

The City of Canal Fulton

PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEETING

Thursday, April 8, 2004

MINUTES

Present: Fred Fleming, Mary Ann Higgins, Mary Ann Hupp, Rebecca Shimer, David Prather

Guests in Attendance: Mrs. Garnet Thomas and Miss Sandi Thomas

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Concerning the minutes of the March 11, 2004 minutes, Mary Ann Higgins had corrections: Page 3 “Northwest Jackson Soccer League” at the top, it should say, “Mrs. Higgins suggested everyone put in writing what they plan to do, as far as maintenance is concerned, like the Northwest Jackson Soccer League did.” Then, on the second-to-bottom paragraph on Page 3, there is a typo. It should read: “Patrick Tohill lives in Canal Fulton.”

A motion was made and seconded to approve the March 11, 2004 minutes, with the corrections. Roll: Yes – ALL.

Mrs. Higgins made a motion to approve the March 24, 2004 Special Meeting minutes. Mrs. Hupp seconded the motion. Roll: Yes - ALL

OLD BUSINESS

Dog Park

Discussion of the March 24th meeting: Fred Fleming has the entire \$89,774 grant package now of what actually went into it. He had a drawing which is called the “master plan.” Following the meeting on June 25, 2002, after they found out that they have everything included in the plan they had, the estimate was formed. In the first package, that is all there was to it (holding up the smaller package), and went through the first cut, meaning we were half way there. They wanted more information, and they sent them this packet (holding up a more detailed packet). These are letters from the community that were used as the local support, including the Director of Nursing, the Park Board; they had a calendar of what our park reservations are and the fact we are crowded, a resolution by City Council setting aside almost \$20,000 (they actually held back \$25,000 that was put into a separate account that is still there). We are again ready. Debbie Kerr wrote a letter stating the \$19,943.50 was in an account (but actually there is \$25,000), and where she got the money (overruns on other projects that are well-documented). We did not make that last cut. So Mr. Fleming stated that he has been on Dan, and we are going to resubmit this again in the fall. In the meantime, “you made a statement about the fencing along the sidewalk – the people were all afraid to be down there.” Mr. Fleming thinks we should do something about that and is going to get a cost estimate. He wants the picnic tables, and his understanding was

that the picnic tables were moved (clustered), but they were actually supposed to be moved down along the walks, so people could get to them without going onto the rough terrain. Should we or shouldn't we? We can move them back up into the lot, but we did not think that was right without a pathway to get it up into the property a little closer to the tables. The plan calls for benches all along the path; thinks there are nine benches, 18 shade trees (3" caliber), 9 ornamental trees (3" caliber), 32 evergreen trees (8' to 10' height), seed is 5,925 square yards, pathway is 4,500 sq. feet, 9 benches along the pathway, and the fences of three-rail PVC. Fleming looked at the property, and stated it does not look wide enough to put posts in along the side. He wants to get someone in to find out what it is, but the total of the fencing alone is \$7,345. The asphalt walking path is \$11,160. If we take the money we have, we can do some of this, but it would not be complete. Mr. Fleming doesn't want to do it this way. He'd like to do it right. To do it right, they are going to need that remaining \$80,000 portion. We do have the funds (set back since 2002). We went in, that was the 2003 money. Regarding 2004, from what Dan told him, there were no funds available. There is only one grant that we can apply for parks. There is a lot of money in there, but for some reason they seem to be holding some of it because it looked like they had an overrun from 2003. We are going back in again; the deadline is February 2005. That means that project will not get started until 2005, if we get through the two phases. Mr. Fleming showed a map outlining Discovery Park. Mrs. Shimer asked if he was considering doing the three-rail fence. Mr. Fleming stated just the three-rail fence and not the whole thing. He said that the fence goes just along the front of the pond, from the lot line along Beverly (looks like 24 feet beyond the pond), right along that sidewalk. He said that they show more dirt there than he thought was there, and they have to do something about that due to the danger. Mr. Fleming said he would like to get an estimate and possibly fix that. He does not want to take the money and put it in here and not have it for the matching funds. He has to keep it if they want to do that. He thinks we can do that fence; doesn't know what to do with the picnic tables (i.e., does not know whether to move them back up into the park or leave them down along the walk).

Mrs. Higgins asked Miss Thomas if she had a preference as to the picnic tables' locations. Miss Thomas said she wanted to let the Board know that she is very fortunate that she has a yard, but she will never use Discovery Park. Miss Thomas stated it is not that Discovery Park is only important in her mind because City Council went down and made a commitment to people who had very short ranges of time periods, so they were all excited that they were going to get something and still got nothing. For her, the issue would have to probably be to talk to the Director at Echoing Ridge (Cindy, the Administrator/Director). Mr. Fleming (referencing April 23, 2002 Council minutes he had in his possession) quoted, "Mr. Swanson asked if the timeline is 3-5 years. Mayor Kenney said there is no time line at this time, it is a concept." In other words, the drawing they had at that time did not even have prices on it. What they did was go into a meeting with what they called the "Master Plan." When they came out of that meeting, they had about everything in there that the people wanted, except a McDonald's and an ice cream stand. It was a concept, and he said the City would maintain the park, and money would need budgeted for that project. They budgeted the \$25,000 to get the \$80,000 project done because they will get 75% on matching funds. He stated that there was no promise, but he understands it is like a promise, and they said they would do it, but it seems that they knew at the time that it could take as much as three to five years. **(Please see attached: Council Special Meeting – Echoing Ridge - Minutes April 23, 2002.)**

Miss Thomas stated that what the concern she and anybody who was at the last meeting was having is you had the President of Council stand up and say she has paid enough into taxes; she wants a dog park, and "I want it for me." She said that as a Council person, you're not supposed to be concerned about "me;" you're supposed to be concerned about our community. Before a dog run goes into the community, we need to be looking around. If we have funds to do that, Miss Thomas stated, for the money that is probably going to be put into that dog park, you can at least put in an asphalt pad and a pavilion, so that from the sidewalk there could be one

path to get to a picnic table. Miss Thomas stated she has spent days going over the petition that Mrs. Zahirsky had with about 150 signatures. There are 168 signatures, from everything that she could find, using a reverse directory and trying to decipher the names. She did have help from people in the community and people who knew the phone exchanges. She can verify 41 signatures that have come from the City of Canal Fulton. They are from Dover, Stow, Louisville, Canton, North Canton, Massillon, Manchester and Portage Lakes. Part of these petitions that have not been around now for about 1½ years - the last that she came across was a set of petitions at *Lynn's Groom Room* - so that anyone who takes their dog up there . . . sure they want a dog park in Canal Fulton because why shouldn't we have it here? They can bring their animals, and the taxpayers can pay to fund this. Miss Thomas does not think it is up to Canal Fulton taxpayers to fund anything for people outside of Canal Fulton first. If we had extra funds, Mrs. Thomas could see that; she understands that at the last meeting there was a thing about dog parks being in the planning stages in Akron and Cuyahoga Falls. But, she said to look at the size of those cities - at the size of Massillon. We are barely a city. We can not even take care of the parks that we have. And now, we are even beginning to think about putting a dog park in because it's Linda Zahirsky's idea and that "this is for me," and that were her words, and she was adamant about it - that she has put enough money everywhere else. Miss Thomas stated that had she gone around her neighborhood and walked around her community going door-to-door to get a petition that was a legitimate petition, there would have been a whole lot more names on that petition that would say, "No, this isn't right for now." But, Miss Thomas stated, Mrs. Zahirsky has led everyone to believe that she herself has gone out and done some great work of getting these names on this petition, and they have sat in vets' offices and they've sat around and they haven't been around for over a year because it was all kept "hush-hush" until the money was appropriated from City Council. And, now it has come out in the open because now they have to get approval, and to get approval, the citizens will know about it. But, the citizens did not know about it until the very end, until the money is here, and you are ready to vote for it. In Miss Thomas' mind, that's wrong . . . the Park Board should have a lot more pressing issues. Miss Thomas stated that Mrs. Zahirsky picked Discovery Park because it sat there. You go anywhere, she stated, you go to the Muhlhauser - there are things that can be done there. If there is money for this dog park, there is money for Canal Fulton to take care of what we already have. Why are we expected to put in a dog run for people from all over because it's convenient for them; because they can go home? Miss Thomas stated she knew it's been appropriated; had she known that they were even thinking about appropriating the money last December, she would have been out going up-and-down the allotments and would have gotten signatures that said, "No, I don't want my tax money used for this." Miss Thomas' said she didn't have that opportunity, and that was wrong.

Mr. Fleming said it is not really a petition; it was a list of interested parties. Mrs. Shimer stated that under the numbers that she called (questioning the number 41 Miss Thomas stated were Canal Fulton people), she had to call about 50 people, and every single one of hers were from Canal Fulton, except a couple. Miss Thomas stated she would give the Board a list, saying she did not call anybody - not wanting to bother people. Mr. Fleming said Mrs. Zahirsky knew they were not all from Canal Fulton, but they did business in Canal Fulton; that part is true. That's why the vets and groomers had the sheets. Miss Thomas said to give her the time, and she would go into the allotments for people who would tell the Board they do not want the dog park.

Mrs. Shimer asked if the Board put the fence in Discovery Park and waited for the proper government channels with the grant money to do the rest of Discovery Park and is that agreeable? Miss Thomas' stated to her, "no" and she understands the fencing. She stated that if City Council can appropriate the money for a dog park, then Canal Fulton has the money to do more than just put a fence up. Mr. Fleming stated that anything the Board does, remember, we lose the grant. Miss Thomas went on and said that Council has already appropriated . . . somewhere sitting where citizens didn't know is \$10,000 that now we are going to spend it on a dog park. She

Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2004

said that instead of putting the \$10,000 in the dog park, put the \$10,000 - you can put an asphalt path; It does not have to be a path all around the pond and all that is down there, put an asphalt pad anywhere from the sidewalk where (this is something that someone has to sit down and figure where are we going to put our pavilion; where are we going to do these things?), but for now with our \$10,000, we can put in an asphalt pad somewhere and put a picnic table (stated she has no idea of what the cost is), a pavilion, something covered, put a big tree in. She said for \$10,000, you can get a couple of huge trees; there are things that can be done within our park system and that we do not need to add something else to Canal Fulton.

Mrs. Higgins said what about Muhlhauser? Miss Thomas responded that she understands that Mrs. Zahirsky was a passive playground and the Seniors did not want it. Mr. Fleming agreed, saying that is a passive park. Miss Thomas said there was more that could be done with Muhlhauser that all you have to do is look in your park systems, and there are things that need to be repaired, things that can be added, and things that can be done. She said it is not easy for her to go out and look at the parks anymore, but anywhere that there is a park in this town there are things that can be done before the Board spends money because there is 168 signatures from some people from Dover and Stow.

Mrs. Shimer stated the way she sees this happening is . . . she went down to Discovery Park and took a walk to where Miss Thomas was speaking about and said, "Yep, you got to have a fence here." There is just no way, and these picnic tables are fine, but there are no shade trees. What good are the picnic tables at this point? But, everything has been worked out (those came from a grant as well) and monies set aside. The Board is waiting, since it is such a large plan, for the rest of the money to come through so they can begin to work on it. The Community Park has the same kind of thing going on. The Board is going to start with the Visitor Center and the parking lot. So, there are parks and things that we are tending to; now, we've taken it one step further and this dog park is another form of a park and recreation. It is not very expensive, and it is something that we can do, and we can do now. If we do not do it then, and we go into Discovery Park and take it - the Board is doing a portion of Discovery Park - we are not tending to the new park that we could be adding. Mrs. Shimer agrees with Fred about do you really want to go in and put some kind of a pad, a table on it and a tree. We are doing the waiting game with the government that is holding up money on it. Everything is planned, so we need to decide if that is something that we just trade off and just go and do.

Mrs. Thomas said there were three grants involved. For three/four years, she led community service projects in this town - the workers. They worked the parks; they did the parks; they were involved. It was a very large program in Muhlhauser Park. We had a train that had nails sticking out of it. Anyone who tells you that Muhlhauser Park is not used, or anyone that tells you that hearing children play and laugh takes away from a green setting is (in her opinion) wrong. She stated she finally got the Courts to send her a design carpenter to rebuild the train there. While they were trying to rebuild the train, those children flocked around us (12 at a time); we had to tell that guy what they wanted. The design carpenter they wanted this, that - they wanted a caboose. They wanted that tunnel in the front. They wanted one of the cars to have benches on it. He took his equipment down there and spent every evening for a number of evenings. Then the children were told to sit in the grass, and that is where they sat (ages 8, 9 and 10). Now they have learned that they could yell over at the guy. The children wanted this train, and the design engineer went up-and-beyond the hours required from the Courts to complete that train for them. They played on it conscientiously. Another observation, young people are very strapped for funds. Mothers would come with baby carriers, with a couple of kids behind them, then another mother and kids, etc., and they would play there. Finally, we arranged for them to get some benches. They would sit there spending a couple of hours daily. The kids would play on the swings. The train was a big draw. The mothers played with the kids, and it did not cost them one cent. Mothers and fathers who are

Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2004

watching their money need these parks. She would argue with anyone who says that Parks spend enough money on the kids. When she looks at these children, we have sent 18-, 19- and 20-year-old kids out of every generation to be killed. Mrs. Thomas stated there is not a place in this world we have not left body parts of our young people. The only thing they take with them to that field is what you have given them as a child - the times they take mom and dad and go to the park; go down to Canal Days. In her mind, it is one of the worst statements she ever heard for any adult to say, "The kids have got enough." Those kids - and if you have got kids, you go home and look at them and you figure and you look at their friends, which ones are going to die or be blown apart before you say that! You have got 18 years to get them ready, and she would take Mrs. Zahirsky on "one-on-one" on that one.

Miss Thomas stated that, unfortunately, the bottom line is that you guys can not give grants because the City of Canal Fulton does not have anybody employed that knows how to write a grant so that they can get the grants. And, when they do write them, they do not send them in on time or they leave information out of them. She stated that she is not saying to use the money that the Board is setting aside for matching funds. But, as long as Canal Fulton has the people in our administration who continue to try and write our grants, the Board is never going to get a grant, so nothing is ever going to be done. And that has happened time and time again. You can go down and get copies of grants that have been denied and look at why they were denied. They were not denied because there was not a need for them; they were denied because we do not have anyone here that knows how to write them.

Mrs. Thomas said that Dan Mayberry told her that he has applied for a grant for two years. She said she has applied for grants. She said Mr. Mayberry's grant was turned down. She said his reasoning was that they had changed the deadline on him.

Mrs. Thomas said they have people at the universities who are being trained to write grants. She said she was the one who got the grant for the recycled plastic tables and communities take advantage of those young people because they are updated and they know how to write the grants. She said she does not think that has ever been done in Canal Fulton and the grant that brought in the plastic tables she attained. She said she went to Zoar's Tri-county Recycle after she made the application. She said she filled out the one-page application and then submitted a list of what she wanted. She said the grant was for \$25,000. The City would put up \$2,500. She said no City representative showed up. She was with Tom Messenger. She thought they were going to lose the grant with no official representative present, so she got up and spoke and told them she was representing Canal Fulton. She said in the end they received the grant and that tells them the indifference this City has towards acquiring grants. She said someone is sitting at City Hall doing nothing should go through and find grants and there is a book on grants at the Library. She said the first year the City didn't apply for the grant because Dan Mayberry did not like plastic. She said the second year Mr. Messenger got benches.

Mrs. Shimer asked if they could move on, as it was 7:55 PM.

Mr. Fleming stated he feels they need to get an estimate on fencing across the pond at the nature trail.

Mrs. Higgins said that in Discovery Park II, the tables that are there now are not the tables that will be in the park when it is done. She thinks they are there temporarily. Mr. Fleming said that is what he understands.

Mr. Fleming returned to the dog park subject, saying the dog park is not in the Park Board budget; Mrs. Zahirsky went out and got her own funds. He said to look for a line item in the budget for a \$10,000 dog park;

it is not there. Mrs. Shimer asked where it is. Mr. Fleming said Mrs. Zahirsky said it is in the Park Board budget, but it is not.

Mr. Fleming also said he found Miss Thomas' April 6, 2004 letter offensive when she stated in the letter that no Council members showed up on "Community Day" to help assemble the picnic tables at Discovery Park. **(Please see attached: Sandra L. Thomas letter dated April 6, 2004 "To Whom It May Concern.")**

Summer Recreation Program

Mrs. Higgins said the agreement was passed by Council and signed. Now the YMCA has it in their hands. She met with Pam last week, and they decided the program would be at Trinity Church on Manchester Road. They went over the program's calendar; the "Y" will do the contract with the Church. The Law Director, Dale Kincaid, wants to look at the registration packet once it is complete. She will be calling the VFW for their \$500 donation for scholarships.

Mrs. Higgins said the flyers and information would be sent to the schools at the end of April or the beginning of May.

Mr. Fleming said he is holding on the ball fields. He does not know what will be happening with the tennis courts yet. Until he knows, he does not want to spend any money.

Mr. Fleming said there is no report on the nature trail.

Mr. Fleming said Mrs. Thomas told him that the water runs down across the yards because the sewer lines on Bob Street and Dan Street do not work properly. Mrs. Thomas said the water runs down and into the swamp, and she is concerned about the water being tested in the swamp. Mr. Fleming said he does not think that has been done yet, and if there is a problem with the water and the City accepts it, they will have to clean it up.

Mr. Fleming said on the Discovery Park grant they have two and one-half years to spend the money.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Fleming said he has received the reservations for the Olde Canal Days Festival. He said he has a memo from Marge Loretto, who is asking for the park from Monday through Sunday, July 5 through midnight July 11.

Mrs. Higgins made a motion to approve the use of Community Park for Olde Canal Days Festival, July 5 through July 11, 2004. Mrs. Shimer seconded the motion.

Roll: Yes – ALL.

The meeting was adjourned.

Fred Fleming, Chair