

Parks Commission Meeting
July 20, 2020
Minutes

Chairman Janke called the meeting to order at 6:03p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Friedman, Mayor Fritz, Mr. Janke, Mr. Minoff, Mrs. Renda, Service Department – Mr. DeWater & Mr. Misterka, Mrs. Wyatt
ABSENT: Mr. Olsson, Mrs. Prendergast, Mr. Stanard

Also Present: Sherri Arrietta, Clerk of Council, Maureen Geck, MHHS President

Mrs. Renda made a motion seconded by Mrs. Wyatt to approve the minutes of the Parks Commission Meeting of May 18, 2020.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Mr. Friedman, Mayor Fritz, Mr. Janke, Mr. Minoff, Mrs. Renda, Service Department – Mr. DeWater & Mr. Misterka, Mrs. Wyatt

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Stanard joined the meeting at 6:04pm.

Updates from Mayor Fritz

Mayor Fritz reported that the House on the Hill demolition would take place in the next three weeks; we will be given at least 7 days advanced notice. The Village held an honorary tree planting event and had 12 residents participate, representing all sections of the Village, they were: Gianfranco Borroni, Karen Cunningham & her sons, Doug & Jeff Moore, Patty Emser, Beth Furlong, Jan Jones, Allan Kleinman, Laura Kozminski-VanderHart & her sons, Paul Pesses & his family, Tom Shaper, Shayna Sharpe, and Curtis Taylor. There will eventually be a plaque placed at that location. He thanked Mrs. Arrietta and the Service Department for their help with this project.

Mayor Fritz gave an update on the violations in Forest Ridge, which included a bike trail. Three of those individuals were identified by our Police Department and they made the repairs, with the help of our Service Department. Shane Wohlken of the WRLC has confirmed that the repairs have been completed to their satisfaction. There are still some trees that were vandalized with spray paint that the Service Department will use pruning tar to remove the paint soon. A letter was also sent to all the residents of Quail Hollow reminding them of the restrictions we are under as it relates to Forest Ridge and asked them to help us keep an eye on it. To date, we have not had any other violations in the preserve.

Mayor Fritz stated that he Mr. DeWater recently met to discuss some maintenance and improvements that need to be made at the James A. Garfield Birth Site Park. The Village has hired VanCuren Trees to remove some hazardous trees, including those that have fallen over the birth

site stone. The path will be pressure washed in the next few weeks, improvements to the brick steps will be made shortly, and some ground cover in the birth site area will be removed by VanCuren. The retaining wall by the Garfield statue that was damaged by a lawn mower will be repaired as well as thinning out some of the growth around it. He gave a special thank you to all the docents that are stepping up to help out during the weekends. Mayor Fritz stated that he had an opportunity to talk to the Garfields this weekend who were docents from 10:00am to 1:00pm, and his daughter Hadlie, was the docent from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. He stated that Hadlie has volunteered as a docent three times now with a friend and stated that she is starting to enjoy it and he is proud of that effort. There were about 15 visitors to the cabin this weekend, which he feels is a good turnout. He stated that he looks forward to the continued partnership with the Historical Society.

Mayor Fritz shared a copy of the proposed layout of Forest Ridge that was emailed to all commission members. The plan shows the new pavilion, restroom facilities and an additional parking area, however, it is still preliminary at this time.

Mr. Olsson joined the meeting at 6:11pm.

Our Community Kids Fishing Day is still tentatively scheduled for September 12. Since we are not in a good place right now in Cuyahoga County, we have to still consider that it may not take place if we are not able to have it in a safe manner. We will adhere to the ODH and Cuyahoga County Board of Health guidelines and will have to make a call based on what is going on at that time, as to whether we move forward or cancel/reschedule the event.

Mr. Minoff asked Mayor Fritz if he could provide a brief update on the funding situation and the discussion at the last meeting about the need to come up with an additional \$150,000. Mayor Fritz stated that as they all know, Mayor Renda worked very hard with Senator Dolan and Representative Robinson to get additional monies via the capital budget. He stated that he saw Senator Dolan this morning who informed him that they are hoping that by September they will have defined capital budget requests. He is hopeful that the hard work that was put into that request will pay off. We are using some money received from the state for the house tear down and preliminary work, and money has been budgeted from previous administrations. Our Treasurer feels that if we do not use some of the money we budgeted to offset our revenue stream losses; we would essentially lose the \$35,000 we received in the form of a grant. It is everyone's opinion in the financial area of things to move forward with the money secured in the previous administration. The message is that we have some grant money, money that is budgeted, and money that we are hoping to get, but it is still a question mark at this time. He will keep everyone updated.

Mr. Janke asked if the additional monies would be used for the restroom facilities and asked if funds were already allocated for the pavilion. Mayor Fritz stated that the grant money can be used for a multitude of things, specifically mentioned in the grant is the tear down of the house and the prep of the work area. We have more latitude with the money that was budgeted. We will get the house leveled this year, prep the area and let it settle for a while, and then pour the pad in early spring. By that time, we should know if we received the capital budget money, but if not, then we would use what was budgeted to actually build the structure. There are some restrictions with some of the grant money, but we can co-mingle it with some of the money we have budgeted to cover everything.

Updates from the Moreland Hills Historical Society

Mrs. Geck reported that their last private tour that was still scheduled has since been cancelled, so there will be no private tours this year. The cabin is open by appointment, which they have received none of, however, they are open on Saturdays and have had about 10-15 visitors each Saturday. She stated that they have been fortunate to have the ability for the cabin to be open, especially because 50% of museums are closed.

Mayor Fritz stated that this a perfect venue to get out and see where the 20th President of the United States was born. He stated that they are adhering to strict COVID protocols; everyone is required to wear a mask and one group has to wait by the bench while another group is inside the cabin. We are taking these protocols seriously; there are masks and hand sanitizer available for visitors use. Mrs. Geck stated that she feels that it is a good place for them to grow. Mr. Janke stated that he was there a few weekends ago and the docents were very informative so he would recommend that everyone take the time to go. It really is a little gem that we have here in Moreland Hills.

Mayor Fritz also asked all members to help the Historical Society to get the message out of when they are open, by sharing it on social media. Mrs. Geck stated that she is also hoping to post a film video clip from 1931 when the rock was placed in the spot where it is now located. That is something to look for in the near future that they can also share, as well as another video clip for Throwback Thursday that she will provide to Mrs. Arrietta.

Managing Fundraising Dollars

Mr. Janke stated that he knows that they have had previous discussions about fundraising ideas, such as holding a 5K at Forest Ridge. He stated that before we discuss these opportunities we need to talk about managing the fundraising dollars. There were two avenues discussed; creating a non-profit 501c3 or managing it through the Village's budget.

Mr. Janke stated that after speaking with Mayor Fritz, he feels that the easiest and most efficient vehicle to manage this would be through the Village budget. In working with Council, the money raised can be designated for whatever we choose to use it for. There is a lot less red tape and there is also the ability to make it a tax deductible donation and provide that information to the donors. He stated that he would like feedback from the group regarding this option. Mr. Minoff stated that he is fine with whichever one they choose but he stated that he feels that there is the opportunity to raise more money if it was a foundation, and not related to any political motivations of Council or this Commission. A foundation would also be tax deductible. He stated that you do not hear about people make large donations to cities, but you do to foundations. In order to get a landmark donation, he feels that we would need a foundation. Mr. Minoff stated that as Mayor Fritz has pointed out previously, if we were to create a foundation, we would need several questions answered regarding potential liabilities and how to set it up. He feels those questions would be best answered by Village Council.

Mr. Janke stated that he understands Mr. Minoff's position. Generally, a foundation is more independent. He stated that the way he envisions this working if we go through the Village, is when we have a fundraiser, we would work with Council and inform them what we would like to raise these funds for. He stated that he feels it would help if we were very purposeful in directing our message on what we are raising the funds for.

Mr. Minoff agreed that having a purpose is important and does help in raising money. Mayor Fritz stated that there would certainly have to be some good faith between administration and Council and the fundraising effort as far as knowing what the money is raised for will be designated for that in that specific fund within our Village budget. He stated that that may be a challenge we would face, but he is optimistic enough to think that could be a collective effort and that it would be seamless. He stated he would say that even with a 501c3, there would have to be a good faith relationship between everyone involved with the money and what it is earmarked for. He stated that he feels there are a lot of checks and balances between Council, administration and this Commission who would make the recommendation to Council. Mayor Fritz stated that he does understand Mr. Minoff's point to have a separate entity where the messaging would be better, but it sounds like there is at least some willingness to start with creating a fund in the Village budget, which would also be tax deductible. If the Parks Commission feels that it is not working at some point down the road, then we can have a discussion about a 501c3, but he stated that he feels starting with a fund in the Village budget is a good starting point. He feels that it would remove some of the issues and questions that we had such as if a member of the Commission could also be a member of the 501c3. There will be transparency with having our Treasurer, Law Director, Council, administration, and this commission all overseeing this money within the Village's budget. He stated that he likes the fact that it removes the "what ifs."

Mr. Minoff stated that he agrees that is a good place to start and mentioned that he could look into what Twinsburg's Parks Commission does relative to their funds. He stated that maybe we are way off base with even considering a 501c3 if no one else is doing that. Mr. Minoff stated that making a fund in the budget does seem to be a simpler way to go, but stated that he will contact Twinsburg to find out what they do so that we have that information.

Mayor Fritz stated that he cannot speak to what other Parks Commissions do as it relates to funds, but when our Law Director, Bill Hanna, looked into it, he said that the model that the Village already has in place for donating to the House on the Hill, is the structure that has worked in some other communities. He stated that he does not know if that is the common model or if anyone else is using the 501c3.

Mr. Stanard asked Mr. Minoff what he would describe a "landmark donation" to be, as he stated earlier, since he has years of experience in fundraising. Mr. Minoff stated that you are always glad to get whatever you can when you are working for a good cause with a worthy mission, but he would say \$50,000 or six figures would be a "landmark donation." He stated that Cleveland Clinic just received a 261 million dollar donation, but of course, we would not get that kind of donation. There are people that love parks and if someone had a relationship with Brain Zimmerman from the Metroparks, perhaps they could reach out to him so he could share who some of those people would be. Mr. Stanard stated that information gathering is a good thing and he feels that creating a fund in the Village's budget seems like a viable starting point. He stated that as we gain information and experience we could circle back and talk about a 501c3 in the future. Mr. Minoff agreed with that. Mr. Janke stated that he feels that will give us the ability through the rest of the year to move forward and not be stuck trying to figure out the 501c3 structure. He too feels that gives us a good starting point and he likes the fact that we can revisit how it is working for us. Mr. Janke stated in working with Council and the Law Director, he thinks they are top-notch people and so he does not have any worries about transparency when it comes to funds.

Mayor Fritz stated that he feels that we have a cohesive group of people who will stick to the goal of the commission with the fundraising efforts.

Open Discussion

Mr. Janke stated that he knows that it was previously discussed to have a 5k run to raise money and he asked what the members thought about doing a virtual 5K and if anyone else knew more about doing something like that. Mr. Friedman stated that these virtual runs are happening all over the place because in light of the pandemic, things are being cancelled. Generally, participants sign up and pay their fee online and then go and run and report back their time. It has a similar feel to the live event and he stated that he feels it is a good option.

Mayor Fritz agreed and mentioned that there are defined routes that are located in the South Chagrin Reservation and suggested that they could explore something with the Metroparks and create something where everyone runs the same route. Mr. Friedman agreed that was a good idea and suggested even allowing participants to run the route multiple times to try to beat their own time, within a set period of time. Mr. Janke stated that he likes the idea of having a defined route because it is comparing apples to apples. He stated that he welcomes any other thoughts and ideas so perhaps before our next meeting they can come up with some additional ideas. Mr. Friedman stated that he will take a look at how to set up your own race and not hire a race management company and will bring some ideas to the next meeting. Mayor Fritz asked Mrs. Arrietta to contact the Metroparks to make sure there would not be any issues with that. Mr. Minoff stated that there are many places online that tell you how to get medals and certificates of completion for virtual races.

Mr. Janke stated that he is sure some of them share the frustration of having to put the brakes on in March after they were heading in a good direction, so he thinks it would be a good thing to research and really consider doing it if they can.

Mr. Olsson asked if he missed an update on the bike trail in Forest Ridge. Mr. Janke relayed the information that the Mayor gave at the beginning of the meeting. Mr. Olsson informed Mrs. Geck that he still has the map of the James A. Garfield Birth Site Park in his possession that belongs to the Historical Society. He stated that one of the action items they discussed was relocating the plaques located behind the cabin and stated that he would be willing to help the Historical Society in determining alternate locations to relocate those plaques. Mrs. Geck stated that she just sent an email to Mayor Fritz and Mr. Janke about signage. The list of items that she would like to accomplish on that site are quite lengthy and stated that she will first need to start at a foundation and go through the steps one at a time first. She stated that she had a walk-through with Mark Druckenbrod and Tim Garfield and explained to them about moving the plaques, to which they suggested only moving one. The two plaques provide space and a clearing of where the cabin might have been, so the idea is to move one plaque forward and leave the other two where they are, to provide that sense of space. Mrs. Geck told Mr. Olsson that she appreciates his offer but she just does not think that they are to that point just yet, but she will share those ideas with him. Mr. Olsson stated that once she decides what they want to do, then they can determine how to make it happen.

Mr. Minoff made a motion seconded by Mr. Stanard to adjourn the meeting at 6:46pm.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Mr. Friedman, Mayor Fritz, Mr. Janke, Mr. Minoff, Mr. Olsson, Mrs. Renda,
Service Department – Mr. DeWater & Mr. Misterka, Mr. Stanard, Mrs. Wyatt

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherri Arrietta, Clerk of Council

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