

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**January 22, 2019**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the **Lewes Parks and Recreation Commission** was held on **Tuesday, January 22, 2019 at 7:00 P.M. in Lewes City Hall** in accordance with proper notification with the following present: Chairwoman Alison Kirk, Mardi Thompson, Christine Besche, Harry Keyser, Warren Golde, Candace Vessella, Lorna Dempsey, Rodney Robinson, Barry Dunkin, Louis Papp, Ex-Officio City Councilman Rob Morgan, and Recording Secretary Jackie Doherty.

**A. CALL TO ORDER & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Chairwoman Kirk* called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. stating the Delaware Recreation and Parks Society Conference is on March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> at Dover Downs (registration is required); the Philadelphia Flower Show on March 7<sup>th</sup> will include a tree-care update from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. given by Bartlett Tree Care (registration is required). The regular meeting in February will be held on Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. The March meeting will be on Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M.

*Ms. Kirk* stated the meeting in February will include a review of the Showfield site plan for the section at Monroe and Freeman Highway. She has asked Mr. West and Ms. Townshend to schedule a meeting for the Commissioners to have some training in site plan review.

**B. MINUTES: DEFERRED: Presentation and consideration of the December 17, 2018 regular meeting minutes.**

**D. OLD BUSINESS:**

**1. Discussion of Parks and Recreation FY 2020-2021 budget and capital improvement items.**

*Ms. Kirk* provided a copy of the budget submitted along with the individual budgets to City Manager Ann Marie Townshend and Financial Officer Ellen Lorraine McCabe. The date has not been set for presentation to Mayor and City Council (MCC). The top four Capital Improvements include:

- 1) Irrigation for Canalfont Park;
- 2) Second Street bump outs;
- 3) Match grant for tennis courts;
- 4) Install six large flower planters in Zwaanendael Park.

**E. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Presentation from Chatham Marsch regarding Phragmites control by the Mitigation Commission.**

*Officer Marsch* spoke about the past phragmites control including burning eight blocks of the marsh in 1995, 2008 and plans with DNREC to begin a five-year-plan for control.

Officer Marsch's discussion included:

- The City is not eligible at this time for grants to cover the cost of spraying; a private company was hired for \$250 to spray one area; there is a percentage of the area seen by drone that is beginning to deteriorate; because of concerns about the use of chemicals, the chemicals used were tested at the University of DE and found to cause no harm to humans or wildlife;
- The five-year plan includes spraying, cutting and burning of the approximately 200 acres of phragmites from East Market, Savannah Road, Freeman Highway, ditches along Cape Henlopen Drive and other areas throughout the City; experts will be hired for the burning in the next two years which is done in Winter; spraying will begin in August and be applied by helicopter;
- Grant applications will be submitted this year; the cutting, spraying and burning will only be done on City property and not on private property.

Commissioners suggested giving a presentation to residents regarding education on the hazards of phragmites to include information in the newspaper and posted on the City's website. The City should notify residents when the burning, cutting, and spraying will take place.

## 2. Presentation and consideration to increase the donation amount to Lewes in Bloom.

Susan Crawford, Dianne Stevens, and Marilyn Vai of Lewes in Bloom (LIB) were present stating the City has given \$10,000 for the past 10 years to cover costs. Costs have risen due to the increase in sites being maintained, flowers, the need to hire someone to do the watering, deteriorating planters replaced, \$4,000 to replace the willow in the Herb Garden. The costs in 2018 were over \$15,000, and the request is for an additional \$2,000 from the City for a total of \$12,000 each year. Other LIB income sources include fundraising, donations, dues, plant sales, etc.

*Mr. Golde* stated the estimated cost to the City to pay a contractor for services provided by LIB would be \$250,000 a year.

**ACTION:** *Mr. Dunkin made a motion to recommend to Mayor and City Council approval to increase the amount given to Lewes in Bloom to \$15,000 each year based on the number of valuable volunteer hours given that the City should support; Mr. Robinson seconded the motion.*

Discussion included:

- LIB is given \$10,000 a year by the City and reimbursed for plants on City property; 2018 costs for plants was \$8,000 to \$10,000 paid from the parks' budgets;
- Lewes Chamber of Commerce pays for the tulip bulbs; the City pays separately for the watering on Second Street; request to see the individual costs in detail including the line item of \$6,000 for watering; watering expenses include people being paid to water and the depreciation and repairs for the watering truck;
- Budget to show what expenses are being paid for from the yearly \$10,000; the money requested is for plants and supplies for gardens at the bridge, post office, corners and the parks not being reimbursed by the City;
- Present Mayor and City Council (MCC) with the entire amount of yearly expenses and the number of volunteer hours in money value; list expenses to see what is actually paid by the City and what is paid by LIB.

*Ed Zygmanski, Treasurer, Art in Bloom*, stated he is in favor of the motion to approve an additional \$5,000 from the City for all the work performed and volunteer hours donated by LIB. The additional \$2,000 requested is only a 1.7% increase.

*Mr. Golde* stated \$5,000 was paid in preparing for Communities in Bloom, which the City won, and does not include the entry fee paid by the City.

**ACTION:** *Ms. Dempsey voted yes to the motion.  
Mr. Papp voted yes to the motion.  
Ms. Thompson voted yes to the motion asking for more detailed documentation and explanation of the expenses at the budget meetings.  
Mr. Keyser voted yes to the motion.  
Ms. Besche voted yes to the motion also requesting more detailed documentation.  
Ms. Vessella voted yes to the motion.  
Mr. Dunkin voted yes to the motion.  
Mr. Robinson voted yes to the motion.  
Mr. Golde recused himself from the vote.  
The motion passed unanimously.*

## 3. Presentation and consideration from Art in Bloom to install a bronze plaque in Otis Smith Park.

*Ed Zygmanski, Treasurer of Art in Bloom*, was present providing an information packet for the project. Plans for the project include:

- A mural on the bayside of the Beacon Motel and the bronze plaque in Otis Smith Park;
- Drawing of the plaque was submitted and includes the logo for the City of Lewes and Art in Bloom, wording to be on the plaque, and a picture of Otis Smith;
- Plaque will be 36" x 24" from Franklin Bronze; information to be stated on the plaque has been approved by Mike DiPaolo of the Lewes Historical Society;
- Plaque will face Savannah Road so while reading it, the mural will be in view; plaque will be supported by two aluminum posts in concrete; a photo of the mural was also included;
- There will be no cost to the City or PRC; mural will be on private property; a fundraising event is planned at the Peninsula Gallery on February 9<sup>th</sup> with prints of the mural for sale.

*Mr. Dunkin* suggested having a concrete pad under the plaque to prevent a bare spot in the grass where people will be standing.

**ACTION:** *Mr. Keyser made a motion to recommend to Mayor and City Council approval of the request for placement of the bronze plaque in Otis Smith Park; Ms. Thompson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

**4. Presentation and consideration of the Phase I final layout, design, and budget of George H.P. Smith Park Playground.**

*Mr. Dunkin* reported the three vendors were asked to modify their plans to the budget available and Cunningham Resources/Game Time was the most adaptable; there are some cost savings in the removal of the old structure since it was completed by the Streets Department; cost is \$59,197 with a deficit of \$10,197; two local businesses were asked to donate and will be giving a contribution.

*Ms. Thompson* asked for verification that the maple trees would not be disturbed.

*Mr. Dunkin* stated the structure will fit the existing space but can be turned in another direction to protect the trees. The installation method by Game Time will insure safety compliance and their warranty is superior including 10 to 20 years; colors can be chosen to blend with the environment; the company has been in business for 90 years.

*Ms. Kirk* stated if the playground is approved by MCC, the down payment can be made and then work on raising the additional \$10,000 can begin. It will take 6 to 7 weeks to complete the order.

**ACTION:** *Ms. Thompson made a motion to recommend to Mayor and City Council approval of the playground project with additional fundraising to follow; Mr. Papp seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

**C. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS: Update on monthly activity, projects, and volunteer hours.**

**Mary Vessels and 1812 Parks:** *Mr. Golde* stated there is no report for Mary Vessels. Sewer project work continues by the Board of Public Works in 1812 Park.

**Stango Park and Stango Park Extended:** *Ms. Vessella* reported on January 14, 2019, a coalition of organizations briefed Mayor and City Council on Proposed Right-of-Way Improvement Project focusing on an area between the Lewes Public Library and the History Museum at the Margaret H. Rollins Community Center (between Adams Avenue and Kings Highway). The organizations represented in the conversation were:

1. Art in Bloom
2. Lewes in Bloom
3. Fort Miles Historical Association
4. Lewes Rail Working Group
5. Lewes Historical Society
6. Parks and Recreation Commission
7. Historic Lewes Byway Committee
8. Board of Public Works

*Ms. Vessella* stated the project began to cover the library’s emergency power supply and outside equipment; the project is on the right-of-way owned by the State, and an approval by DeIDOT is needed before any work can begin; the plans include a miniature train station to resemble the one that was once located on these grounds.

*Ms. Vessella* continued stating this presentation is a result of Mayor Becker’s request that all groups interested in proposing projects along DeIDOT’s right-of-way meet, share goals, and develop a comprehensive conceptual plan to be taken to DeIDOT to agree to extend the railroad tracks and allow things to be placed on the right-of-way to complement the area.

The request was to ask MCC to endorse a one-year extension on the retention of the railroad tracks and retention in place of the railroad swing bridge to allow additional time for planning and concept development of proposed improvements. MCC has agreed to endorse a one-year extension and forward this request to DeIDOT.

The project has four key elements:

1. Lewes Junction: A Library-Arts Project
2. Railroad Car and Bridge Project
3. Garden Railroad Project
4. Landscaping Improvements

*Ms. Besche* reported Stango Park plans with landscape architect Eric Wahl of Element Design have been finalized and will be presented at the next PRC meeting.

**George H.P. Smith Park:** *Mr. Keyser* reported he met with *Ms. Dempsey* when she presented a five-year Master Plan for the park.

*Ms. Dempsey* reported she has spoken to Chris Bason of the Center for Inland Bays regarding piers and living shorelines. Mr. Bason referred Burt Monroe of Coastal Tributaries who did come to the park and will be providing an estimate for the work. Volunteer gardeners for 'Gardening Friends' are needed to help with the chips and to help decrease some of the invasive plants. There is a problem with people walking their dogs unleashed on the island and not cleaning-up. There may be a need to place signs in the area.

**Trees:** *Ms. Thompson* reported seedlings were planted in George H.P. Smith Park; the application was submitted for Tree City U.S.A.; the woodchip pile in Great Marsh Park needs to be moved due to complications with the Dog Park property; someone has been dumping woodchips there that were not authorized; participated in the Urban and Community Forestry meeting and helped them to write their grant applications; attended sessions on Chainsaws 101 for Delaware Ag Week; attended the meeting of Greenways and Trails at Greenhill and Mike DiPaolo of the Lewes Historical Society spoke about its history.

**Zwaanendael Park:** *Mr. Papp* reported Distinctive Landscaping did an excellent year-end job removing all the fallen leaves from the park lawn and beds. All knockout roses were pruned to 24". Developed a detailed schedule by month for the planned projects in the park for 2019.

**Canalfront Park:** *Mr. Robinson* reported he will be meeting with Distinctive Landscaping tomorrow to decide when the sod will be placed in the area damaged during Oktoberfest. There will be no change to the City with all costs paid by the Friends of Canalfront Park.

**Recreation:** *Mr. Dunkin* stated he has been working on the playground project.

**D: ADJOURN:** *Ms. Kirk* adjourned the meeting at 9:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Doherty, Recording Secretary  
Lewes Parks and Recreation Commission