for swim lessons
 - ✓ New summer programs have been added
 - ✓ Staff training is close to completion
 - ✓ Pool opens June 26th
 - ✓ Kick Off to Summer event is June 28th
 - ✓ Middle School dances are tentatively scheduled for November 15th and December 13th – requested commission members volunteer for at least one event
 - ✓ Supervisor Dickson requested updates on the Recreation Commission’s idea of a dog park

Chairperson Sugrue stated she has a dog park on her list of budget recommendations. The idea has not been developed further but believes there is a demand for one. There are many details to consider when planning for a dog park and suggested Highway Superintendent Adams could assist with access to water. Councilmember Breidenstein stated that the priority will be to find a viable space and water hook-ups could be added. Chairperson Sugrue suggested a dog park with trails might be an idea for the commission to pursue.

Motion by Mr. Bauer, seconded by Ms. Morris, to recommend a dog park for budget consideration.

On the question, Mr. Smolen questioned why the commission would motion for the dog park before a location is identified and investigation and groundwork is completed. Chairperson Sugrue stated it will not be worthwhile for the commission to move forward if the dog park is not in the budget. Councilmember Breidenstein stated he has a dog park on his list of budget recommendations, also. Mr. Bauer questioned if the former soccer fields Harlem Road Park might be a possibility and stated the property by Picasso’s was intended to be a playground and might be a possibility, also. Ms. Latham questioned if reviewing the concentration of dog licenses might be helpful. Secretary Martin advised there are dogs everywhere in town whether they are licensed or not. Ms. Jarczyk stated there is a dog park behind Southtowns Animals Hospital.

Ayes: (5) Chairperson Sugrue Noes: (1) Mr. Smolen Abstain: None Motion Carried

Mr. Smolen does not support moving forward without more information.

- C. Budget Recommendations – Ms. Latham stated survey results should be considered but reiterated the need for bike racks across town. Chairperson Sugrue agrees with the need and referred to Mr. Staunch’s comments from previous meetings who brought forth the need for bike racks at businesses across town, also. The question of identifying a quantity was raised. Ms. Latham stated no parks should be excluded

and stated Go Bike donates bike racks.

Motion by Chairperson Sugrue, seconded by Ms. Latham, to recommend installing a bike rack at every park in West Seneca.

Ayes: All Noes: None Abstain: None Motion Carried

Chairperson Sugrue also addressed the ongoing issue of dog owners not picking up after their pets and questioned if the commission could undertake a campaign to remind dog owners. A resident stated some parks provide bags but not all.

Motion by Chairperson Sugrue, seconded by Mr. Bauer, to recommend dog waste bags are provided at all West Seneca parks.

Ayes: All Noes: None Abstain: None Motion Carried

Councilmember Breidenstein requested Recreation Supervisor Masset inform himself and the commission when the budget due date is provided to her.

- D. July Meeting – Chairperson Sugrue advised that both she and Ms. Latham will be absent and questioned if the meeting should be cancelled. Mr. Bauer suggested checking each commission member’s availability before cancelling the meeting.
- E. Public Comment Policy – Ms. Jarczyk questioned if the commission was changing the policy. Chairperson Sugrue stated she would like to establish a policy for the commission to respond to public comments and questions. Ms. Jarczyk stated the commission should provide responses at the following meeting and perhaps the members could discuss information to provide a response. Councilmember Breidenstein supports the commission responding to questions but cautioned against responding immediately during the meeting. Recreation Supervisor Masset questioned if Secretary Martin could include the questions in the minutes so the members can provide responses to be added to the final draft. Ms. Martin stated that the minutes reflect what occurs during the meeting. Councilmember Breidenstein stated that the minutes are a summary and not verbatim. Depending on the nature of the question, Councilmember Breidenstein suggested the Chairperson, Recreation Supervisor, or himself can volunteer to follow up with the individual.

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Morris stated she is available to volunteer for the Scavenger Hunt event on August 10th.

Mr. Bauer questioned if the commission members are reviewing the 9 remaining parks. Chairperson Sugrue confirmed that the playgrounds that have been done or are on the current list being addressed do not have to be reviewed.

Councilmember Breidenstein suggested the commission may want to consider changing the date of the November meeting as it falls on the day before Thanksgiving. Chairperson Sugrue stated she will check on room availability the prior week.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Chairperson Sugrue, seconded by Mr. Bauer, to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 P.M.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

Margaret A. Martin
Deputy Town Clerk/Secretary to the Youth and Recreation Commission