



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting will be held virtually using the Zoom Platform.

Kent Park and Recreation
June 17, 2021
Zoom Meeting 5:30

Members Present:

Steve Mitchell
Kathleen Wlller
Neil Dukes
Jake Ferlito
Debbie Smeiles

Staff Present:

Angela Manley
Sam Tuttle
Karen Magilavy
Megan Johns
Garyn Daniels

Council Liaison

Steve called the meeting to order at 5:30. Gwen had a work conflict. Welcome to anyone watching on YouTube. Roll was called and we'll add people as they enter. We are adding a few items to agenda. **Neil moved to approve the minutes of May 20, and Kathleen seconded. Roll called to approve the minutes, all were in favor, motion passed unanimously.**

Personal Appearances Lt. Mike Lewis at 6:30

Correspondence

Staff Reports

Expenditures Angela corrected the expenditure report to show only park related expenses, not the entire city. JD Williamson will be reimbursed by ODOT for the Hike & Bike Trail and it shows as an expense, but that is a grant and will be reimbursed to that line. The headings on the columns need to be corrected the year to date should be higher than current monthly transactions. Angela will check on the report with Budget & Finance Director.

Revenue The Fitness Center amount for the monthly revenue for is lower than the lease on the fitness center. That lease is for multiple months. The lease is ending in 2022. We have a loss each year of \$50,000, Angela will be discussing this with the board in the future. Do we value this enough to run it at a loss. We

need to agree to loss, it is valuable to the community and less expensive than KSU SHWC and some other gyms.

Park Report Today JD Williamson started to pour cement for the Brady Leap Trail. They will pour every morning to have it dry by evening to avoid vandalism. The crew is working on Al Lease Ballfields to improve infield draining. They will need to cut a lip in the field. Sam is waiting for the use of the field to slow down.

Recreation Spring Soccer ended and the Football Clinic is popular. Sports Camps are starting to fill up. Tennis lessons are full, people are excited pandemic restrictions are ending. Running Club started last week. There will be free yoga at the backwoods stage once a month June, July and August.

Educations Camp Registration is going very well. Davey only has a few openings, the rest of the camps are full. Davey had to move the classrooms from the basement to the cafeteria for the summer. We are taking registrations for the before and after school program and preschool. The free lunch program has 2 foster grandparents helping distribute the lunches. We will receive pandemic support payment for all the licensed sites we are waiting to receive the preschool (\$3300) we have received checks for Rec and Davey (\$6300).

Steve made a motion to add New Business as item 5. Debbie seconded. Called roll and all were favor. Motion passed unanimously. Angela would like to permanently add Unfinished Business, New business & Motion to Adjourn.

Director Report

1. Master Plan Update Pat Hogland asked the board to review the survey. They would like to mail that as soon as possible. There a couple of problems; the response scale needs adjusting, "Not Sure" get the lowest score and should be reversed. Item 11 instructions says if yes please rate 1-4 then there is a 5 point scale. Lowest response should be left to right but they read the opposite. They need to adjust that scale to get correct validation data. Angela will send Brandstetter Carroll the corrections. Angela will also ask about the level of commitment for the steering committee. This would be a sounding board possibly monthly or biweekly.

The city is going back to in person meetings in July. Would the board like to meet in person? Going back to face to face would be in the Old Jail. How many views do we get on You Tube. Guessing 20-50 views. The Jail is not very large, can we keep it as a live feed? There are other options to consider, if we want a larger space we can check other locations around the city. On our social media we can invite the public.

2. Art in the Park We are moving forward with Art in the Park so far this year we have over 80 vendors, entertainment and food vendors. Brandstetter Carrol will come to this event to talk to the public.
3. Outdoor Seasonal Ice Rink Angela was informed about the ice rink at her first staff meeting. KSU President is paying for a community ice rink and the city has authorized the use at the end of Erie Street. The City has updated the electric on the street. The road will be closed Thanksgiving week through the end of February. In the future, events and concerts could take place at this locations. The proposal came to P&R to operate and staff the ice rink. They had approached KSU rec staff first but they had a list of concerns and questions. Probably the same questions we have. How would we pay for staffing, equipment, training, payment processing? It is scheduled to open in November. Angela spoke with Dave Ruller, she told him that the department budget could not absorb this. Dave asked her to come up with a budget for cost at the ice rink. Right now she is at \$87,000 to \$97,000. Debbie concerns are the size of the area and how could you staff this when you don't know who will show up? It is proposed to be open 10am -9pm Tue – Sun. Jake asked, does this have to do with taking down the university's ice arena. How can you staff 11 hours a day? You won't have people coming down until after 5.

- The KSU ice arena probably didn't have use that early in the day. In Cuyahoga Falls one at the Gorge is not staffed and you bring your own skates. The other one downtown does have staff and rentals. Angela has a conceptual drawing she can forward to the board. There are still things to be ironed out. This a beautiful concept plan, it is very inviting and very wintery. One of the buildings was to be used for rentals, but it is now being sold. Now they are talking about a rental shack. We need to think about training, employees, how to take secure payments the Zamboni will have to clean the ice 3 times a day. Neil said it sounds like this is going forward and they dropped it in your lap. It hasn't been agreed upon yet and the city manager said there are talks about splitting the cost with KSU. Debbie said maybe the city can provide EMS. Jake said will we get the skates from the old ice arena? We will not get the skates from the ice arena. The third party will have skate rentals. It's not anticipated to be profitable, it is for the community. Steve thinks it is a cool idea, but the hours need revised. There are many more discussion points to be covered and Steve will be happy to join any future meetings with Angela and Kent State.
4. 2022 Budget to be discussed in July.
 5. **NEW BUSINESS** Lt Mike Lewis of the Kent Police Department joined on Zoom. Angela wants to bring an item to the boards attentions. There is an unauthorized event at Plum Creek this Saturday to celebrate Juneteenth. It was estimated that 800-1000 people attended last year and they did a lot of damage. There is no point person, it is on social media and being spread around many communities. Angela reached out to KPD and the City Manager. Dave Ruller wanted Angela to bring this information to the board. Neil reached out to Lt Lewis and the Chief after he heard about the event. He also spoke with Kent State to find out if it is an authorized group. If it is a KSU group they would have an advisor. Dr. Nelson of the NAACP did not know who was hosting the event. She suggested she reach out several groups to let them know it is not a sanctioned event and is not being supported by any of the local groups or organizations, which support social justice or work with the NAACP or anyone in the City of Kent. This group is "off the record". It is not supported by any groups or organizations. Mike said they looked into it last year and said it is not a brand new event. It was previously held at a Cleveland Suburb and last year they showed up at Plum Creek without permits or reservations. We didn't know anything about it. It took us by surprise. As the police identified people from last year, we didn't see any groups from Kent or KSU. Why did no one go through the proper channels? Because no one want to be responsible or accountable. Mike understands it was quite a mess, this year looks to be larger than last year. What are our options? There are people and families who use the park without reservations, many people use the parks for the playgrounds and basketball courts. Garyn was at adult softball last year and there were so many cars parked all over the place that emergency vehicles could not get through. Garyn says the event has huge following on social media and are calling it Part 2. There are no good options here, just trying to figure out the best one. The people manning the barricades could get hurt, especially if alcohol is involved. If we move it to a different park we would have the same issues. Look at it as an opportunity, it became a federal holiday just today. As a community and police department tell people we welcome you to Kent but please respect our park. Honor the cause and agenda and that doesn't mean the park should be left a mess. Steve doesn't mind being down at the park and greeting people. Debbie asked if it is too late to get porta pots and trash containers and contact the people who have reservations and games. Sam said he is the only one working he has no staff this weekend. If this was a legitimate event we would be supportive. Neil doesn't feel this is a Juneteenth Celebration but an excuse to party. This almost has nothing to do with Juneteenth a celebration of freedom or history behind it. We have softball and pavilions rented on Sunday and we have our camp out there Monday morning. Garyn says the amount of trash was something he has never seen, last year's party continued after dark. Plum Creek does not have lights, it would be difficult to shut it down after dark. Garyn shared people are advertising they

are going to fight at the party. It is not going to end well. Lt Mike Lewis appreciates Steve's welcoming words, but we are getting indications things are going to be worse this year. It is doubtful they will go downtown because of the lack of parking. No one has approached us about this party through official channels. Can we reach out to the DJ and let them know the park will be closed for safety reasons. If we do a social media blitz and discourage the party and ask the DJ to cooperate. We would love you to go through the proper channels next year. Angela said looking ahead how can we make a family friendly event next year. How can we turn this into a positive? We need to protect city property and safety of people in the park. Last year it was a 10 hour clean up job. We don't have that many officers, we can't get emergency personal in there. We need to be proactive. The more Garyn researched it the more concerned he became. Angela told the board about her conversation with the Chief and City Manager, they suggested placing a park employee at the entrance of the park, and Angela's concern is that the employee has no level of enforcement. There is a hesitation to have police presence there because it sets the wrong tone. The party start time on social media is 4pm. The parks close at dusk and after dark it is trespassing. That was the only way the police could gain compliance last year and it still took over an hour to clear everyone out of the park. We can't start confrontation or physically stop them. As soon as the first group goes in then what should we do? Mike said it is a matter of criminal procedure. You have to have a crime be committed and they have to be made aware of it. We need a representative to express you are not welcome and it is criminal trespassing and if you continue to be there, you can be charged and arrested. Just have one person down there with authority over the property. They can notify the police. This prevents the heavy handed approach. We can reach out to social media and the newspapers saying this is not a sanctioned event. Advise the people who have reserved the park about the situation. Garyn asked if the police will drive through the park. Mike said, that wouldn't faze a large crowd. Steve asked Angela to contact the people who have reservations. See if they want to move or change the date. If they move we can completely shut down the park. Mike said stopping vehicular traffic will prevent the crowd from forming. Get info out to social media and paper media. We are supporting KPD and want to prevent destruction of our property. We would love to have a legit group plan an event for next year. If it turns into anything like last year they would have to call in additional resources. These would be big cost to the city. Sam shouldn't be there by himself, but the more people there would be more confrontational. If the park is shut down we can act more quickly to get groups out of the park. Can we barricade off the neighboring business. Yes we will talk with the businesses. Getting the word out, will be key to lessen the problem. Mike will contact the last year's DJ and Fraternity. Angela will put out a statement from the Park Board and Dave Ruller will share that with Council. She will send a preview to the board in case someone contacts them and they will have the same talking points. Mike will reach out to the media too. It is concerning that people are not sharing information with us about this party. He thanked the board and stated it is important that we have a united effort. **Steve made a motion that In light of recent information concerning a large unauthorized gathering and concern for safety of citizens and property as occurred in a similar event in 2020. We regretfully authorize the closing of Plum Creek Park for the day of June 19 2021. Debbie seconded and all were in favor. Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.** That concludes new business. A big thanks to Mike Lewis of the KPD.

At 7:30 a motion was made to adjourn. Neil moves, Debbie seconded all were in favor and the motion adjourned.