

PERRYSBURG CITY COUNCIL

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Report for regular meeting of September 8, 2020

PRESENT: Chairwoman Deborah Born, Counselors Jonathan Smith and Jan Materni.

Chairwoman Born called the meeting to order at 6:47 P. M. in Council Chambers. After the Pledge of Allegiance, citizen concerns were requested with none presented.

OLD BUSINESS:

A) Riverside Park cannon stands: Mr. Smith asked if the cannon stands are still in the budget. Chairwoman Born responded that she had only received the 2021 budget today that day and had not had an opportunity to review it but she recalled that there was 20,000 to 25,000 dollars in the 2020 budget for this. Mr. Smith commented that he had been at Riverside Park the preceding Saturday and feels that it would be nice to know that the project is progressing. Chairwoman Born agreed.

B) Inclusive Playground: Chairwoman Born announced that the committee has received a request from the administration to recommend to Council that draft Ordinance 14-2020 be adopted. This Ordinance is a response to a request from Ryan Wichman (spokesperson for "Wood County Plays") and it would amend section 1090.071 of the code which permits commercial advertising in Rivercrest Park to authorize commercial advertising in Rotary Park as well (at present Rivercrest Park is the only one of the City's 12 parks which permits this).

Chairwoman Born commented that she had talked to Ms. Alkire about the ordinance prior to the meeting and noted that it has a clause stating that the issue had been discussed at a meeting on August 11. Since no meeting had actually taken place on that date Ms. Born asked that the draft ordinance be amended to reflect this. She then mentioned that she had been told (in an August 4 E-Mail from the City Administrator and in a September 3 memo from the Law Director) that the reason for this request was because Mr. Wichman had told them that he had been in contact with a major corporate sponsor who would require advertising signage to participate. Ms. Born then asked Mr. Wichman (who was present) the identity of the donor. She stated that she has been and continues to be supportive of this project as (in her opinion) are the other committee members but she does not wish to move forward until she has more information. Therefore she had asked Ms. Alkire to make the necessary corrections to the draft ordinance and resubmit it to the committee.

Mr. Wichman stated that his organization does not have any secret donors. He said that while he does not want to offend any donors he needs to identify The Ability Center, Wood County Board of Development Disabilities, Mercy Health Partners and Wood Lane Foundation as the major donors. He also mentioned that a complete list may be found on the organization's web site.

Mr. Wichman then presented proposed designs for signs which he said would be placed on the fence around the playground. Every contributor (whether personal or corporate) who gives more than \$500 would be commemorated with a sign with the size depending on the size of the donation..

Ms. Born then commented that she was opposed to authorizing the Directors of Service, Safety, and Law to determine who will be permitted to buy advertising in Rotary Park. She feels that these decisions should be made by City Council. Mr. Smith responded that he was concerned that fundraising for PABSC would be damaged because they put up temporary banners in Rivercrest Park and this procedure would

slow down their efforts. Ms. Materni said that she feels the City Administrator and Law Director should see it first. Ms. Born said that Council is there for a reason.

Chairwoman Born then asked if there was any rush to complete the project. Mr. Wichman said that there was not; they would like to have it complete by next spring or summer and they have already raised a total of \$550,000 with \$170,000 to go.

Mr. Smith stated that in his opinion a delay until October would hurt the fund raising abilities of Mr. Wichman's organization. Ms. Born responded that her experience in fund raising causes her to believe that this is not the case. Ms. Materni stated that action on the ordinance could be taken that night "contingent on subsequent changes". Mr. Wichman complained that as a working father it was unfair to ask him to return to another meeting.

Mr. Smith asked Chairwoman Born to repeat the requested changes in the ordinance which she had already presented. She did so. Mr. Wichman asked if there any abuses concerning signage in Rivercrest Park (where it is already permitted) have occurred. Mr. Smith asked if Chairwoman Born would prefer a separate ordinance for Rotary Park. Ms. Born stated that Mr. Smith had already proposed this earlier in the meeting and she agreed with him. Mr. Smith then asked if she wanted the same language in both sections and Ms. Born replied that she did not and her objections to the first ordinance would have to be corrected in a new one.

Mr. Wichman reiterated that there is currently no large secret donor. He said that the designs for signage had been created with places for possible future large donors since the size of a given sign will depend on the size of the donation. He said that negotiations with future large donors cannot proceed until an ordinance permitting any form of signage in Rotary Park is in place.

Mr. Wichman asked if his organization was being "penalized". Ms. Born repeated that she has been in support of his project from the very beginning but simply wants to be fair and to be a good councilman for the community. Mr. Wichman asked her once again to repeat the changes she had requested in the ordinance. She did so. Ms. Materni stated that in her opinion the fact that a secret donor was not mentioned in the ordinance did not affect the ordinance. Ms. Born responded that her decision was based on the memos sent by the Law Director and City Administrator which discussed it..

Mr. Wichman stated that regardless of what the Law Director and City Administrator had said there is no secret large donor. He stated that the issue was whether any commercial signage would be permitted in Rotary Park.

The question was presented that if this permission is given it would mean that any entity, not just Wood County Plays could put up commercial advertising in Rotary Park and this would lead to the gradual commercialization of the City's other parks. Ms. Materni stated that she considers commemorative bricks (usually purchased by individual citizens) to be commercial advertising. Mr. Wichman stated that in his opinion any time a large donor offers a substantial amount of money for a project in a park the City should change its laws so it can take it.

Ms. Materni said she has no problem with this proposal. she considers the design of the playground "low key and tastefully done"

Mr. Smith made a motion to recommend to Council that the Ordinance be passed as is. Ms. Materni seconded, stating that she had read the memos from the Law Director and Administrator and that the word "secret" was not used to describe the unnamed major donor. Chairwoman Born stated that in order to make a proper decision we need to have the proper information. Ms. Materni said she already had

enough information to vote. Mr. Wichman asked that the project be moved forward because a month's delay would set back their goal of opening next summer.

Mr. Smith called the question. Here ensued a period of discussion between the three Council members and Mr. Wichman during which Ms. Materni stated she felt that the inaccuracies in the current draft "didn't matter" and Mr. Wichman accused Ms. Born of only helping his project to get a photo op. Finally a vote was taken with the result being 2 (Smith, Materni) to 0 (Born not voting).

C) Splash pad: Ms. Materni stated that she wanted the Splash Pad removed from the Old Business section of the Agenda because it will always be too expensive to maintain. Chairwoman Born stated that she wishes to keep it there because it can be acted on in the future (it is the Chair's prerogative to prepare and edit the agenda). Mr. Smith concurred.

D & E) there was no discussion of the multipurpose wall or the West side handball court.

F) PABSC financials : Chairwoman Born asked the Committee members if they had received their copies which she had requested from the Administration. Ms. Materni said she had received it and had no questions about it. Ms. Born said she agreed. Mr Smith said he had not received it but was O. K. with it since the other two members were.

G) PRAC appointments: Chairwoman Born reported that Todd France was appointed to PRAC. Ms. Quinn Baumgartner was reappointed to one of the two seats reserved for high school students and the other was filled by a new member Caleb Cristen. Connor Patrick, whose term had expired was not reappointed. Chairwoman Born stated she planned to recognize his service by presenting him with a plaque at a future Council meeting when the plaque has been completed (it is being donated by a private individual at no cost to the City. She said she would inform Mr. Smith of which Council meeting she would like to do this.

4) NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Smith mentioned that he had been out for a run in the parks over the weekend and had noticed a lot of trash. He asked if the city workers could be assigned to clean up the trash on weekends. Ms. Materni said that it is obvious that the parks were very heavily used this summer, Ms. Born agreed that the parks need to be maintained and asked if this would required paying them overtime. Ms. Materni suggested that a part time person might be hired maintain the parts on weekends. There was also discussion of recruiting volunteers.

5) PRAC report: There is no report because PRAC hasn't met this year due to the pandemic.

Meeting Adjourned 7:30 P. M. Next regular meeting will be October 13 at 6:30 P. M.

Report prepared by Deborah L. Born, Chairwoman
September 14, 2020