

City of Bowling Green

Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Minutes

Scout Building: June 26, 2018

Call to Order Jeff Crawford (7:00 PM)

Roll Call

Present: Jeff Crawford, Linda Cubberley, Cale Hover, JD Pooley and Robin Veitch

Absent: Jodi Anderson, Jon Laabs, Karen Rippey and Monique Rosati

Staff Attendance: Kristin Otley, Chris Gajewicz, Ivan Kovacevic & Cheryl Witt

Approval of April and May 2018 minutes: Unanimous approval on a motion by Robin Veitch and a second by JD Pooley.

Correspondence: Passed around.

Chairpersons Report, Jeff Crawford: No report at this time.

Old Business: No old business at this time.

New Business: No new business at this time.

Foundation Report: Jodi Anderson

- Kristin Otley reported that the foundation is in the process of planning an open house for the Rotary Nature Center Phase Two project. This will be open to donors, the public and members of the Foundation. Planning on late summer/early fall and light refreshments will be served. Plans are underway for the Wine & Cheese to be held September 28.

Director's Report: Kristin Otley

Projects Update:

- The design team has met about the new building at City Park. The timeline looks good with bids potentially going out in November. Planning on a start date of March 2019. The design team critically looked at the concept plan and gave feedback. If you have a chance to take another look at the concept plan, please shoot Kristin an email with any suggestions, we are happy for all the input. We are planning on reusing the fireplace stone and some of the wood flooring from the Scout and Vet buildings in the design of the new building. This is very exciting to be able to watch the project move forward.

Other Information:

- The staff is amazing, we have so much going on and everyone is working hard. At the last City Council meeting, Mike Aspacher said that City Park looks great. Mark Sauber and his staff have taken on additional duties at City Park. The pool is doing well.
- Brad Douglas started June 11 as a full time Maintenance Specialist.

- The posting went up today for a part time Customer Service Specialist.
- Bike Safety Commission has been busy educating the public at the Farmers Market. Bicycles are allowed in lanes and should be treated as a vehicle and follow all of the safety rules and laws of the road. The sidewalk is not a safe place for a bicyclist to be. Kristin thanked Ivan for his work in promoting BGPR at the Farmers Market & Firefly Nights.
- Jeff Crawford asked if there is an anticipated end date for the City Park building. Kristin said at this time there is not an end date, this will be determined when the bids are in and the contractor is on board.

Coordinator's Reports:

- Ivan Kovacevic: Summer is in full swing. Day camps are going well. Lunches and Concerts in the Park are doing great with good attendance, especially considering the weather. The singer/songwriter camp that Kerry Patrick Clark is doing has been awesome. It has been pretty impressive to watch him foster the kids through the whole process. We have been at the Farmers Market and at the Firefly Nights.
- Chris Gajewicz: Wintergarden is doing very well. Weather has not been an issue for any of the gardens. Rain or shine there are always great experiences at the gardens. We have been working on poison ivy and native removal. Simpson looks very nice. We are finishing projects and trying to keep weeds at bay (which is a challenge). Chris read a document (see attached) to the Board about the grass that is growing in Simpson Garden Park. He also prepared in advance a copy of the sign that will be going out in the park to help people understand what is happening there (see attached). Sustainability and education are key factors when explaining to people about the new grass. JD Pooley asked if the department has been getting many calls about the grass and Chris answered that we have not. JD also mentioned that the grass looks good and it makes sense. Sandy Rowland agreed that the grass looks good and that we are starting to show citizens what sustainability looks like with this new grass. She also thanked Chris for his explanation. Kristin Otley mentioned that the new design of the entranceway into Simpson off of Conneaut looks amazing and credited Dan Parratt for many hours of tedious work that he has done to complete it.

Lobby Visitation: Mayor Dick Edwards thanked the BGPR Foundation for recognizing Phil Hollenbaugh's work in the Hosta Glen. Phil has done so much for Simpson Garden Park. The mayor has a full appreciation of the complexity of managing and maintaining Simpson. He remembers working with Tom Stubbs to develop the garden park. The garden park looks terrific! Thank you to Chris for his marvelous statement and his willingness to educate the public on new things that are happening. He commented that even Nadine likes the Scottish Links! He applauded the summer workers and all that they do to help the department. He thanked Ivan for how sharp all of the publications

have been looking. They really tell the story of what is happening and that makes people want to join in and sign up.

Motion to Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm by Jeff Crawford

Next Meeting: July 24, 2018 @ 7:00 PM, Rotary Nature Center

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Witt 7.12.2018



Jeff Crawford, Chair

Sign by the Amphitheater in Simpson Garden Park

The grass you see growing here is a fescue called, “Scottish Links”. It is currently in its, “establishment phase”, and its length will be managed as soon as the seeds drop. In future years we intend to manage its length on a more regular basis. Scottish Links is drought resistant. Once established, there will be no need to irrigate. Scottish Links is a grass variety that, once established, out-competes weeds like dandelion and thistle, due to its intertwined root structure. This means we need little to no chemical herbicides and pesticides to manage weeds. Scottish Links also needs no fertilizer to maintain its health. Scottish Links is a low mow grass variety... once established, our staff will mow it less often using fewer fossil fuels and thereby producing less carbon emissions into the air. While this area may look a bit unkempt to the homeowner who is used to a perfect green lawn mowed at a standard length, we at Parks and Recreation are committed to experimenting with grass varieties that lessen our human impact on the environment and waterways.

For more information or if you have questions, please contact Chris Gajewicz, Natural Resources Coordinator at 419.353.0301.

Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Read by Chris Gajewicz at the Park Board meeting on 6.26.2018.

Gardens, by definition, are not static but dynamic. They are living, growing, and constantly evolving spaces. Each growing year, day, and even minute, *every single moment* in a garden is in a constant state of change. Visitors to Simpson Garden Park may have noticed over the past eleven years, the "Healing Garden" has changed to accommodate the entire person, their mind, body, and spirit while surrounded by healing plants. The garden is no longer simply a collection of medicinal plants, but a space meant to nourish the whole visitor. The Holistic Healing Garden is now a destination garden which is ADA compliant for disabled visitors. The concrete sculpted bridges, (and similarly themed benches), have been removed and replaced, again with ADA compliance in mind and also because the material with which they were constructed deteriorated over time. They had to be restored more than once by the only person who was capable... the original artist... at an additional cost we were not expecting. The style of the sculpted bridges and benches was also incompatible with the surrounding garden designs. The new bridges are able to accommodate the donated golf cart which again, allows visitors with limited mobility the chance to visit all of the gardens while on a tour. The concrete paths are continually replacing crushed limestone paths for ease of access and again, ADA compliance.

As with art, garden design is subjective to each individual's tastes. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Each of us is drawn to a particular gardening design style. While some people prefer a more rigid approach to gardening, others are quite comfortable with what may appear to be a less managed look; something more natural in appearance. Each garden takes on its own personality which allows the entirety of Simpson Garden Park to appeal to a wider audience.

Recently, one of the areas of Simpson Garden Park which was mowed turf grass in the past was allowed to grow to mature seed heads. The grass planted there is drought tolerant using less irrigation once established little to no chemical herbicide and pesticide and no chemical fertilizers. The grass can be mowed once a week or it can be mowed once a month... even once a year. The Simpson Garden Park staff spends hundreds of hours and the department spends thousands of dollars each year managing the turf at this one park. To have a traditional American lawn, chemical treatments must be applied and irrigation incorporated. This grassy area has been allowed to grow as an experiment in sustainability within a managed garden setting. Since the City of Bowling Green has recently hired its first ever Sustainability Director to manage sustainability activities in the city, our Parks and Recreation Department must also explore every opportunity we can to save water, eliminate two cycle engine exhaust whenever possible, limit the use of chemical herbicides and pesticides, and reduce our environmental footprint as a garden.

I am constantly reminded by the many visitors to Simpson Garden Park that we have an amazing addition to this community. Ohio Magazine seems to agree, and they have placed Simpson on a statewide stage. The current staff of the Simpson Garden Park will continue to manage this space efficiently, responsibly, and aesthetically, with the hopes that our park visitors will continue to see the beauty throughout. We will continue to change and evolve each year with new plants, re-designed gardens, and new staff and volunteers who take the management of this space very seriously. We will continue to educate the public, the visitors, the neighbors and the community at large that the goal of Simpson Garden Park is not an end point but a journey