



Mayor David L. Koontz

# Park & Cemetery Board Memorandum

To: Karla R. Richards, Clerk of Council  
From: Paula Fisher, Interim Boards & Commissions Secretary  
Date: 3-13-09  
Re: Approved/Signed Parks & Cemetery Board Minutes:  
Thursday, March 12, 2009

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Attached you will find a copy of the approved/signed minutes from the Park & Cemetery Board meeting held on Thursday, March 12, 2009.

Please note that the original document has been forwarded to, and will be on file with the Clerk of Council for the official record.

E-Mail: Mayor (per Admin. Asst.)  
Administrative Officer  
Finance Director  
Director of Planning & Community Development  
Superintendent of Building & Zoning  
Building & Zoning Inspector  
Municipal Engineer  
Council (5)  
Parks & Recreation Board (5)

CC: Parks Crew Leader  
Tom Jones (Council)  
PRB File/Posting  
William Mowery

# PARK & CEMETERY BOARD CITY OF NORTON

Thursday, February 12, 2009

The Park and Cemetery Board of the City of Norton, Ohio, convened for a public meeting in Council Chambers of the Safety Administration Building. Chairperson Neva Gibson called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

## I. ATTENDANCE:

**PRESENT:** Neva Gibson, Frank Laury, Lisa Merrick, John Conklin, Scott Testa

**ABSENT:**

**ALSO PRESENT:** Pam Dixon

## II. OLD BUSINESS:

Chairperson Gibson asked if there was any old business. Chairperson Gibson stated that the letters Ms. Campbell is working on for the summer concerts would be ready soon and that Ms. Fisher would E-mail a copy to all of the board members. Mr. Testa stated that he had gotten the number for the inflatable movie rental and passed the name and number on to Ms. Campbell.

## III. NEW BUSINESS:

Chairperson Gibson asked if there was any new business.

### A.) Update on the Cemetery Board Files in Community Center

Chairperson Gibson asked Ms. Merrick for the update on the Cemetery Files. Ms. Merrick stated that on January 24, 2009, she went to the Community Center BoardRoom where the Cemetery Board had held their meetings. She went through the files at home and consolidated them and made copies. Ms. Merrick talked to Mr. Ryland and let him know that she took the records to the Lahr House since it was mostly historic information and she gave a list of everything in the files to Mr. Ryland. Ms. Merrick did make a copy of the letter and the contents of the filing cabinet for the board members to look at. Chairperson Gibson asked if Ms. Merrick thought it should go to the Lahr house, Ms. Merrick stated that she has already taken it to the Lahr house and that she placed the files in a cabinet drawer specially marked for the Cemetery. Ms. Merrick stated that most of the records were historical information. Chairperson Gibson asked about the report from the Ohio Genealogy Society and if Ms. Merrick had the chance to go through the list to see if there were any common names that is well known in the City of Norton. Ms. Merrick stated that the list had 22 names on it and that she did not have the chance to really go over the list at this time. Ms. Merrick stated that after glimpsing over the list she did not really notice any familiar names. Ms. Merrick stated that the Ohio Genealogy Society is putting together the Norton Township Cemeteries and this is the first project she has worked on and as soon as she gets the information she will have a complete list. Ms. Merrick printed off copies of the City Codified Ordinance for the cemeteries and it gives the update of the price structures for burials for the residents. Ms. Merrick stated she has the update for burials for the year 2008. Ms. Merrick stated there was 1 interment for \$640.00, and 3 foundations for

*Park & Cemetery Board Preliminary-Drafted Minutes of 1/22/09*

*Respectfully Submitted by Paula Fisher, Interim, Boards & Commissions Secretary/Stenographer*

*\*\*Note: These Minutes are not verbatim.\*\**

\$510.00. Ms. Merrick stated she keeps the large copies of the mylar and records when people bought the plots, when they died and when they are interred. She has the records at the Lahr House and Ms. Merrick stated that she is there every Monday so she works on the records there. Chairperson Gibson asked how many people are buried in Western Star. Ms. Merrick stated she was not sure how many are buried there but gave an approximate amount. Chairperson asked what the earliest date was interred, Ms. Merrick stated she was not sure. Mr. Conklin asked Ms. Merrick if she had any records for the cemetery in Loyal Oak. Ms. Merrick stated that the only thing she has is what she read off the stones and stated that their records were either lost or destroyed. Chairperson Gibson stated that maybe Mr. Bill Blackburn might have some information about the cemetery in Loyal Oak. Ms. Merrick stated that she talked to the Ohio Genealogy Society and added a name to the list, Nettie Witchey, a baby, who was buried in Norton Center Cemetery and there were no records of the burial since the family did not have permission to bury her, but the family went ahead and buried her. Mr. Conklin asked if Ms. Merrick had any idea if Barberton was doing anything to improve the cemetery in Johnson Corners and Ms. Merrick stated that the Ohio Genealogy Society was in contact with someone in Barberton. There is a lot of damage in the cemetery, the fence is knocked down and many of the stones are gone due to vandalism. Chairperson Gibson asked if anyone had any other questions for Ms. Merrick. Chairperson Gibson thanked Ms. Merrick for the update.

Chairperson Gibson stated that she wanted to extend to Mr. Frank Laury her sorrow for losing him from the Board and her happiness for having Pam Dixon accept the position as the new Board member. Chairperson Gibson asked Mr. Laury what his most memorable moment was serving on the Parks and Cemetery Board. Mr. Laury stated that his most memorable moment was when they broke ground for the baseball fields. It was the biggest accomplishment for the Parks Board. We finally got them to do two baseball fields instead of one. We got the new playground equipment in and it has turned out to be a beautiful park. Mr. Conklin stated that when you serve 2 terms on the Council or however many, you don't see all the accomplishments like when you are on the Parks Board and you can see the beautiful park and the way it has moved forward for the residents to be able to come and have fun with their families. Mr. Conklin stated that thanks to Mr. Jeff Pritchard, we were able to help keep the baseball fields on track and getting the playground equipment in the park. Chairperson Gibson stated she was very sad when she heard Mr. Pritchard was leaving for a new position. People didn't realize what Mr. Pritchard did for the Parks Board, and he is sorely missed. Chairperson Gibson hopes the City gets another Community Development Coordinator because that is a position we really need. Mr. Pritchard did a really great job, and believes the people didn't appreciate the things he did behind the scene because it was intangible things he did that the people didn't see but he worked very hard to get us grants and different things that we would never have received, had it not been for Mr. Pritchard and we really appreciate all his hard work. Mr. Conklin requested to have a copy of the minutes forwarded to Mr. Pritchard in Streetsboro.

Chairperson Gibson asked Mr. Conklin what has been happening on the Planning Commission. Mr. Conklin stated that Pride One proposed 180 rental units, it was tabled the last 2 meetings since they wanted to do a different type of road construction that the City is not in favor of. Mr. Conklin made a diagram of what they are proposing for the roads in the project. Mr. Conklin stated that what Pride One is proposing are inverted roads where the drains are in the middle of the road and snow and water lays there and the road starts deteriorating. Mr. Laury asked about green space. Mr. Conklin stated that the density on the project from the one before is radically different. Mr. Conklin stated that considering how rare it is for open space in the City of Norton that has water and sewer access on it, the usage of the land for that particular project is wasteful. It has a lot of green space around it but it is by default and not planned. They are toting this as a retirement community; it is a retirement community with no sidewalks, no gazebo, no streetlights, no clubhouse, and no sand box or duck pond for the grandkids. Mr. Laury stated they had problems not allocating the green space properly and he is sure they probably won't allow that anymore, it has caused such a problem. Mr. Laury stated that the green space that was for Mount Vernon are either catch basins or retention ponds and was never used properly. Mr. Testa stated that they could have small parks in the different locations, they don't have to be big and elaborate. Mr. Conklin stated that there was a sentiment on Council for quite awhile that those were unnecessary to have. Mr. Max Seal would come into Council saying he didn't want to have sidewalks, and Council would say fine, and he would say he didn't want to

do streetlights and Council would say fine, and he didn't want to do green space and they would say fine. Mr. Conklin stated that he had some arguments with Max Seal about the retention ponds. The application is now on hold right now. There are no new subdivisions coming, and the road expansion is still on the books. Mr. Conklin stated that Council has approved the project to go out for bid for the waterline project on Cleveland Massillon Road. Chairperson Gibson stated she is very happy that Council voted yes. We are finally starting to move forward.

Ms. Merrick stated that she had the information to the questions that Chairperson Gibson asked earlier. Ms. Merrick stated that in Western Star the oldest burial is Seth Lucas age 49 buried 1815. Ms. Merrick counted up to about 106 burials as a rough estimate but there are a lot of unmarked graves. Ms. Merrick stated there was a revolutionary war soldier who is buried in Norton Center Cemetery born 1776 died 1831.

Mr. Conklin asked Ms. Fisher if she knew what the future of the Community Center was and Ms. Fisher stated that right now the Community Center is being rented out. Mr. Conklin asked the Board if they should take an active role in the Community Center? Maybe the Board should ask Mr. Rick Ryland for a presentation. Mr. Conklin stated that the Board might want to make a recommendation to the Administration and Council to place a .50% tax increase on the ballot to help renovate the Community Center. Chairperson Gibson stated that with this economy, it would not behoove us at this time to place that on the ballot. Mr. Conklin stated that to take the Community Center one step further, Mr. Conklin talked to Mr. Ryland and stated the City received approximately \$13,000.00 to \$14,000.00 in Community Center rentals, and it cost \$54,000.00 to operate. Mr. Conklin stated it needs a new furnace, a new roof, new electric wiring and more, and he feels if the Board doesn't take an active pursuit toward the Community Center, it is going to be shut down anyway because it is so expensive to operate. Chairman Gibson stated they could check about being involved in the Community Center. Mr. Laury stated that we might want to look into having an outside person take ownership of the Community Center and let them handle all the bookings and in turn there would be a split of the monies with the City of Norton

Chairperson Gibson stated that what we need to do is check into government money to help renovate the Community Center. We would need to find the right person to handle writing the grants so that we may be able to fix the Community Center up. That is why she brought it up about Mr. Pritchard because he did check into grant monies to work on projects around the city and that is why we need to get another person to fill Mr. Pritchards place and have them investigate the prospect of grant money. Mr. Conklin stated that civil engineers are going nuts because the turn key projects which means the cash comes out of Washington and they can line up at the doors and say hey I have this project ready to do and all I need is help. To say the Community Center would not qualify he wasn't sure. We know it needs a new furnace, insulation, new roof, new wiring and more. Mr. Conklin stated that maybe the Board should make a motion to start down the road for a grant for the renovation of the community center.

Chairperson Gibson asked for a motion to investigate any government money going toward the renovation of the community center. **Mr. Laury made a motion to have the City of Norton investigate the possibility of receiving government money that could be used in the renovation of the Community Center. Mr. Conklin seconded the motion.** There was discussion about whether to make a recommendation or resolution. Chairperson Gibson explained to Pam Dixon, the new board member that this is just a recommendation board. It is up to Administration to follow through if they want. Chairperson Gibson called for the roll call. **ROLL CALL: Mr. Laury – Yes, Mr. Conklin – Yes, Ms. Gibson – Yes, Mr. Testa – Yes, Ms. Merrick – Yes. The motion passed 3-0.**

Chairperson Gibson asked if there was any other new business, there was none.

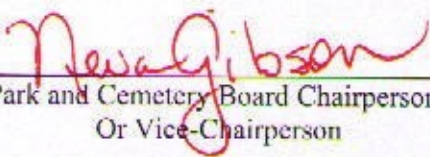
#### **IV. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:**

*Park & Cemetery Board Preliminary-Drafted Minutes of 1/22/09  
Respectfully Submitted by Paula Fisher, Interim, Records & Communications Secretary/Stenographer  
\*\*Note: These Minutes are not verbatim.\*\**

The Board reviewed the minutes of Thursday, January 22, 2009. Chairperson Gibson called for a motion to approve the minutes. **Mr. Testa moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Merrick seconded the motion. ROLL CALL: Mr. Testa -Yes, Ms. Merrick-Yes, Ms. Gibson-Yes, Mr. Conklin – Yes Mr. Testa - Yes. The motion passed 5-0, approving the minutes. Minutes were signed and processed accordingly.**

**V. ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Gibson announced the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 12, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. With no further business coming before the Board, Chairperson Gibson adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

  
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Park and Cemetery Board Chairperson  
Or Vice-Chairperson

  
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Park & Cemetery Board Vice-Chairperson  
or Member

3-12-09  
Date: