

## **MINUTES OF THE JULY 18, 2011 MEETING OF THE BRECKSVILLE RECREATION COMMISSION**

**Chairperson Nanci Schlabig called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.**

**Roll Call was taken. Members present: Pat Barth, Candice Beaver, Recreation Commission Council Representative Rex Mack, Brian Stucky and Nanci Schlabig. Also present: Clerk of Recreation Commission Kelly McNeill, Athletic Director Pete Kormos and Aquatics & Facilities Coordinator Bob Pliske. Brecksville residents also present: Meg English, Joe Kosek, Dave Barchet, Pat Savage, Mark and Mary Ann Krusinski, Margaret Ritzman, Katie Onders, Angela Frajter, Joan Deuch, Dariene Wasser, Laura Redinger, Kathleen Deuch, Nuvia Martin, Terri Speck, Kathleen Mack, Carri Kenney, Allison Winokur, Kim Traum, Gina Muffet and Sharon Bach. Absent: Charles Cassaro, Don Lastoria and Recreation Director Tom Tupa.**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 23, 2011**

**A motion was made by Rex Mack and seconded by Brian Stucky to dispense reading of the minutes and to approve as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Chairperson Nanci Schlabig and seconded by Commission Council Representative Mack to change the order of the agenda for tonight's meeting, asking to move "Public Comments" up to item #4 and move everything else down. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Chairperson Nanci Schlabig welcomed the residents in attendance and thanked them for coming to the meeting. Council Representative Rex Mack also thanked those in attendance, confirmed that this is the appropriate forum to give feedback regarding city recreation, and that their input and feedback is important to the process of future planning of facilities and with regard to helping improve the city's recreational services. Mack also reiterated that what is brought forth at Commission meetings is documented and communicated to the Mayor and City Council, the ultimate decision makers as to what happens with regard to programs and facilities.**

**Councilman Mack gave a brief history of the City's acquisition of the Blossom property and the early plans for the property. In early 2000, an informal master plan (that included additional athletic fields and the possibility for a water park) was drafted. In 2005, the City purchased from the City of Cleveland an additional 102 acres located immediately adjacent to the property. At that time, informal drafts to update the master plan to include the additional 102 acres**

were formulated. Unfortunately, the flood that occurred in June of 2006 had a large impact on the city's attention and finances. Necessary improvements to the city's storm water management infrastructure became a major effort and have cost approximately \$7 million. In 2008, the economic environment became difficult and the city's income tax revenues declined. To further complicate matters, it became eminent that the VA Hospital Facility would close and the city would need to plan for a reduction in income tax revenue of roughly \$2 million per year (15% of the budget). The annual budget is approximately \$4 million per year less than what it once was. To be fiscally responsible, the City has been prudent in recent years by reducing annual expenditures and deferring capital improvement projects. With 32 less employees to manage and serve our community, the City Administration should be commended for being able to operate at the same standards to which we've become accustomed. As the economy improves and the City pays down debt over time, the possibility of permanent capital improvements at Blossom Hill may become more of a reality. To take the time to make a well thought out strategic master plan that would make good sense for the long term, City Council and the Mayor agreed that a process similar to the one used when planning the Community Center would work. The first step is that a citizens' committee has been appointed by Mayor to get citizen input and talk to various groups with interests in the property. The citizen committee's job is to discuss their findings and make recommendations to the Recreation Commission as to what should be done at the site, suggest methods to fund the projects, and establish priorities. The Recreation Commission will then formulate the final master plan and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on behalf of the Commission and the citizen's group. City Council would then have to agree to authorize an architectural firm to perform an updated master plan for the Blossom Hill Property. Ultimately, City Council will decide what goes where and when. Currently, there are no monies allocated to put anything in place. The idea is to begin the planning now and getting feedback and ideas so that when resources are available, that there is a well thought out long term plan that might be able to accomplished in phases and so that projects aren't done hastily without adequate feedback and discussion. Mack again stated that the community's feedback is an important part of the process to determining the overall plan for the Blossom Hill Complex.

Dave Barchet, of Robin Lane, stated he was there to represent those in attendance. He said it is their desire to see an outdoor pool built at the Blossom Hill complex and they would like the city to consider the pool as the next project for this complex. Barchet submitted a petition with 250 signatures (received within the last 48hrs) to the Commission.

**Commission representative Brian Stucky asked “What is the group looking for in terms of an aquatic facility?” Barchet reported their ultimate vision is a community based pool that will be attractive to families for generations to come. They would like it to be a combination water park/pool, similar to the Independence facility.**

**Brecksville resident Joan Deuch reported ten years ago she, Kelly McNeill and Nanci Schlabig collected over 250 signatures for an outdoor water park. Deuch remembers as she collected signatures back then, everyone said “absolutely” the city needs a place for kids to hang out and for families could go in the summer. Residents in their 70’s & 80’s have also said the same thing. Our city has addressed our senior’s needs, have done a lot with soccer fields and baseball fields, and I think it is time to concentrate on the rest of the community. Joan Deuch believes there is a large segment of the community in favor of a water park.**

**Brian Stucky commented that there are many communities that have done a great job with their outdoor pool facilities. These facilities have become a “hub” for their city.**

**Dariene Wasser of Brecksville stated she attended a baseball game in Bay Village and saw the tweens and the teens on their bikes heading to the pool. She believes the one thing an outdoor water park would bring, that additional soccer and baseball would not, is that it would not be exclusive to any one person. She feels the pool would get more use than the baseball/soccer fields. It would be available to everyone in the community from the very young to the very old. The pool would also be a great place for middle school and high school age students to have additional job opportunities. She believes it would be a great place for kids to come together, for families to come together and for the community to come together.**

**Councilman Mack asked if the group thought this project would receive public support to be put on the ballot as a tax increase. Mary Ann Krusinski commented she did not know if it would have public support considering the school levies continue failure. So, because of this, Krusinski’s question was “how can we build a facility**

**that would generate money to cover the costs so the city would not have to increase taxes?” People are going to have all kinds of wants and what they perceive as needs for this facility. Brecksville resident Margaret Ritzman, stated the more bells and whistles available for the pool will actually cause the pool to be more lucrative.**

**Candace Beaver asked how much money the Solon Facility, for example, brings in per year. Mark Krusinski stated the Solon Facility brings in \$275,000 to \$300,000.00 per year. The summer program/USA Team is in the swims at the Community Center Pool. Solon Swim Club which is a combination of their Masters Program and Summer Program.**

**Aquatics Coordinator Bob Pliske reported he feels there has to be further consideration of what the City wants to do at the Blossom Property in terms of swimming. Does the City want to keep in line with what the Recreation Department’s outlook has been which is?**

- 1. Serve the Community**
- 2. Provide Instruction of classes**
- 3. Competitive in nature**

**Does the City want to host meets? If so, then considerations must be made in order to house these meets. Does the city want it to be a money maker or do we want it to just serve the community? Do we consider opening it up to other communities, to host large events and rentals?**

**Pliske believes a facility can be built that could encompass all areas, competitive events as well as meet the needs of having an enriched facility having features (both functional & safe in its design) serving all ages of the community as a whole. The facility can run 12 hours to 14 hours a day.**

**Commission member Brian Stucky does not see where the revenue would be for an outdoor pool because it could not be utilized as often as an indoor pool. Schlabig stated outdoor pools (with special features, concessions and host to outdoor meets) do make money.**

**Pliske stated Waterworks, in Cuyahoga Falls, is a great model to work off of (on a smaller scale.) They are able to not only break even, but they have been in the black every year since they have opened (approx. 12 years). They opened up the facility to non-residents. They seem to have gotten it right from the use of green**

space, locker rooms, concessions and special pool features to keep people coming through the gate every day. The typical 50's, 60's & 70's "L-shaped" pool does not make money. But if you design a facility that has features that appeals to families to keep them coming, then it can be a revenue maker. But again, there must be considerations of what the purpose of the pool are; what the scope of community usage is along with many other considerations before building the facility.

Brecksville resident Margaret Ritzman stated the committee should look at costs/expenditures that can be "shared" with the other facilities which are part of the master plan.

Nanci Schlabig reported she was part of the Pool Task Force that the mayor commissioned ten years ago. The task force looked at many different facilities and they also sent questionnaires out to the community. This collected data has been handed over to Laura Redinger who is on the current Blossom Hill Facility group.

The top items requested by the community were:

- 1) Water slides
- 2) Beach-like entry
- 3) Diving boards
- 4) Shade structures
- 5) Eight lane competitive, 50 meter pool
- 6) Concessions

Brecksville resident Pat Savage agreed 100% with Nanci Schlabig, the city needs a gathering place for families to go to in the summer. Mr. Savage stated there are many swim clubs in need of pools and because of this; a competitive pool could help finance this. There are many ways to generate revenue to help defray costs. Savage feels the Independence pool is a great complex to aspire to.

Dariene Wasser stated the Independence Pool is packed. From a financial standpoint, Wasser wanted to know if there has been any considerations given to have a few businesses donate money towards the facility. (PNC "Splash Zone")

Mack acknowledges that our current facility is small and he has seen it overburdened at times, but Mack states he always asks these two questions when making any considerations:

1. Will this enhance the quality of life in our community
2. Is this fiscally responsible

Mack believes the demand of the community will drive this project but also the availability of financial resources is the determining factor.

Nanci Schlabig and Candace Beaver both believe a water park is something *everyone* in the community can potentially use, unlike baseball/soccer fields. Mary Ann Krusinski feels what might be more of a concern to the mayor and to council is “what they don’t see,” and that is our citizens are going to other communities to enjoy their pool facilities.

Council Representative Mack stated the idea behind this Citizen’s group is to put together a well thought out strategic plan for the 185 acres.

Joe Kosek, chair of the Blossom Hill Citizens Committee, stated once this committee has put together their recommendations, these recommendations will be presented to the Recreation Commission as well as to City Council and the Mayor. Kosek assured the audience the pool has been addressed and there has been an area set aside for this. This huge piece of property at Blossom is an incredible asset to the city. Development of this property will create a ripple effect that will make Brecksville a more attractive community. If this property is planned correctly, it will help everyone. Kosek reported the committee’s first mission is to plan out all the different needs that will be competing for this property and then from there put in place a Master Plan. Once that master plan is in place, the next phase will be to get “preliminary” pricing on preparing the land.

- clearing of trees, leveling land
- utilities (electricity & water)
- storm drainage
- finish roads
- parking lots

From there, Kosek stated the committee will prioritize these recommendations, what makes sense to do in what order, based on the cost. Ideally, Kosek stated they would like these facilities to generate revenue. The Mayor has asked the committee to have the report completed by fall, which Kosek believes is doable.

**Brecksville resident and Citizen Committee member Laura Redinger added “the plan is to come up with what is needed, where it should go and what will be able to draw revenue. At this time, there is no vying for space. The committee’s main purpose is trying to figure out how this all can be accomplished.”**

**Brecksville resident Kathy Mack asked “Is there not a way to have a blog where the community can interact and find out what is going on?” She feels it is important that members of the community feel as though they are being heard. She feels it is all about “communication.”**

**Kosek stated this group was commissioned by the mayor to put together this report. Once this report is done, then that is when the dialogue will begin. Kosek asked those in attendance if there is any additional information they would like to give the committee, to please put it in writing.**

**After a lengthy discussion, Nanci Schlabig thanked everyone for their time. She told those in the audience not to hesitate to email her with any questions or comments. Schlabig will then keep the Blossom Hill Citizens Committee apprised of these emails. She reiterated that the Recreations Commission’s job is to represent the community. “We are the suggestion box that is in the Community Center.” If you feel you are not getting anywhere, you need to come to the Recreation Commission Meetings and or email one of us.”**

**Council representative Mack also thanked everyone for coming. He stated this feedback from residents is going to be wanted more as this planning gets further along.**

**Facilities & Aquatics Coordinator Bob Pliske reported the Community Center had been plagued with break-ins to the men’s lockers for the last year and a half to two years. Last weekend, the person who he felt was primarily responsible for these thefts, was caught. Pliske stated he will continue to work with the police to resolve this issue.**

**Pliske introduced Brecksville resident Allison Winokur. Pliske reported her eight year old son, who was attending Summer Camp, was pushed off the gym stage during their lunch break and suffered a subdural hematoma and fractured skull. He was taken by squad to Marymount where he was then transferred to Rainbow Babies where he spent two days in the ICU. Winokur asked the Commission to reevaluate the current policy regarding use of the stage. Pliske reported the stage is not used often, but it has been used for large rentals.**

Pete Kormos. Nanci Schlabig assured Winokur this topic will be put on next month's agenda and will be discussed at great length. Schlabig is sure other communities have dealt with similar safety issues and promised to look in to these.

**COUNCIL REPORT:**

Council Representative Rex Mack, on behalf of the City, wanted to thank Nanci Schlabig, Brian Stucky and everyone involved in the 2011 Home Days Run. It was a huge success! Mack is still hearing great feedback about Home Days and the parade. All the work that went in to the weekend is greatly appreciated.

City Council authorized the engineering for design specifications for the bases for the lighting of the turf field. Once these plans are completed, the next step is to send this out to bid for bases and lighting. Depending on finances, it is very possible the lights may go in this fall.

The VA property is almost vacated. On the positive side, the Brecksville Town Shopping Center is getting a nice "facelift." It will be a nice upgrade to the town center. With the passing of City Law Director Paul Grau, City Council has been interviewing for the Law Director position.

Mack along with Council member Mike Harwood and Tom Tupa have attended a number of meetings with school officials (Scot Prebles & Dan Kalinsky) to talk about the possibility of sharing facilities. Council member Harwood has compiled data regarding capacity, current usage and availability at both school and city facilities. Most recently, the City received a proposal from the school that is going to be considered at the City Council meeting. The following is what the school district is proposing:

1. Use of the turf field
  - August 1<sup>st</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> 8am -12noon for tryouts and practice
  - August 22-October 28<sup>th</sup> 3pm-5pm for soccer practice
  - April 2-May 18<sup>th</sup> 3pm-5pm for lacrosse practice
  - April 2-May 18<sup>th</sup> 3pm-5pm for baseball & softball on selected dates when the weather isn't conducive
2. The school will give in return:
  - Chippewa, Hilton & Highland fields for soccer practice 8/1/12 thru 10/28/12 & 4/1/12 thru 6/1/12 Monday thru Friday in the evening.



- Use of the High School stadium turf will be given on selected Sundays from 1-5pm; 8/28/12-10/30/12 and 4/10/12-6/3/12.
- Use of High School Stadium turf on selected Saturdays in the spring.
- Use of the Middle School gym Saturdays from 8am-12noon; 10/29/12-4/30/12.
- Use of both High School gyms on Sundays 8am-4pm; 10/29-4/30/12.

The school district is proposing this on a two year basis. Mack believes it is a win/win situation for both the City and the school district.

Brian Stucky thanked Mike Harwood for his commitment to compiling the data that proved invaluable to this outcome.

Stucky wanted to make sure that lacrosse, baseball and softball will not be used on the soccer field. Pete Kormos stated SCG has used the turf field once for lacrosse. The turf field will be used for soccer and limited softball and baseball use.

Mack noted the importance of this proposal and how it is setting a quality precedent for how the City is going to handle facility sharing. It is reciprocal and it is documented. There is now a process for assessment of how this is going and whether or not it should continue.

Mack reported there are still several Bicentennial events coming up.

- July 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm at the Brecksville Public Library “War Heroes and the Home Front Part I”
- August 18<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Brecksville Public Library “War Heroes and the Home Front Part II”
- August 19<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> Civil War Reenactment (Sat 10am-11am & Sunday 10am-5pm) Broadview Heights City Complex.

#### **DIRECTOR’S REPORT:**

In Tom Tupa’s absence, Kelly McNeill reported on Friday, July 8th the Community Center had it’s first Drive-In Movie of the summer. It was well attended (approx. 300 ppl). The next drive-in movie will be on Friday, August 5<sup>th</sup> “Toy Story 3.” McNeill also reported the upcoming Summer Concert Dates:

- |                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| -Sunday, July 24 <sup>th</sup>   | KB & The Riptides |
| -Sunday, August 14 <sup>th</sup> | Playback          |
| -Sunday, August 28 <sup>th</sup> | Redneck Inc.      |

**Schlabig asked if there is anyway the Community Center can use RecTrac to send out notices regarding upcoming events. Pliske reported “yes” this can be done and it is being looked at by the staff.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Nanci Schlabig reported the following for this year’s Home Run Race:**

- numbers were up from 269 participants in 2010 to 319 participants.**
- made approximately \$3,000**
- Thanks to Bob Pliske, Ron Weidig, Brian Stucky, Kelly McNeill, Candace Beaver, and the Brecksville Police Department for all of their help.**

**COMMISSION ROUND TABLE:**

**There being no further business to discuss, it was moved by Pat Barth and seconded by Brian Stucky to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted:  
Kelly McNeill  
Clerk of Commission**