

GERMANTOWN PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2011

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Germantown Parks and Recreation Commission for February 24, 2011 took place at Germantown Parks and Recreation, 2276 West Street.

PRESENT:

Kevin Young
Bill Lansden
Jerry Gee
Mary Anne Gibson
Angela Sorensen
Mike Palazzolo, Alderman

ABSENT:

William Kenley
Rodney Strop
Jim Wilson

Pam Beasley, Director of Parks and Recreation

GUESTS:

Randy Doubrava, Bicycle Planning
Roberto Garario, Student
Lisa Parker, Planning Commission

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2011

The following corrections were noted: There was a move to strike a line on page 3, next to last paragraph "but it is not something the commission wants to get involved in." Also, "Mr." Sorensen was corrected to read "Dr." Sorensen.

It was moved by Ms. Gibson, seconded by Dr. Sorensen to approve minutes of February 24, 2011.

Young – yes; Gee – yes; Gibson – yes; Lansden – yes; Sorensen – yes; Palazzolo – abstain.
Motion approved.

There was a welcoming of the guests.

GERMANTOWN BICYCLE FACILITIES PLAN

Mr. Morgan, Chief Planner with City of Germantown Department of Economic and Community Development, introduced himself along with his team Jonathan Smith, Traffic Engineer with City of Germantown Department of Economic and Community Development. Mr. Morgan presented the Germantown Bicycle Facilities Plan.

Copies were passed out in draft form of the plan. The goal is to present the findings and recommendations to the commission in order to answer any questions regarding the plan. Ultimately, they would like to get a recommendation for approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Mr. Morgan discussed the history of bike lanes and how this plan would propose the next phase of development for bike facilities in the area to expand the network, not just have it serve parks and neighborhood schools but to use the existing network that we have to connect bike lanes from the network within Germantown. The purpose is to serve both recreation cyclists and also give recognition that bikes are being used by an increasing number of people for transportation. Another goal of the plan is to connect the Germantown network with bike facilities within Memphis and Collierville and also other parts of Shelby County. The final purpose of the study is to update the design standards that are used to layout the bike lanes at intersections. These include standards with the bike lanes and also how intersections are treated including how railroad crossings can be challenging.

The plan was passed out and discussed. Mr. Morgan wanted to point out how the Wolf River Boulevard extension that is under construction right now will have bike lanes. The plan calls for an extension of the Greenway along Wolf River all the way up to Collierville to connect with the Greenway system that exists in Collierville. It was also noted that the Memphis and Shelby County Metropolitan Planning Organization has recommended a Greenway of some sort along Nonconnah Creek. As far as the approval process, there is discussion with the Public Safety Commission. The goal is take the plan to the Environmental Commission, Planning Commission, and to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for approval as a plan for Germantown.

Jonathan Smith discussed the design aspects of the plan. One of the goals is to make the transportation system within the City of Germantown as safe and efficient as possible. This plan represents the efforts made to accommodate bicycles. There was discussion of striping bike lanes in order to keep cyclists away from the curb and gutter, but there is no need to stripe residential roads, as residential roads are typically 30 feet curb to curb, and if you take 10 feet of that away for bicycles, you do not have enough room to get two cars past the same point at the same time. One of the greatest concerns he has heard is Greenway crossings, particularly across Wolf River Boulevard. There are six lanes plus a median that people have to get across. There is a new beacon that works with the traffic signal that has been developed in Arizona which consists of two red elements and one yellow one underneath which has been widely accepted out west. This seems to be the best approach anyone has come up with to provide safe crossing for pedestrians and bicycles without holding up vehicular traffic for a full red, yellow, green cycle.

Mike Palazzolo suggested implementing a bicycle safety program for school age riders. Mary Anne Gibson also suggested educating parents and drivers. There was a discussion regarding bike racks and businesses possibly providing bike racks for cyclists.

Pam Beasley discussed implementing a plan where businesses that purchased bike racks were provided a very small plaque or sign actually mounted on the bike rack stating "Our business supports biking in Germantown."

There was an email received from a citizen who asked the question “should or would the city ever consider requiring cyclists to purchase a bike tag?” The citizen suggested whatever fees collected from the tags be put into a fund for bikeways. Mary Anne Gibson stated that a tax or tag permit may deter new cyclists, but this could be discussed at a later date.

It was moved by Mr. Palazzolo; seconded by Dr. Gibson to approve the updated Germantown Bicycle Facilities Plan and back it to present to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

Young – yes; Gee – yes; Gibson – yes; Lansden – yes; Sorensen – yes; Palazzolo - yes. Motion approved.

CAPRA REACCREDITATION – TASK FORCE REPORT

Jerry Gee discussed the process of CAPRA reaccreditation. Natalie Ruffin reported that progress is being. Mr. Gee proposed a couple of goals including a “bio” and photos for each of the commission members. There was also a discussion regarding a welcome reception and dinner for the Visitation Team and the details of that.

Pam Beasley reported how different the department looked in 2006 at which time Parks and Recreation still managed and operated the Germantown Centre and had building maintenance and park maintenance. She discussed reorganization and restructuring over the past years and coming up with an interdepartmental agreement to show that the city meets the standards. There are about 30 documents which include plans, manuals, and large files that need to be updated.

There was a discussion regarding volunteer background check. Natalie Ruffin reported that most are familiar with the background check and the policies in place for the process. There are packets given to volunteers with a letter as the front page to the packet. There is something called the Tennessee Urban Records Act, and the consent form is subject to that Act. Recently, there was a request from a volunteer to blacken out the date of birth in addition to the social security number because of identity theft. Ms. Ruffin stated how they would like to make that change within the letter of the policy to be able to blacken out the social security and date of birth if someone does come in and request that information.

It was moved by Mary Anne Gibson; seconded by Kevin Young.

Young – yes; Gee – yes; Gibson – yes; Lansden – yes; Sorensen – yes; Palazzolo - yes. Motion approved.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. Beasley reported that the city is working with the State Department of Environment and Conservation to provide them a statement of intent as to what the first steps will be to develop Ocean View Farm known as Bobby Lanier Park. There was a letter sent about a month ago that gave 90 days to respond. A letter will be drafted explaining that the city will be budgeting in the

FY12 budget monies to hire a professional consultant to help with the design and development program of Ocean View Farm. Patrick Lawton has requested \$400,000 in the FY12 budget which should provide monies for the consultant and then hopefully phase I of the project. There is a deadline of June 10, 2012 to have Ocean View Farm open to the public. The goal is to develop a request for qualifications to get a consultant.

Ms. Beasley discussed an upcoming trip to an educational farm on the Massachusetts Coast about 30 miles north of Boston. There they have a developed farm and environmental education center and through the farm-based education there is a two-day workshop. This will help in providing documentation to the state. The vision of this project is to develop using green standards and sustainable practices a farm-based education, environmental education, and heritage education project.

Regarding the Riverdale Playground, the last phase of the playground will be May 14, 2011 which is the grand opening. This is also the day of Riverdale school's summer picnic.

The Dogwood Park project status is on hold still awaiting contract from the state. There was a tentative build date of April 16, 2011. If nothing has been heard from the state by April 1, 2011, a public announcement will be made that the project has been pushed back.

Ms. Beasley wanted to make a brief statement regarding Rugby. There is no unwillingness in trying to support Rugby; there is just uncertainty if there can be accommodations regarding field space. There is still research taking place regarding possibilities. There is a park off of Whitten Road that is a very underused facility which Ms. Beasley is working on for consideration.

COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION LIAISON REPORT

Lisa Parker discussed the meeting with the planning commission. There were two items on the agenda. There has been a lot of time over the past couple of years trying to meet the needs of older neighborhoods that have private streets. There was discussion of private to public street conversions. There were two neighborhoods that came with applications, Poplar Grove and Devonshire.

There were handouts given regarding the Veteran's Committee.

Regarding the Germantown Youth Soccer Advisory Council, Kevin Young reported a meeting took place last evening, and the meeting identified how the recreational program had grown as well as the competitive program and how the director of coaching will be lost. Ms. Beasley spoke of a subcommittee that was formed to try to determine the best solution for the challenges and move forward. Mr. Young wanted the entire Commission to know for the record the sense of urgency and the timeline involved.

Mary Anne Gibson reported the next meeting for the Youth Sports Alliance will be April 21, 2011 to discuss the process of revisions of certain policies.

There was again discussion regarding Ocean View Farm and that there be complete clarity with the Aldermen regarding this project.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.