

RECREATION COMMITTEE

AUGUST 9, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Chairperson Jonathan Smith. Committee members present were Jonathan Smith, Barry VanHoozen, and Cory Kuhlman. Also present was Bridgette Kabat, City Administrator.

CITIZEN'S CONCERNS

Leah Delao-Ponce, 25614 Broad Street, has requested information on the bike path along the side of Levis Commons. Ms. Kabat stated that it is currently under design by the City Engineer.

Jacqueline Kyle, 235 Southwood Drive, is here to express concerns about the dog park because they are not a good thing. She spends a lot of time training her dogs and the environment of dog parks does not support that. Bicentennial Park has no parking and is a family park, whereas dog parks are very loud. She asked how this would be funded. Mr. Smith explained that we are more in an exploratory phase and have not yet set aside funds. Ms. Kyle added later in the meeting that the survey could be skewed with those that do not have a yard space for their dogs. She is curious if the next survey could zero in on the people asking for the dog park, what their living situation is, if they are homeowners or live in apartments wanting green space for their pets. She opposes dog parks for many reasons.

Vicki Jueng, 1086 Running Brook Drive, was unsure why Bicentennial Park was on the survey and does not understand why it is on the survey because it is a neighborhood park. She explained that there used to be baseball practices in that park and that it was a mess with littering and those practicing walking through their backyards to get to the park. Mr. Kuhlman stated that he requested it to be included due to it being centrally located in the city. Mr. Kuhlman added that the city is trying to give different options and to get public input. Mr. Kuhlman reminded everyone to please put all their thoughts onto the survey. Mr. Smith added that PRAC had knocked the Bicentennial option out and recommended Three Meadows or Orleans for the dog park.

Carrie White, 1100 Running Brook Drive, stated that her and her family use Bicentennial Park often. She stated that she loves dogs, but to please not put a dog park there. She stated that many people are voting for Bicentennial Park because it is the cheapest option, but that the cheapest is not always the best. Ms. White added to please not put this in her backyard.

Tricia Durham, 889 Brookfield Lane, is advocating to not put the dog park in Three Meadows Park. She does not take her dogs to dog parks because people do not train their dogs properly. Ms. Durham stated that they have a big concern with parking if a dog park were to go there and that the parking lots are crowded already. Ms. Durham stated that she used to live in Cincinnati and that dog park fights would happen all the time. She added that Police would have to manage the dog park and that they probably have better things to do. Dog parks are loud and they should be away from any residential areas. She added that they bought their home because Three Meadows is a quiet park. Ms. Durham stated that the City should be put into the plan for Orleans to make it a bigger and better park.

Tonya Schneider, 234 Margaret Place, also does not agree with a dog park period. She stated that even if additional parking was added to Bicentennial Park, the neighborhood has small streets, it would not be wise for the neighborhoods surrounding the park. Ms. Schneider added that this would be more beneficial in a larger City. She has two rescue dogs, and they would not use a dog park due to safety issues and there are irresponsible pet owners.

Ruth Lucius, 26768 Ottekee Drive, asked what the issue is with Orleans Park. Mr. Smith said the issue is with people getting in and out. Mr. Smith asked Ms. Kabat about the ingress and egress to Orleans Park. Ms. Kabat stated that there was a traffic study for the Orleans Park area, and they will meet soon to receive some preliminary information. Ms. Lucius stated that through her research, most successful dog parks are privately funded, and that people pay to use the parks, showing proof of vaccinations and a license. Of the three, she stated that Orleans is the best because most sounds would be muffled by traffic, there is plenty of parking, and it is not around any homes.

Mr. Smith appreciates everyone coming out and stated that this will be an ongoing conversation.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MONTH'S MINUTES

There being no objections, the minutes of the July 12, 2022 meeting were approved 3-0.

MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF JUDY HAGEN TO FILL A VACANCY ON PRAC

Mr. Smith stated that the city was well served by Ms. Hagen, and that it is important to keep her involved. The Committee agreed 3-0 to recommend Ms. Hagen to fill one of the vacancies on PRAC.

PLAYGROUND MAINTENANCE

Ms. Kabat explained that several Department of Public Service workers do monthly inspections of each playground to catalog what is broken or missing. They do their best to keep the pieces of equipment in service and safe. Ms. Kabat added that the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator is doing a biannual review of all playgrounds and parks using an inspection form. Ms. Kabat added that they are excited to have the OHSC on board and that he is looking out for the best interest of the City and the residents using the Parks. Mr. Smith added that we should have a life cycle plan for the park equipment, so that it is not a substantial chunk at once. Ms. Kabat also added that they could set aside money each year to build up a project fund specifically for playground equipment replacement.

Mr. Kuhlman asked if we could get a safety or equipment checklist for the playground equipment replacement, so that the staff is familiar with it and on identifying specific issues. Mr. Kuhlman added that the City has been fortunate to have a lot of donations for park land and equipment. He stated that the City should be able to take on that role if the giving ever stops, so that the City still has nice equipment that is well maintained.

PRAC

Mr. Smith stated that PRAC is unsure of their specific role. The members of PRAC have indicated that they would like to have a better understanding of their purpose and to become even more involved with the recreation aspect of the community. Will Harbauer, Chairperson for PRAC, stated that PRAC members would like to be involved earlier in the processes, such as designing or concepts. Mr. Smith suggested increasing the frequency of PRAC meetings. Mr. Smith also suggested a uniform checklist for all members of PRAC to report back to the City.

Mr. VanHoozen asked if PRAC made a recommendation for the dog park. Mr. Harbauer stated they recommended Three Meadows and Orleans, but not Bicentennial. Mr. Harbauer recommended that they update what they are supposed to do or redefine their advisory role. Mr. Kuhlman would love to see a recommendation for PRAC on what they would like to see PRAC grow into. Mr. VanHoozen added that they value their advice and would love their ideas too.

OTHER BUISNESS

None.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Smith, Chairperson
Recreation Committee

Next meeting: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.