

Park and Recreation Commission

John Bittmann, Chairman
Ronald Sill
Bruce Sill
Heather Beaton
Jose Rivera (BOAT)
Michael Kelleher
Diane Smith

Minutes

(meeting recorded)

Monthly meeting: Monday, September 9, 2024 – held at City Hall.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

By roll call, members present: John Bittmann, Ronald Sill, Bruce Sill, Heather Beaton, Michael Kelleher, Diane Smith and Jose Rivera.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis O'Connell was present. Athletic Director Jenn Moffat was excused.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:

No changes were presented and the agenda was accepted as written.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION made by Michael Kelleher and second by Ronald Sill. MOVE acceptance of the minutes of August 12, 2024, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION:

No one spoke and public portion was closed.

CORRESPONDENCES:

Nothing was presented.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Mr. O'Connell stated that Superintendent Dr. Conway was intending to be here this evening to speak on the requested use of Payden Great Room. The Partners for Educational Leadership are seeking to use the facility once a month for a workshop/seminar for the next ten months. This was discussed last month and there were questions regarding the usage fee to be charged. Dr. Conway explained to Mr. O'Connell that it has come to his attention that there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest as it was being said that he is a member of the board of the Partners for Educational Leadership; Dr. Conway wanted it to be clear that he is not on the board. Members felt that the request should be processed under the fee schedule that has been set by the Board of Alderman and Alderwoman

The summer playground program is done. It registered 130 participants. There were challenges with the summer weather. Having access to Bradley School was essential for serving the food and providing relief from the heat. Mr. O'Connell noted that having the director overseeing the program has been an asset to him. All details that he generally had to manage were now handled by the program director. He noted one detail that he continued to do is to bring ice to the playground each morning. Mr. Kelleher offered to assist in the ice deliveries and encouraged Mr. O'Connell to remember him next year.

Mr. Ken Marcucio reported that the fall Little League program is underway with Ansonia. Ansonia has approximately 25 participants and they pay their registration into Derby. There are senior, junior and minor league levels. Mr. Marcucio noted that the National League has established that four to eight years in the league are allowed to choose any town to play with the endorsement from their home town.

Mr. O'Connell reported that Pop Warner starts next week.

Derby High School football starts this week. High School soccer is playing tonight. The fields are very busy with football, soccer and men's softball occupying the field schedule.

Next, Mr. O'Connell reported on facility maintenance. New windows were installed in the press box at a cost of \$6,000. The baseball pitching mound repair quotes have yet to be received but the costs will be high and not budgeted in the current budget. The damage was due to the use of metal spikes which was a topic of contention during construction and at the start of use. It has been determined that metal spikes will not be allowed going forward. He noted that all of the facility fields are under review. They are being used extensively and general wear is starting to show. Going forward the maintenance will have to be discussed during budget deliberations. Current funding will not sustain the projected costs.

It was noted that each year the receivables go back to the general fund. The last few years the actual amount was always greater than budgeted figure. Much of the money is from the Derby Veteran's Community Center and the swim lessons but also there were rentals at Payden Field. Ole Soccer paid \$15,000 last year. Unfortunately, they have not renewed. Mr. O'Connell noted that he needs clay at the Amendola softball field at a cost of \$8,000. That too is beyond the funding resources.

High School Athletic Director's Report: Ms. Moffat was unable to attend this evening but submitted her report via email.

The season has started for DHS and DMS. The first home football game is this Friday vs St. Paul at 7pm. Boys and Girls Soccer and Girls Volleyball have all had games already with X-Country set for a home meet tomorrow.

DMS contests will begin next week.

Thank you to Dennis and Derby Glass, the new Press box windows were installed last week and they look and function amazingly! Such a necessary upgrade!

Dennis and I are still working on options to replace the turf on the baseball mound at Payden Park.

I provided game/meet and practice schedules to Dennis and Mike from DPW.

I have asked for the net in front of the field house to be raised before the game on Friday to prevent footballs from flying into the concession stand area and possibly injuring a spectator.

Friday night will be Pop Warner Night and will be working in the concessions stand as well and the players will be on the field with the team during warm ups and the National Anthem.

We will be recognizing the 4 members of this year's Derby Athletic Hall of Fame class that are able to join us at halftime.

Our Football and Cheer teams will be giving back to our community by collecting donations at our home games. Each of the 5 home games will be for a different cause. With September being childhood cancer awareness month, Friday night we will be collecting money for St. Jude's Hospital.

Members noted the comment regarding the collecting of donations. Mr. Marcucio indicated that as a Board of Education member he was not aware of this collection. Members questioned where and how this collection is being done. It was felt that there are many local needs that should be addressed rather than a national concern. Doing this charitable cause is commendable but there should have been more discussion prior to going forward. Mr. O'Connell will research this matter further.

NEW OR OTHER BUSINESS:

Discussion of Payden Great Room Use: Mr. O'Connell reported on this earlier in the meeting.

MOTION made by Michael Kelleher and second by Heather Beaton. MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully prepared,

Karen Kemmesies

Karen Kemmesies, secretary

These minutes are subject to the Commission's approval at their next scheduled meeting.