

**City of Wyoming
Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 7, 2016**

Members present: Howard Krueger, Keith Desserich, Tim Marty, Ralph Boss, Scott Boster Stephanie Hass, and Dan Gordon.

Staff members present: Rachel Leininger – Director of Recreation and Citizen Engagement, Rusty Herzog – Police Chief

Others Present:

Citizen Participation:

None.

Call to Order:

Mr. Marty called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the December minutes as amended was made by Mr. Boss second by Ms. Hass. All ayes.

Reports:

- City Council – Mr. Desserich did not have a report, but congratulated Chief Herzog on his recent appointment to Police Chief.
- Administration – Ms. Leininger reported office her office has permanently moved to the Recreation Center. Ms. Leininger also announced that the Recreation Center Renovation is scheduled to bid in early February, and would be awarded at the February 16th Council Meeting.
- School Board – Mr. Boster reported that the high school baseball field is complete, and are in the final stages of going over punch list items. Mr. Boster also reported that winter sports are up and running, and that the school plans to interview various sports medicine providers this year in hopes provide on location rehabilitation services. The service proposal will go out to bid.
- Greenways Committee –none.
- Senior Commission –Mr. Krueger reported that the commission was hosting a number of seminars partnering with Westchester UC Health. The next seminar is Tuesday, March 1st and will be focusing on fraud.
- Chairperson – Mr. Marty reported that the 2017 Master Plan Committee met for first time a couple weeks ago. The group is working on an RFP for consulting services to facilitate the master plan process. Mr. Marty reported that the group will meet on January 28th to finalize the RFP. Mr. Marty announced that Beth Miller will be the alternate in his absence.

Mr. Marty also announced that a group of six high school students, Rachel Leininger, Aaron Marshall, and himself plan to meet to discuss the future plans of Civic Center. Ms. Leininger will email the students discussion questions to help facilitate the discussion.

Business:

- Commission Member Responsibility Areas:
 - Youth Sports (Dan Gordon): none.
 - Adult Sports/Recreation & Senior Activities (Howard Krueger): none.
 - Cultural & Educational Activities: none.
 - Facilities, Parks & Grounds (Ralph Boss): none.
 - Programs, Recreation & Fitness (Beth Miller): none—absent.
 - Special Events (Stephanie Hass): none.
 - Other:
 - Hilltop Park Feedback Discussion—Mr. Boss stated that this method of collected data was a great plan and something that should be used for future endeavors to gather information about neighborhood parks. Mr. Marty stated that he many people were questioning of a specific agenda by the commission, and that he was very careful not to influence their answers. Mr. Desserich asked what the reference to an illegal sign at 438 Hilltop as it was mentioned in one of the responses. Mr. Boster stated that the sign said something to the effect that “diversity is good,” and that it was a handmade yard sign. Mr. Desserich also asked about the reference to the undercover cops as it mentioned in a response. Chief Herzog replied that the police department has worked in various ways to monitor the park, one of which was an officer in plain clothes. Chief Herzog stated that the police had used civilian dressed officers to monitor the park and observed what activity took place, and in their experience no violations were witnessed. Mr. Marty added that the undercover officer was up there for two weeks off and on. Mr. Desserich also asked about the requests of a portalette or bathroom that was mentioned. Ms. Leininger stated that the City is exploring options for a permanent restroom facility in the Hilltop area that would provide restroom access, but also remain aesthetically pleasing to neighbors in the area. Mr. Marty stated that by far the main issue was the use of profanity and he asked how the City could enforce rules to combat this problem. Mr. Marty asked if it would be possible to remove park patrons for using profanity. Chief Herzog replied that the police would be able to remove patrons and take more action with the help of the neighbors. Chief Herzog stated that the neighbors would need to be willing to point out the exact person in violating the rules, and potentially testify in Mayor's Court if the situation escalated to a citation, otherwise there is nothing more than police can do than to go up and try to witness the behavior themselves once a call is received. Mr. Boss asked if he called to report a park violation, would he need to come out of his house and on the basketball court to actually identify the person violating the rules. Mr. Herzog stated that a resident would need to be able to identify the person in violation for the officer, and if resident were to do so they may be involved in a mayor's court case if a citation was issued. Mr. Marty stated that typically most people are at the park walking their dog and/or playing in

the park. Ms. Leininger asked if any neighbors have actually tried to identify a single person for police in hopes to remove the problem from the park. Chief Herzog replied that the goal of the police is to not actually charge anyone. Mr. Marty asked what the officer typically does in response to a park complaint. Mr. Krueger stated that there are other people up at the park that hears the profanity besides just the immediate residents. Mr. Boster noted that the comments received are overwhelming positive and in support of the park and the basketball court. Chief Herzog stated that profanity is happening at every park in the City, and asked do we really want police officers charging kids with profanity. Mr. Marty commented that the most angst came from people closest to park. Mr. Gordon stated that since the response rate was small he wonders if it is really that big of a problem. Mr. Boss stated that while the problem is not a serious one, profane language in such close proximity to little kids is definitely a concern that needs to be addressed. Ms. Leininger asked if patrons using profanity have been receptive to police interaction thus far. Chief Herzog replied that for the most part patrons using the courts have been receptive when the police have been called. Mr. Boss asked Chief Herzog what would his suggestion would be to residents experiencing a problem at the park. Chief Herzog replied that no resident should ever hesitate to call the police and that if you feel that you are at all intimidated by other patrons do not feel like you need to engage them. Chief Herzog continued that the officers are going to come up with best resolution for everyone involved, which may be that everyone keeps playing basketball with the understanding that the issues reported will be addressed, or those patrons may be asked to leave depending on the conversation. Mr. Krueger asked what are excuses are given by patrons that are in violation of the park rules. Chief Herzog replied that some have stated that it was just heat of the moment and are apologetic, while others may get an attitude with police and that's when they are usually asked to leave. Mr. Marty asked if Recreation Commission should respond to the neighbors that received the postcard. Chief Herzog stated that he wants to press the community to call the police if they have an issue. Mr. Boss asked if they should they call 911 for park calls. Chief Herzog replied that residents should call 911 if there any doubt, and they should give dispatch the situation and dispatch will get message to police to handle. Mr. Boster said that we could respond saying the Recreation Commission looked at the data and found there was no information that showed there should be any major change to the park. Chief Herzog said that he would be happy to talk to people to get them to understand what would happen during a police response, and that would hopefully encourage neighbors to call when there are problems. Mr. Boss said that perhaps the commission should draft a letter with our findings and send it to City Council. Mr. Krueger suggested education and getting help from the actual users to address the issues, such as handing out leaflets to users. Chief Herzog commented that while the police haven't used flyers, they are educating users every time they go to the park. Mr. Krueger asked if there a way we can get the help of the actual user. Mr. Boster suggested that an officer goes up and welcomes users to courts and says have a good game but to watch the language. Ms. Leininger stated

that mutual respect has to exist between the users and the residents in order to truly address the issue. The Recreation Commission agreed on the following recommendations to address the issue of profanity at Hilltop Park.

1. Police will work to educate neighbors on what to expect when police respond to a call at the park, and this will hopefully encourage neighbors to call if there are problems.
2. Rec Commission encourages the police department to increase community engagement efforts with park patrons, including times when there are not calls. Police can stop in and positively engage park patrons while reminding them of rules and asking for compliance.
3. The Recreation Department will help to educate parents and coaches about park rules, as well as the steps to take if they were to witness those rules being broken (such as profanity) during recreational events. Coaches and parents are encouraged to call the police to address issues.

Miscellaneous: The next meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2016 at the Wyoming Recreation Center.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel Leininger