



CITY OF NORTON

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Mayor Mike Zita

PARK & CEMETERY BOARD MEETING MINUTES February 27, 2019

TIME: 6:04PM in Council Chambers

I. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Neva Gibson, Denise Mullins, Ruth Stimac, Brent Mason, Ada Waltz all present

ABSENT: Brent Mason, Ada Waltz

ALSO PRESENT: Andrew Mullins

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Neva Gibson at 6:04 PM on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 in Council Chambers.

II. **PUBLIC SPEAKING:** No one in audience wishes to speak.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Helmick Park - (Status Update)

Ms. Gibson stated that Mr. Hess had relayed that as soon as the weather breaks they have a plan and it will move forward. Ms. Szittai, Board Secretary, confirmed that Mr. Hess had stated that Parks has the most current information. Ms. Waltz stated they haven't touched it since the Board had viewed it and Ms. Szittai concurred and added that it is high on Mr. Hess's priority list. Ms. Gibson shared that she checks weekly on the park's status. There was discussion as to how Helmick was put on hold for the Bicentennial, Cider Festival, and the fall rains interfered with anything being done last year. Brent inquired on the plans and stated he assumed Parks would see them before they were implemented; the rest of the Board agreed. Ms. Szittai responded she would ask.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Columbia Woods- Sidewalk around pond

Ms. Gibson relayed that the last she knew, it was sent to Council and questioned if Council approved it. It was discussed that Council was dealing with grants and other processes involved. Ms. Stimac asked if the pond sidewalk was different from the walking trail. The

discussion shared that the two are different projects and there is much involved on the walking trail with Council needing to approve an engineering study. Ms. Gibson relayed that Mayor Zita and Mr. Fowler were working on many things, as well as Councils' plate being full so was unsure of the status. Ms. Mullins stated Council was going through readings now.

Update- On tables and benches in the parks

Ms. Gibson asked Ms. Szittai if she had any updates on the tables and benches; Ms. Szittai responded as of today all the Parks will be getting done and CW 3 will be the first as it is the most used, but all will be done this year. The use of grants was discussed and it was believed the City was paying without grants.

Lighting- For Football Field at Columbia Woods

Ms. Gibson asked if this was also a grant and Ms. Szittai stated the bids were opened yesterday and they are going through them all now. Ms. Mullins inquired as to why they were going to light the football field. Ms. Gibson responded for night games and it would come in handy when they do the Cider Festival and other events held at the park. Ms. Szittai added that she believed the City was receiving a lot more calls from different youth groups also wanting to use the field.

Ms. Gibson stated she was told that youth soccer wants to use the football field and she had reservations on that. In the past we had allowed that in the spring, but now things have changed with the lease agreements between the leagues. Youth Football pays for everything on the field and had taken out a \$60,000 loan in the past for improvements. They have paid out \$1,500 plus per year caring for the upkeep of the grounds with Dennis Matheny doing the maintenance. They are currently planning on putting another \$20,000 into more improvements this year. They start practicing in July through August; youth cheerleading uses it now and Mr. Matheny works on the field every day. The youth football has not been able to use the school fields, but the City works with them on this field. Ms. Gibson went on to share that Youth Football feels that if they are going to put all the money into the field, if everyone else is going to use it, they do not want to put all that money into it; they want to have full use of the field. Ms. Mullins inquired on the cheerleaders and it was explained that they are a part of Youth Football and uses the field in the spring with different ages and different practice times.

Ms. Gibson stated she had done some research on other fields that would be appropriate for soccer, although she had not spoken to Tim Crawford yet. Soccer used to use Holiday Heights and now with the number of children (about 100), the parking and no available restrooms is an issue there. She has a proposed plan for soccer to use the fields behind Norton Elementary as there is about 10 acres back there. Ms. Stimac responded they could not even take the kids out there for recess. Ms. Gibson went on to say that Norton Youth Softball uses those fields as well and it was clarified that these are the fields behind the old Middle school. Ms. Gibson stated she spoke to the school entities and a lot of the leagues used to use those fields. Ms. Stimac stated they couldn't use it as there is an issue with the ground sinking and creating holes just like in Frashure Park. Ms. Gibson

questioned how the other groups could use it and Softball had told her they were planning on using it as well as Football. Ms. Stimac responded she did not know how and questioned if there was room for five fields. Ms. Gibson answered they need five fields as Mr. Crawford made the choice to have all 100 kids at one time for practice with Ms. Stimac dissenting and saying it was for games as her kids were in it. Ms. Gibson pointed out that they have all of Loyal Oak Park after softball gave up the fields in the back to soccer; softball now uses the fields behind the Elementary school, but they are willing to share it. Ms. Mullins asked for clarification if Mr. Crawford has the huge Loyal Oak area and now he wants another area and Ms. Gibson concurred. Ms. Stimac stated no; one soccer field was really bad and Mr. Crawford wants to reconfigure it, just for the spring, and she has spoken extensively with him on it. Ms. Gibson pointed out that with rainouts they would end up running past spring and it's already being utilized. Ms. Stimac responded they stop in June. Ms. Gibson rebutted that Ms. Durbin had been told by Mr. Crawford that it could go into July. Ms. Stimac argued it would not as she has a grandson in the program and she has spoken to him and the coaches (Jason, Janice, and Joe Rutherford) extensively and none of it goes past the second week of June. Ms. Gibson responded that Football has put all this money into the field and soccer wears cleats that will tear it up as it is grass and even Tim Crawford admitted that. Ms. Mullins stated it doesn't sound feasible to put soccer on the football field with Ms. Gibson agreeing. Mr. Mason asked about using Helmick Park as it is an open canvass; Ms. Stimac said it could not be used in its condition with others agreeing and parking being an issue there.

Ms. Gibson offered the idea of using Frashure Park as they have parking and restrooms. Ms. Mullins asked if they hadn't walked that and it was lumpy and bumpy; it was discussed that was on the baseball side of the park. Ms. Stimac stated the only problem there was security of equipment. Ms. Gibson shared that is why she asked for the minutes as Mr. Crawford told Ms. Durbin that the Parks Board had voted to allow soccer to use the field and all agreed they had not. Ms. Gibson relayed that Parks did write two resolutions the day Mr. Crawford was present, but they were for port-a-pots at Loyal Oak and the headstones at Western Star Cemetery; there was nothing on the field use. Ms. Waltz pointed out it was not up to Parks to approve that. Ms. Stimac stated Loyal Oak never really got properly done with grass to change over from softball to soccer and that is what Mr. Crawford wants to do with rearranging some of the fields for the very young. She added there is some problems with storing at the ex-Middle School field, but they will have to figure that out. Ms. Waltz asked if soccer didn't already have enough over there and Ms. Stimac responded they are growing. Ms. Stimac stated they need someplace to use while they are fixing it; you cannot put down grass seed and then have the kids playing on it. Ms. Stimac stated soccer needs to be told that football has plans for that field and they would have to contact the school and see if they could use it temporarily as sit is out of our hands. Ms. Gibson said she had the number of Mr. Jack Bird, who is in charge at Norton Elementary, and will pass that on to Mr. Crawford for him to contact. She just wanted everyone's approval on that for him to work with Mr. Bird on it as she personally did not want to see soccer using the football field. The contract was discussed and how it wasn't exclusive. Ms. Mullins put in if football was paying all the money for maintenance and improvements, why would we want to antagonize them on doing such a beautiful job. Ms. Stimac stated before they did not maintain it 100%, the City did, and

that is when we made the deal with football for soccer to use it also, but that was a long time ago. Ms. Gibson pointed out that was probably 15 years ago and they had softball fields at Loyal Oak. Ms. Stimac stated that soccer had gone to four different size fields now. Ms. Mullins stated that they cannot expect to say that just because they've grown they are going to use someone else's area. Ms. Stimac yielded and said that Ms. Gibson had done her homework and soccer would have to find another way besides the football field. Mr. Mason asked about where all the dirt had been dumped in Columbia Woods being used in the future and it was pointed out that it was on a slope. Ms. Waltz stated Frashure could be an option as they had talked on with Ms. Gibson adding that Frashure was not booked and hopefully Helmick will be an alternate in the future as well. Ms. Gibson added that parking could be an issue at the school depending on how many are using it at the same time, but Mr. Crawford could work that out with them.

Norton Kiwanis/Park Improvements

Ms. Gibson stated that the Kiwanis have approached her and wants to put a dog park at one of the parks. She had informed there that there is a lot to consider for that. Olivia Bennett is who came to her and her husband had put the dog park in at Barberton. Columbia Woods was discussed as there is not the amount of houses near it and possibly Frashure or Helmick. If Kiwanis would like to pay for something, she personally would like to see a splash park like Barberton has and perhaps it could be combined with a dog park. Ms. Gibson stated it is something that needs further discussion and more information with liability to be considered as well. Ms. Stimac stated that not all owners are responsible dog owners and various costs were discussed. Ms. Mullins spoke on adding poop stations in the parks, which is not a dog park, but is more dog friendly; she said she had mentioned that to Mr. Fowler. Ms. Gibson said she had spoken to Mr. Fowler on the dog park and he needed more information from the Kiwanis, but he did not seem enthusiastic on it. Mr. Mason suggested Frashure Park for a dog park, but the splash pad would make sense here; the problem with holes and such would not be an issue for a dog park. Ms. Stimac stated she felt Frashure would be her choice and Mr. Mason added it would give it a purpose.

Green up Day/Arbor Day

Ms. Gibson turned it over to Ms. Szittai as she was working on this project. Ms. Szittai stated the date was the weekend after Easter, which would be April 27th. All the flyers were ready to go, we only needed to decide who we wanted to do the tree for. Mayor Zita had some ideas, but hadn't approached the families to see if they were okay with it. Ms. Stimac suggested John Moss before he was totally forgotten. It was asked if something wasn't done for Mr. Moss already and it was decided there wasn't. Ms. Stimac went on that last year due to the anniversary that they wanted to do it for past Nortonites, but she could bring it up again this year. Ms. Szittai stated Mr. Moss's name had been mentioned, but it was not one of the ones the Mayor was inquiring on for now and wanted to see if Parks had any suggestions. Ms. Gibson stated she would have to really think about this as far as who has passed on and who has made a significant difference in Norton, although it would not have to be someone who had passed. Ms. Gibson suggested Valerie Wax Car and Ms. Mullins agreed she had also thought of her. Ms. Gibson stated she believed she had really started the ball rolling for this City; she

brought in Adopt-A-Spot, Green Up Norton Day, and other things. Mr. Mason asked if any of the other trees back there are for someone that had not passed away and everyone agreed there were not. Some discussion was held on perhaps coming up with something else for honoring people. Ms. Szittai mentioned all she needed was a name to honor; the packs needed to be ready for passing out that morning and she doesn't want to wait till the last moment.

Adopt-a Spot

Ms. Szittai added that Adopt-A-Spot also falls to her and she needs help on it as she is doing it all by herself. Ms. Mullins asked about the new signs being placed and when that would happen. It was not known when the signs were to be placed. Ms. Stimac asked if they had items for the bags and Ms. Szittai responded they had some left over from last year. Ms. Waltz added we did not have enough gloves last year and there should be a couple pairs per person. Ms. Waltz added the police in the past had informed everyone on items the people should not be handling so they would not pick up anything drug related and dangerous, particularly for children and the need for them to go to an adult. It was discussed that they had pre-signups and walk-ins for the event. Parks handles check-ins and bag pass out duty. Ms. Szittai stated she did not know about the donuts and would look through the paperwork she had from last year. Due to the cold weather as it was last year, it was asked that the Community Center be used for the pizza this year as we only need it until early afternoon so it would be available for something in the late afternoon or evening. It was unknown if Tracey Rainier has given any input on contacting Home Depot on donating crafts for kids. Ms. Gibson did not know and Ms. Szittai stated that it was handled. Ms. Gibson pointed out that was during Arbor Day and the bench was donated to John VanHynning. They would like to do the same this year for Green Up Day. There was discussion on where to put the tree this year and Ms. Gibson pointed out that the Lion's Club does not want any more trees in the park. She explained that they did not want any more trees in Columbia Woods Park because it interferes with the Cider Festival as she was told by Kim Miller that it affects the vendors. Ms. Stimac stated they just needed to be back more in the field. Ms. Szittai stated she would keep everyone posted on how things were progressing on these items, but she definitely needed help.

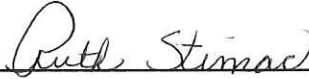
Ms. Waltz asked if everything had been turned in for 2018 on Tree City USA as it needed done by the end of last year and Ms. Szittai responded she would have to talk to Mr. Fowler and Mr. Messner on that, but she thought it was handled. The damages from the storm was discussed and how expansive it was throughout the City.

- V. **CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:** Ms. Stimac made a motion to approve the amended July 18, 2018, October 17, 2018 and November 21, 2018 minutes and Ms. Waltz seconded. All accepted.

VI. **ADJOURNMENT:** The next meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2019 at 6:00 PM. With no further business coming before the Board, Mr. Mason moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:03PM Ms. Waltz seconded the motion. None opposed.



Park & Cemetery Board Chairperson
or Vice-Chairperson



Park & Cemetery Board Vice-Chairperson
or Member

3/20/19
Date