

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

ROLL CALL:

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

MINUTES TO BE APPROVED

Motion by Chairperson Sugrue, seconded by Ms. Fallacaro-Dougherty, to approve Meeting Minutes of the July 31, 2024, meeting.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Motion Carried

CONTINUED BUSINESS

- A. Playgrounds - Chairperson Sugrue stated Highway Superintendent Adams provided the first draft for Firemen’s and Dorrance Parks. Highway Superintendent Adams referred to the Firemen’s Park playground draft stated the only detail that may change based on the actual material costs will be using wood chips or pour-in-place rubber under the zip crews, wood chips are approximately \$19,000. Highway Superintendent Adams stated he is reviewing two playground designs for Dorrance Park and will forward them to the commission for a recommendation. The timeline for the playgrounds will be to obtain Town Board approval and install the playgrounds in the spring. Chairperson Sugrue requested input from commission members on strategies to engage the neighbors of Dorrance Park on playground designs.

Chairperson Sugrue stated the commission was asked to re-evaluate the priority list of playgrounds and requested feedback from the members about the playgrounds they observed, for example, missing equipment, and noted resident comments should also be considered. Highway Superintendent stated his employees will evaluate the parks in the fall and some slide pieces from Firemen’s and Dorrance Parks can be used to repair and replace the slides at Harlem Road Park until funds are available to replace the playground. Grant opportunities are being pursued and Harlem Road Park is in a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) eligible area. The commission members agreed to wait for the Highway Department’s evaluation before revising the priority list. Mr. Smolen requested a written report from the Highway Department.

B. Commission Events

1. Scavenger Hunt – Chairperson Sugrue stated five teams registered for the event noting four were present for the event. Ms. Latham, Mr. Smolen, and Recreation Department staff supported the event.
2. A Walk in the Park – Ms. Latham stated the event was very successful and 22 participants took the commission’s survey indicating 100% would attend again and provided many comments and suggestions. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of the parks and walking paths in the town and additional survey results include: 91% encourage them to explore other parks, 73% encourage them to access other recreation and wellness services, and 73% pleased with the event.

Ms. Latham stated the survey results indicate continuing A Walk in Park event, but that it be organized by a Town Department or Service Organization noting the commission members could assist and share their project plan. Ms. Latham is hopeful that Recreation Supervisor Masset and Councilmember Breidenstein will seek Town Board support to begin planning for and promoting the event in 2025 noting survey responses suggested widening efforts and strategies to promote the event. The Recreation Department’s promotion of the event had a wide reach with many participants having learned of it from them.

Mr. Smolen recognized the participation and support of the Police Department, Highway Department, and Buildings and Grounds Department. Mr. Smolen agreed the event was well received and would like future events to have more vendors and participants. Chairperson Sugrue noted A Walk in the Park was a true community event.

3. Trivia Nights – Chairperson Sugrue questioned Recreation Supervisor Masset about the possibility of the Recreation Department absorbing Trivia Nights. Recreation Supervisor Masset stated she will discuss this with the staff and review her budget for fall of 2025. Mr. Smolen suggested the Trivia Nights may be a successful winter program due to the weather. Chairperson Sugrue stated she will inquire about possible dates for the commission to hold events before possibly transferring the activity to the Recreation Department.

C. Responses to Public Comments

What can be done to increase the confidence level of lifeguards to allow the pool capacity to be increased – Lifeguards participate in regular skill training each session. The training is skill based and improves safety factors. Lifeguard competency is a skill and does not correlate with a statutory code of increased demand, being better at CPR does not increase the capacity of a space.

Regarding the skate park proposal, why is Firemen’s Park proposed and is there adequate space between the proposed location and residences– The location was recommended by the group proposing the idea and there is approximately 125’ between the court and residential property. Refurbishing the court is an interim solution and will cost approximately \$3,500. The project will not be wasteful and will be built by qualified contractors.

The bike pump track will be resurfaced, and Highway Superintendent Adams stated the intent was to do maintenance on the track. The full sealing will be completed at the end of this season or early next season.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Courtney Fallon, Treehaven Road, distributed copies of the 2023 Youth and Recreation Commission Annual Report and made the following comments and questions:

- ✓ The report states that the Recreation Commission members are to assist a middle school dance and the commission members have volunteered to meet more frequently than required and does not feel this is a reasonable request for the volunteers
- ✓ A full day camp program and playground programs have been requested by residents and questioned if they are included on the 2025 budget
- ✓ In her opinion, the middle school dance scheduled for 6 – 8 P.M. starts too early and recommended the dances start at 7:30 P.M.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Recreation Supervisor Masset's Report – Two upcoming middle school dances are scheduled for November 13th and December 13th. Fall programs are underway and spring programs are being planned. Chairperson Sugrue stated she appreciates the requests for pickle ball and dodge ball opportunities were realized by the Recreation Department.

- B. Youth Mental Health First Aid – Ms. Latham stated September is Suicide Awareness month and questioned what initiatives already exist within the community for suicide awareness and prevention. Recreation Supervisor Masset stated she and Ms. Reimondo received youth mental health training. Councilmember Breidenstein stated he is aware of first aid training and supports investigating the possibility of partnering with the West Seneca School District or Community Education Program. Mr. Smolen questioned how a program would be advertised. Councilmember Breidenstein stated social media platforms, the West Seneca Bee, and the newsletter would be utilized. Ms. Latham stated in her opinion the town should take a proactive stance on suicide prevention and sponsor or host events such as free Safe Talks offered by Crisis Services and noted the Erie County Department of Mental Health offers funding for youth mental health first aid training at no cost. Ms. Jarczyk stated in her experience parent teacher groups and school administrators hold annual meetings. Councilmember Breidenstein stated local business owner Zack Armstrong holds an Annual Suicide Awareness Walk and may be a good partner. Additionally, Councilmember Breidenstein will speak with Superintendent Kruger about this idea. Mr. Smolen suggested resources for the adult and veteran populations could be provided. Ms. Fallacaro-Dougherty stated the Community Education Program services youth and adults. Mr. Smolen questioned how veterans could be addressed. Councilmember Breidenstein stated he would consult with Jim Manley of the West Seneca Joint Veterans Committee.

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Councilmember Breidenstein referred to Ms. Fallon's comments and stated the Recreation Commission Code was updated and Recreation Department staff will be supporting commission sponsored events. Updating program registration software is being investigated. Chairperson Sugrue stated many commission members assist with events because they enjoy participating. Ms. Jarczyk stated volunteering is very rewarding and commented that the Highway Department personnel appeared to enjoy showing the children the highway equipment and trucks.

Ms. Jarczyk suggested organizing a dog walking event. Mr. Smolen concurred and commented on the Buildings and Grounds personnel stepping in to assist the Boy Scouts packing up the inflated obstacle course.

Mr. Smolen requested receiving a draft of the meeting minutes prior to the following meeting and questioned if any playground status reports were provided. Chairperson Sugrue stated the commission will wait for the Highway Department's assessments of the playgrounds before moving forward with their own.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Chairperson Sugrue, seconded by Ms. Fallacaro-Dougherty, to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 P.M.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried



Margaret A. Martin

Deputy Town Clerk/Secretary to the Youth and Recreation Commission