

City of Chillicothe
Parks and Recreation Department
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes
July 26, 2021 at 5:15 PM

Meeting Attendance

Director Josh Norris, Assistant Director Drew Hinton, Advisory Board Members Lou Cowherd, Jim Hinrichs, Mitchell Holder, Janice Shaffer.

1. Call to Order

The Chillicothe Parks and Recreation Board met Monday, July 26, 2021 at 5:15 pm in City Council chambers. The meeting was called to order by Director Josh Norris.

2. Approval of Previous Board Minutes

President Lou Cowherd asked the members for additions or corrections to the previous board meeting minutes. None were offered, Advisory Board Member, Mitch Holder moved that the minutes be approved as submitted, Jim Hinrichs seconded the motion and the motion passed.

3. Old Business

Director Josh Norris offered that there was no old business except to remind park board members to attend the new Simpson Playground Ribbon Cutting Ceremony scheduled Tuesday at 10AM, with details being included in the email sent out by Park Board President, Lou Cowherd.

4. New Business

Appearance by Eric Tuner

As Scoutmaster of Troop 120, Eric Turner presented a request that the scouts be approved to use the park on September 18, 2021 in order to host a regional event that will include pedal car events and gaga ball pit building. Scoutmaster Turner explained that the event would include a service project consisting of a Simpson Park clean-up event which, following the weekend after Chautauqua, should be timely and helpful to keep Simpson Park tidy. The appearance by Mr. Turner included a request for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to offer their support to partially close the park to traffic during the event in order to keep the scouts and any other potential visitors safe during the activities, especially those that will require blacktop (like the pedal cars).

Director Josh Norris further explained that if the board supports the request, they will make a recommendation to City Council, and that the council will then need to approve the partial shut down on the day and time of the event.

Questions presented by advisory board members allowed for further discussion and clarification. Park Board Member Mitch Holder requested information about those attending, and for how long. Eric Turner explained that scouts ages 5 years to 10 years of age from a 6 county region would be those in attendance and that the event would need the park to be closed from 7:00 AM to noon. Park Board President, Lou Cowherd asked for clarification regarding the new playground, and the specifics of the area closed to traffic and parking. Josh Norris clarified that the Walnut entrance would not be shut down, just the center area from Washington Street to the bridge would be closed to vehicles driving and/or parking, but that the playground would not be closed to the public, including the new playground area. Discussion that the public who wanted to could park in the Country Club parking area and walk to the park. Mitch Holder asked if other entities such as the CHS/CMS Cross Country Teams might have events scheduled that could potentially conflict with the event date and Director Norris confirmed that this was not the day of their fall event. President Cowherd suggested that signage for the public would be a good communication tool. Josh Norris offered that they will post the closure on Facebook and President Cowherd said that she thought that would be a good idea. The board members expressed their curiosity about the gaga ball. Scoutmaster Turner said that this is a fun and popular sport for the youth. He encouraged the board to investigate the game, that there are two permanent pits in Chillicothe: one by the Girl Scout House and the other in Danner Park.

Advisory Board President, Lou Cowherd thanked Scoutmaster Eric Turner and the board unanimously recommended that the City Council approve the closure of Simpson Park from 7AM to Noon from Washington Street to the bridge that joins Walnut in order for the Scouts to host this regional event.

New Business: Director's Report

Simpson Park's new playground project included the need to remove the dirt pile, and Director Josh Norris reported that the street department helped to remove the pile and that Assistant Director Drew Hinton and the offenders crew graded and reseeded. Fencing is in place to protect new grass. Other projects in the park include a need to remove the dead oak tree and to remove the old playground equipment. The staff will

plan to erect the walking trail berm in the fall following Chautauqua. Park Board Member Jim Hinrichs asked for playground equipment removal clarification, and Director Norris reiterated that only the old area that had once been designated for smaller children, beyond the west fence and Washington Street is planned for removal and that equipment that can be reused will be moved to other parks such as Clay Street Park or Danner Park.

The Car Show boasted 272 entries and was celebrated as a success. They left the park looking nice and without litter.

Festival of Lights will take place in Simpson Park the third Saturday in November.

Chilli Bay wrapped up swimming lessons and they were well received by the community and well attended. Director Norris gave the most recent season water park attendance count at 16,585 with an average daily attendance of 300, with a high of 763 for one day. He shared that the EMS and Fire training were able to use the facility to simulate water and chemical spill rescues. Chilli Bay will wrap up the season with a scout Camporee and pool party scheduled August 13 and 14, and the last day, Sunday August 15 will end with the traditional Doggie Dip.

Summer Sports include the Mudcats who are scheduled to play Saint Joseph Mustangs at St. Joe. This marks the end of regular season play, so as long as they win, they keep playing. Clarinda will play the winner of the Mudcat vs Mustang game. Church League ball is still ongoing as scheduled in Simpson and Danner.

Danner Park red field drainage project is completed thanks to volunteers. Director Norris reminded the board that although the parks department paid for supplies, he very much appreciated the expertise of those who volunteered to do the labor, some using their own donated equipment to complete the project in a timely and professional manner. Director Norris also communicated to the board that the lighting on the Danner walking trail was up and running all except one lamp due to a power issue. Board members asked about conversion to LED and the director offered that the last estimate bid at \$1900 per pole or approximately \$30,000 for the entire project, so that has not been a budgeted item as of yet.

5. Questions and/or Comments

President Lou Cowherd inquired about tree replacement to provide shade over the new playground area. Director Norris offered that for the health of the trees, this is best done in the fall. He indicated that there are funds to purchase and place trees.

Lou Cowherd mentioned that there is a light out on the red scoreboard, and Director Norris acknowledged that staff was aware and that replacing the light is on their list to do before fall sports begin. President Lou Cowherd encouraged Director Norris to explore using COVID funds to repair and update the Danner Park playground. Josh Norris and Lou Cowherd both thought there was a need to ask others who knew what the funds can be used for to guide this request.

Park Board Member Mitch Holder offered his appreciation for the excellence he witnessed at CBWP regarding private swim lessons, and the professionalism demonstrated on the pool deck during public hours. He mentioned specifically Maddie Eller and Eric Menconi and he boasted that he was glad to see these two leaders contribute to our parks and specifically Chilli Bay. Josh Norris followed these comments up by expressing how pleased he had been with the lifeguards as swimming lesson instructors this year, he again mentioned that Maddie Eller took responsibility for scheduling private lessons and that the system worked well and CBWP received income from the lessons with the new design. He also credited Maddie with scheduling and overseeing morning activities such as water walk and water aerobics. Lou Cowherd shared that she appreciated the lifeguard professionalism at private parties.

President Lou Cowherd asked about financial reports, and Director Josh Norris offered that there were none to report.

Park Board Member Mitch Holder asked about finding a way to thank those who volunteer, especially regarding the repair to the red field drainage. Director Josh Norris did not believe that purchases could be made with taxpayer dollars to thank the individuals. Other means of thanking these volunteers were offered. Janice Shaffer will bring thank you notes for the board to sign and will send those who complete projects in the park as volunteers.

6. Adjournment

President Lou Cowherd declared the meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 16, 2021 in the City Council Chambers with Director Josh Norris directing the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Shaffer

Secretary