Reading Recreation Commission
7:00PM
Pendora Field House

Minutes of the August 14, 2012 Meeting

The Reading Recreation Commission was called to order on Tuesday, August 14, 2012, at 7:10PM by James Washington, Chairman.

James Washington asked the board members to introduce themselves to Rebecca Swoyer (approved hire of Business Manager in July 10, 2012 minutes). James introduced Marisol Torres as the newly appointed board member replacing Michael Schorn.

The Board performed a Roll Call of members and then the Pledge of the Allegiance.
There were 8 of 10 Board Members present and they included: Carl Geffken, Robert Heebner Jr., Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz, John Santoro, Otis Smith, Donald Taddei, Jr., Marisol Torres and James Washington. Francis Acosta is on vacation and Eddie Moran was absent. Staff in attendance: Daphne Klahr, Executive Director and Rebecca Swoyer, Business Manager (acting secretary).

There was a discussion regarding where the board meetings would be held. It was determined that they will be held at different park locations. Daphne stated that it would be a good opportunity for the board members to see the facilities and view the major repairs that must take place. Tonight's meeting was held at the Pendora Field House. Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed concern with the truck depot and the very large trucks right by the park. She felt it was a safety concern for the children.

Minutes
Minutes were reviewed.
John Santoro made a motion to approve the minutes of July 10, 2012 meeting. The motion was seconded by Robert Heebner Jr.

Old Business

A. **Proposed Employee Handbook**

The proposed employee handbook is being reviewed by the Personnel subcommittee.

B. **Board Training**

At the July 10, 2012 meeting it was suggested to reach out to Judy Houck from Spring Township & David Thun from SCORE. Judy Houck declined to assist with the training. The need for board training was discussed again. Daphne stated that DCNR is trying to help. It was stated that urban city playgrounds are changing. It seems they are all coming to this type of arrangement for recreation. Lancaster Recreation Center is our model.

Executive Director's Report
Daphne handed out her report for the month.
Highlights

Met with Alvernia on 3 separate occasions to organize and coordinate the Freshman Cleanup Project scheduled for August 22nd & August 24th, 2012 from 9:30AM – 12:30PM. Sites that will be part of the cleanup include Baer Park, 6th & Amity, Keffer, Northmont, 3rd & Spring, City Park, 11th and Pike, 3rd and Spruce, Neversink, Pendora, EJ Dives, Brookline and Egelman's. Alvernia has donated $350.00 to be used

for equipment & supplies for the event. Reading Beautification and Public Works are providing materials and supplies. Frank Denbowski is providing 10 dumpsters (5 brush and 5 trash) to be located at Baer Park, 11th and Pike, 3rd and Spruce, Neversink and City Park. Public Works will be providing a chipper at Egelman's to assist with removal of brush and trees. Daphne will oversee the 3rd and Spruce location. Matthew Lubas will oversee the 11th and Pike project. John O'Mara will oversee the Baer Park project. Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz will oversee the Neversink project. Daphne expressed the need for assistance with overseeing the projects at City Park and Pendora.

Met with Senator Schwank regarding the Excursion Program for Reading Youth starting 2013. Senator Schwank has agreed to sponsor the program and will ask local businesses and transportation companies to assist. Discussed ideas for alternate funding for the commission.

Met with Captain Stephen Powell from the Reading Police Department. Daphne attended the hearing for the woman selling alcohol at Baer Park. The woman was found guilty and fined $300.00. Daphne is continuing to work with the Reading Police Department to curb illegal activity in the parks and playgrounds. She is currently addressing issues at Egelmen's, Baer Park, 3rd and Spruce and Pendora.

Discussed the Lantern Parade taking place Thursday, August 16th, 2012 at the City Park band shell. The board members were invited to attend the parade. If attending please arrive by 6:30PM. The parade will start at 7:00PM. The Reading Eagle and WFMZ will be there. James Washington asked if we had anyone taking a video of the event. He offered his son for this service. He stated that the video could be sent as a thank you to our contributors.

Reported that the after school program is up and running.

Received a donation of office equipment from Spartan Properties in Wyomissing which included filing cabinets, white boards and bulletin boards. Alvernia University donated two desks and a large filing cabinet which will furnish the tennis office at 11th and Pike.

Attended the Department of Public Welfare Training in Scranton to continue the licensing process for our after school programs. 11th and Pike will not meet current state requirements because of lack of toilet facilities. Daphne will address this issue with Cindy DeGroote as it relates to a CDBG grant/DCNR grant currently in process for renovations to 11th and Pike.

Attended the International Urban Parks Conference in New York City from July 13th – 17th, 2012. Daphne handed out a report with key takeaway points:

#1 – Maintenance: how crucial to the success of a park/playground/program it is. On average 32% of their budget goes to maintenance of facilities and parks. James Washington commented that 6% of our budget may go to maintenance. The City of Reading does not have the personnel or staff to get these parks up to standards.

Commission's standpoint was to get the facilities up and running so they can generate revenue.

#2 – Master Planning: the power of master planning. Daphne spoke about the devastation that Hurricane Katrina brought to the New Orlean's City Park and how having a master plan reinvented the park.

There are four steps to recovery:

#1 – cleanup
#2 – open revenue generating facilities
#3 – massive fundraising
#4 – adhere to master plan for recovery

A Master Plan that is done well will allow potential sponsors and funders to have confidence in your plans for park and program improvements.

Discussion followed regarding several parks:

Neversink has a beautiful amphitheater which has potential for movies in the park. Alvernia Freshman Cleanup project will be working to clean this up.

Pendora's Fieldhouse is beautiful and could be used for rentals which will generate revenue. Right now the only rentals are Schlegel Park and occasionally 11th and Pike and 3rd and Spruce.

Discussion followed regarding pre-existing agreements/contracts that are in place at other parks. The commission needs to know what agreements and guidelines there are.

Daphne informed the board that she met with Legal and has some agreements. She stated that Blacktop, Baer Park and 6th & Amity used to be playground sites. They currently are not running any programs.

Discussed the Iron Works project with Carole Snyder. Wells Fargo is working with local groups to renovate Reading Iron; additionally, money is being used from CDBG funding from the City of Reading to replace equipment. Reading Beautification will be helping to coordinate the efforts with the Recreation Commission.

Met with Lorne Possinger to discuss upcoming grant rounds. Current application needs a secured match from the City of $100,000.00. DCNR will not accept pending match from CDBG funding although the City does receive CDBG funding each year.

Reported that the pool and playground are coming to close. The summer was successful and the playground program is set to expand next year to additional locations. Staff is being notified that the pool hours next year will be extended past 6:00pm.

Met with Todd Graham and recreation staff to finalize paperwork for the retirement plan. Hopeful that the plan with take affect in September.

Reading Recreation shirts orders were taken for Marcia, Marisol, Donald and Carl.

New Business

A. **Logo** – Otis Smith had suggestions for the Commission Logo. He stated it could be used for t-shirts, bumper stickers, etc.
   Daphne met with Berks Digital. She requested to keep in mind the history of the city but also try to keep the logo modern. The Lantern parade was discussed. Otis talked about the Underground Railroad and how the sight of a child holding a lantern was a sign that you were welcome in a home. Daphne handed out 5 examples of the logo to the commission. The images were discussed as well a size and color. Otis suggested making the child in the logo a watermark. John stated that he was not in love with the child. Daphne stated that it is current but old and could relate to young and old. Marcia liked it and liked that it could give history of reading when asked what it is. Lantern Parades are unique to Reading dating back to the 1920's. Robert stated he felt it was wide. Donald talked about the background.
   A motion was made by James Washington to authorize Daphne to work with Berks Digital and reproduce using the suggestions from the commission. The motion was seconded by Carl Geffken. The motion was unanimously approved. Daphne will bring images to the September meeting.
B. **Tour of Duty** – Daphne and John Santoro visited parks. There were dogs without leashes even though signs were present. A huge discussion regarding signs and enforcing codes followed. The Reading Police was discussed and how short staff they are already. Security contracts were discussed and giving the authority to park ordinances, possibly deputizing our own workers. Discussion followed regarding park attendants and maintenance.
C. **Maintenance Position** - Daphne stated that we hired a full-time summer maintenance employee, John O'Mara. He has been doing an excellent job with our ball fields and keeping things nice at various locations. She recommended to the board to hire John through the end of this year and then budget for a full time position next year. She handed out a Maintenance Coordinator position description. The suggestion is to raise his rate from $9.00 an hour to $11.00 an hour from September – December 2012. Then in January 2013 hire as a regular full time employee with benefits at $31,200.00. Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she believed this was needed as

long as it did not take work away from the city. Daphne stated that the city does not have the time or personnel to keep up with the work. Maintenance needs to be a collaborative effort working with the City's public works department. Otis Smith stated that this was dangerous and we are going to be out of money soon if we keep hiring people when there is no revenue. He stated that the 501C3 is still pending and nothing should be done till then. He mentioned that the funding for Daphne's salary has not come in yet. Daphne explained that the budget now is very conservative. James Washington asked Carl Geffken to have his committee work on this and look if a person can be afforded. James agreed if the facilities are in good condition they could generate revenue. Carl's suggestion was to keep him on till the end of December and look at the budget for next year. If we can afford to do it – then we will. It was then discussed keeping him on till the end of September for now . Giving him a trial run and using Pendora field house as his project and then make a decision at the September board meeting. James Washington made the motion to extend his employment till the end of September. Carl Geffken seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote – Carl Geffken – yes, Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz – yes, Robert Heeber – yes, John Santoro – yes, Otis Smith –yes, Donald Taddei – yes, Marisol Torres – yes, James Washington – yes.

D. **Subcommittees** - James Washington reviewed the subcommittee assignments. Everyone needs to work out how they are going to handle them and meet on a monthly basis and then report at the board meetings. These are the three committees and members:

Personnel: Eddie Moran – Chairman; Francis Acosta; Robert Heebner; James Washington

Finance: Carl Geffken – Chairman; Francis Acosta; Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz; James Washington

Programs/Facilities: John Santoro – Chairman; Eddie Moran (northeast region); Otis Smith (southeast region); Donald Taddei (northwest region); Marisol Torres (southwest region); James Washington.

Discussion followed regarding a fishing rodeo at Engleman's; identifying our potential revenue parks, investment of time; money and most importantly identify revenue.

Discussion regarding the large undertaking of the committees and looking into other individuals (legislator/senator) to reach out to for financing. Once we have our 501C3 license it will be easier to generate funds.

John Santoro handed out a list of parks and their regions. Every park has a shed for storage. Would community groups be willing to keep it clean and updated? Carl Geffken stated that maybe an agreement could be completed. Chuck Younger – city solicitor already prepared an agreement.

A discussion followed regarding giving access and how that can become an issue. Daphne will give all agreements she has to Carl. Different parks were discussed and stated that we do not have agreements: Mineral Spring Park, East Ends. Carl with look over 2012 year end budget; 2013 and the summer maintenance position; work that can be done to generate revenue, 2014 – 2017 years to see where we might be. Hopefully to see all surpluses!

Treasurer's Report

Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz discussed the Treasurer report.

Company snapshot. Account balances: Reading Recreation Commission balance $235,947.69 & Reading Recreation Commission Youth Account balance $3,848.60. Marcia reviewed the Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual. Discussion followed regarding the heading. Currently it states January through December 2012. However, the time period of the report is January through the current month (August). Carl Geffken stated that he will go over the budget and make any necessary adjustments. John Santoro made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Carl Geffken. The motion was

approved unanimously. Otis Smith questioned the way the QuickBooks system works. He questioned the company snapshot regarding the section "customers who owe money". Could the system generate invoices, etc? Carl Geffken stated that QuickBooks is comparable to what we need. We could use this system to generate invoices when individuals rent facilities and also process the revenue when they pay for the rental.

Daphne provided Robert Heebner with a report for pool groups.

James Washington questioned the interest in volley ball & middle school leagues. Daphne stated there was no interest. The adult league will continue in the fall. The school board members are trying to schedule a meeting with Dr. Purcell.

Public Comment

Carl Geffken thanked the Reading School District for appointing him to the board.

Daphne stated the next meeting place would be determined. Suggestion was made to meet at the Pendora Field House again so everyone could see the progress the maintenance person has made.

Otis Smith stated that he felt the meetings should be in different location. John Santoro agreed. James Washington stated he felt the meetings should be earlier so everyone could go outside and look at the parks.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be brought before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 9:15PM.

Upcoming meetings: Reading Recreation Commission – September 11, 2012. The time and location will be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Swoyer

Acting Secretary