

GERMANTOWN PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
October 22, 2009

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Germantown Parks and Recreation Commission for October 22, 2009, was held at Parks and Recreation, 2276 West Street.

PRESENT:

Jerry Gee
Mary Anne Gibson
Steve Priddy
Bob Timm
Harry Scott
Angela Sorensen
Rodney Strop
Kevin Young
Mark Billingsley, Alderman
Pam Beasley, Director of Parks and Recreation

ABSENT:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chairman requested that item #5 (Discussion of Dog Park Policies) be moved ahead of item #4 (Germantown Fastpitch Softball)

It was moved by Mrs. Gibson, seconded by Mr. Priddy to approve the October 22, 2009 agenda as amended.

Gee – yes; Gibson – yes; Priddy – yes; Timm – yes; Scott – yes; Sorensen – yes; Strop – yes; Young – yes; Billingsley – yes. Motion approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 28 AND SEPTEMBER 8, 2009

Mrs. Gibson requested that the minutes of September 8, page 6, last paragraph be changed to reflect, “The” Parks at Poplar Pike and “The” Festival Park.

It was moved by Mr. Strop, seconded by Mr. Priddy to approved the minutes of the August 28, 2009 meeting as submitted and the minutes of the September 8, 2009 meeting as amended.

Gee – yes; Gibson – yes; Priddy – yes; Timm – yes; Scott – yes; Sorensen – yes; Strop – yes; Young – yes; Billingsley – yes. Motion approved.

DISCUSSION OF DOG PARK POLICIES

Alderman Mark Billingsley gave a report on the off-leash area at Forgey Park (Dog Park). Mr. Billingsley stated that over the past several weeks, many emails came in regarding the dog park

and “children in the park”, each stating their position whether negative or positive, which came to about 50/50 on the issue. There is a group that feels that children should not be allowed in the dog park at all and then there is another group that feels that they should. Mr. Billingsley stated that his experience with the dog park is limited but his experiences have been favorable.

The Rules and Regulations state on that “Dogs must be supervised by an adult (18 years or older) at all times (Number #3). It also states that “No children, under the age of 18 years are permitted in the park, unless accompanied by an adult. Do not run or chase after dogs, and never attempt to pet other dogs unless permission is granted by the dog’s owner” (Number #4). Mr. Billingsley stated that he has a five and a six year old, which are typical of that age group. He and Diana have taught them not to pet the dogs in the neighborhood without the permission of the owner. Sometimes, the owner agrees. At other times, the owner may suggest that they not pet the dog because he or she can be grumpy. Mr. Billingsley voiced his opinion that he sees the same thing at the dog park. There are some kids that should not attend the dog park until they get their “behavior training” and he has also seen dogs that are one-owner dogs and shouldn’t be around other pets or children (they haven’t been socialized). So, when the emails started pouring in, staff asked him to weigh in on the issue. Mr. Billingsley reported that Ms. Beasley wanted to make sure that the Commission was aware of the issue and familiar with the rules. What Mr. Billingsley has been told by staff and administration, there is not a willingness to change the current rules because they address the issue in the proper way. Mrs. Gibson stated that on page 3, the first paragraph speaks directly to both the responsibility of the dog owner and the parent of the child. It says, “If you must bring children into the park, please supervise them closely. Children are not permitted to be inside the off-leash are unsupervised.” Mrs. Gibson stated that the next sentence is key, “Parents should consider all the risks associated with bringing small children into an off-leash area.” Mrs. Gibson voiced her opinion that whatever permission you gain from the owner of an animal, it is an animal. Pet owners have a tendency to “humanize” their pet and must remember that they are animals and that, at times, they act on instinct rather than trained obedience. Mrs. Gibson agrees that the park should be available to the owners, the dogs, and the children. Mr. Billingsley stated that they have a Labrador Retriever that loves everybody but he’s a heavy dog and supervising his children and the dog can be a challenge. Mr. Priddy stated that at the time of the orientation and application process, the rules and regulations are given to the applicant and it is made very clear what is expected.

Reference was made to the “aggressive dog” that has attacked on several occasions. The owner’s have received two warnings with a strong rebuke that they will not be allowed to bring their dog to the park if it happens again. Mr. Priddy stated that the rules do not indicate that the dog is entitled to get three strikes. If the animal seriously injures an individual, what then?

Other questions:

What is the authority of the Rangers?

Is there a “fine” in place?

After a brief discussion, the Commission agreed that the policies should be reviewed by city attorney, Joe Lee Wyatt.

It was moved by Chairman Jerry Gee, seconded Mr. Strop to request that the city attorney review the Rules and Regulations for use of the Germantown Dog Park and to include that the Parks and Recreation Commission is in full support of the current regulations.

Gee – yes; Gibson – yes; Priddy – yes; Timm – yes; Scott – yes; Sorensen – yes; Strop – yes; Young – yes; Billingsley – yes. Motion approved.

GERMANTOWN FASTPITCH SOFTBALL

Ms. Ruffin reported that the Parks and Recreation Department would be bringing the fastpitch softball program in-house this spring. The new program will replace the former GYAA softball program. The Department will be responsible for handling all administrative functions including program administration, financial management, insurance along with program operations and delivery. Ms. Ruffin stated that participants can expect a seamless transition into the new structure.

The following proposal was submitted for review. No motion is required. Mr. Ruffin stated that registration will begin January, 2010.

Youth Sport Proposal - 2010 Germantown - Fast pitch Softball Program Plan

- Offering a program that exceeds expectations of Germantown residents
- Renaming the name of the league (Germantown Fast pitch Softball)
- Affiliating the league with a regional/national sanctioning body (ex. Amateur Softball Association - ASA)
- Certifying umpires and utilizing paid scorekeepers to operate the scoreboard and keep the official scorebook
- Implementing a draft process that mirrors other department run youth sports programs
- Select all-star teams from within the recreation league to compete in district, state, and national championship play

| <u>Recreation Softball in Germantown</u> (Since 2001) | | <u>Competitive Softball in Germantown</u> Since 2005 | | |
|--|--------------|---|--------------|---------------------|
| Year | Participants | Year | Participants | Overall Residency % |
| 2005 | 180 | 2005 | 67 | 40.2% |
| 2006 | 168 | 2006 | 91 | 46.2% |
| 2007 | 204 | 2007 | 70 | 32.9% |
| 2008 | 197 | 2008 | 42 | 21.5% |
| 2009 | 196 | 2009 | 49 | 16.7% |

Proposed 2010 - Recreation Softball Budget

Proposed 210 Recreation Softball Revenues
Registration (# of participants / fee)

Residents 142 \$130 \$18,460

| | | | |
|---------------|----|-------|----------|
| Nonresidents | 58 | \$186 | \$10,788 |
| Concessions | | | \$ 800 |
| TOTAL INCOME: | | | \$30,048 |

Age Breakdowns
2010 Proposed Divisions

- **5 - 6 year olds**
- **7 – 8 year olds**
- **9 – 11 year olds**
- **12 – 14 year olds**
- **15 – 18 year olds**

Previous Years

- **Fawns** 5, 6, 7 year olds
- **Lassies** 8, 9, 10 year olds
- **Juniors** 11, 12, 13 year olds
- **Seniors** 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 year olds

Amateur Softball Association (ASA) –
National Governing Body of Softball

- The ASA annually registers over 83,000 youth girls' fast pitch softball teams comprising over 1.2 million girls.
- The ASA annually registers over 43,000 certified umpires
- The goal of the ASA youth program is to help aspiring young softball athletes learn a sport they can enjoy for a lifetime in a positive, safe, and supportive environment.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

In Ms. Beasley’s absence, the Chairman provided the Director’s Report and asked to review the Action Agenda Report for the 3rd Quarter (July – September, 2009).

REPORTS FROM COMMISSION/COMMITTEE LIAISONS

Naming of the Park

Alderman Billingsley provided a brief update on the “Naming of the Park” issue. The Board of Mayor and Alderman voted unanimously to name Oceanview Farms “Bobby Lanier Park”. One of the Alderman asked for verification from the city attorney if they were violated Policy 50, which states that “...The authority to officially name park and recreation facilities belongs solely to the Board of Mayor and Alderman; however, such facilities and sites will not be named without first receiving recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Commission and administrative staff.” The city attorney stated that ultimately the Board of Mayor and Alderman make that decision and a motion was made and approved. Mr. Billingsley expressed his apology to the Parks and Recreation Commission if anyone has been offended. On the positive side, Mr. Billingsley stated that it took a very political vote off of the Commission.

In regards to signage, there was an agreement with the city to honor the Germantown Civic Club and install a sign and after talking to Assistant City Administrator, Andy Pouncey, it was decided

to erect a sign at Melanie Smith Lane. Staff has also received a directive to install the signage for “Bobby Lanier Park.”

The Chairman asked about the name for the overall park. Mr. Billingsley stated that “The Parks at Poplar Pike” has not come before the Board of Mayor and Alderman yet. Mr. Billingsley stated that although it has not come before the board and nothing has been voiced out loud, there is not a real sense of satisfaction with that name. Several members of the Parks and Recreation Commission voiced their personal feelings in regard to how this has been handled. The Chairman stated that if the Board of Mayor and Alderman do not like the name, they should vote it down, not simply ignore it. Mr. Billingsley voiced his support of the Commission’s feelings and will bring it up at the next Board of Mayor and Alderman meeting, that they need to make a decision on “The Parks at Poplar Pike.”

Veteran’s Memorial

Alderman Billingsley, on behalf of Alderman Chism, stated that Mr. Chism asked permission to form an exploratory committee to look at the feasibility to develop an appropriate memorial to honor the fallen soldiers that lived in the City of Germantown and would like to start with a small group made up of Andy Pouncey, Pam Beasley, Rodney Strop, and Richard Stern (citizen). Mr. Billingsley reported that the motion was approved and invited other members of the Commission to participate if they so desire.

Commission Applications

Alderman Billingsley reminded Commission members to submit their applications.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.