

Silver Lake Commission
March 20, 2024
5:30 PM
In person & Via Weblink

****DRAFT****

Members Present

John DeMarie
Kathy Doyle
Marie Kozel, Chair
Michael Lewis
William Satchell
Anthony Morris (web)

Staff & Guests

Tricia Arndt, 3rd District City Councilwoman
Carolyn Courtney, Parks & Recreation Staff
Bryn Wambaugh, City of Dover Environmental Scientist
Officer Killen, City of Dover Police (web)

WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM

MEMBER & STAFF INTRODUCTION

Brief Introductions around the table.

MEETING MINUTES

(AN ERROR OCCURRED ON THE RECORDING – STILL LOOKING TO RECOVER THIS INFORMATION)

NAMING/DEDICATION OF CITY PARKS

Councilwoman Arndt is proposing a new naming policy for buildings and facilities in the municipality, as well as a general naming policy. The current process in Dover for naming parks and other spaces is informal and lacks a thorough vetting process. Councilwoman Arndt noted instead of creating an ad hoc committee or using the existing committee to review naming petitions, establish criteria, and ensure a fair and equitable process that honors the city's history and culture, I would appreciate your input. The discussion in the meeting was about whether or not to name things after people in the city. The preference was expressed for alternative ways of honoring individuals, such as memorial bricks, benches, and trees. There were concerns about the number of requests to name things and the limited number of parks available. The brick program at the former fireman's moment site is an idea for offering memory in lieu of naming a park. Discussion & feedback was supportive. Comments are still welcome, please forward onto Ms. Courtney, Ms. Kozel or Mrs. Arndt.

WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Courtney reported that Mr. Lyon was unable to attend this meeting, however, the project is on target for completion in April 30. The parks staff will be following the project to ensure the parking area is cleaned up and left in good condition. In discussion, it was noted that this is not a restroom facility, and the gates will remain locked to the public.

DOVER POLICE – PARK REPORT UPDATE

Officer Killen reported that they would respond if there were issues with alcohol consumption or disturbances. There were very few calls since the last meeting report. A couple psychiatric calls, but no trend was established. We were made aware of large DSU party at Silver Lake Park. Proactive measures prevented this event from happening as a permit was not issued through the city. It was communicated to the organizers that the party would not be tolerated. Myself and another officer stayed late to secure the park and other parks in the area were secured as well. He welcomed questions.

Ms. Kozel noted if we see a large gathering, how would we know if there is a permit. Mr. Killen responded if alcohol and/or DJ are seen, then it is not permitted as we don't allow that. If there is question, we can ask to see their permit. If you have a concern, just give the department a call and we'll check it out. Ms. Courtney added, that inflatable bounce house, or excessive loud music that is not allowed. Those with a permit are given this information. It was discussed putting up a notice of "reservation" or something to that affect. Ms. Courtney noted she would discuss this with Mr. Ridgeway, our grounds superintendent.

There are camera at Silver Lake with access to limited to the police department, but there is a possibility of sharing access with the Parks and Recreation department in the event of researching a particular activity.

Mr. Morris compliments the Parks department on their permitting process. We go there, we don't have a problem as we have the permit and it's been helpful.

A brief discussion on locking and opening gates at Silver Lake and our other parks as well.

UPDATE ON SILVER LAKE PARK PROJECTS & MAINTENANCE UPDATES

Ms. Courtney reported that Mr. Eaton has tendered his registration and will be leaving the city at the end of the month.

Bally's will be returning for another Earth Day projects at Silver Lake Park and also Schutte Park. Bally's staff have been a great group of volunteers for park projects and we look forward to working with them again. Requests for park clean-ups are being sent to me and I'll coordinate accordingly with Mr. Ridgeway. A brief discussion on the various groups that have volunteered for park clean-up events.

MAYORS REGATTA 2024

Ms. Courtney reported a target date of early fall or end of September is being discussed and we hope to partner with Good Neighbors (formerly NCALL). This could increase the event attendance, introduce the lake and offer a day of fellowship at the park.

RIPARIAN BUFFER

Mrs. Doyle asked for an update from Ms. Wambaugh regarding the causeway (State Street bridge). Ms. Wambaugh shared a brief history of the grounds department being in the Public Works Department but they are not part of the Parks & Recreation Department. The area was once maintained by the grounds staff but then public works was told to mow the area and why we do so today. We only have a budget for mowing, there is no budget for plantings, also there is no staff to maintain plantings. We do not have budget or staff to maintain any plantings along this area. We do not have the equipment to do so within the city. Mrs. Doyle feels it is a law that says there has to be a riparian buffer here. She could not cite the actual law and would get that to us. Other members spoke up and said the area looks really good the way it is being maintained now. The grass offers a buffer for water prior to reaching the lake. Discussion took place on beneficial plantings versus mowing this area. Mrs. Doyle feels the problem is the grass just allows the water and junk from the road to get into the water. With deep roots of native plants that would help reduce the water getting into the lake. Mrs. Doyle is concerned with herbicides that are sprayed although she has been told by Sharon Duca that it is a water safe herbicide. Mrs. Doyle noted it sounds like Mirror Lake is being taken care of properly but I don't feel like Silver Lake is being taken care of properly with area like the causeway not having native plants.

Mrs. Arndt noted she had a constituent who was interested in working on riparian buffers. Mrs. Arndt noted she would send that information to Ms. Courtney.

Grass is working as the buffer, we do not have staff or equipment to plant the native plants for an area that shows no signs of erosion. At this time, there is no plan for any plantings along the causeway. Other members noted a lot of healthy wildlife in the lake area. Eagles, hawks, etc. it appears to be a healthy habitat. Ms. Kozel noted that water quality has come back some from the previous projects such as the Mirror Lake plantings. A discussion on water quality tests performed by DRNEC. Ms. Courtney will send out a link to the members for the DRNEC water quality site. <https://dnrec.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/>

Mrs. Doyle was requested to send the actual law or information on the law that she feels the city is violating.

ENDING COMMENTS

Ms. Courtney noted she is most likely retiring in October of 2024. *(Turns out it's 2025 now)*