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Recreation Board Minutes
April 12, 2023.

Roger Carroll - May I have a motion to open the meeting.

Eric Acton - so moved

Clare Ceballos - second

All in favor - the motion is approved.

Roll Call of Members

Eric Acton - present

Tim Bezbatchenko - absent

Ann Brennan - present

Roger Carroll - present

Clare Ceballos - present

Aly DeAngelo - present

Joanne Pickrell - present

School Board Representative

Jessica Saad - present

City Council Representative

Mayor Kessler

Tim Pitts

Joe Miesse

Roger Carroll - may I have a motion to approve the March minutes.

Clare Ceballos - so moved

Aly DeAngelo - second

All in favor - the motion is approved

Jeffrey Park Alcohol Permit Request - Tim Pitts

Mike Price - I welcome Tim Pitts and Joe Miesse. They have reached out to us to offer a special event called the Jeffrey Jam at Jeffrey Park. It would be an alcohol event. Per City ordinance the Recreation Board can approve two alcohol events per year in the park. The requirements are that the event is open to the public, free to attend. They are coming to you to discuss the event. The idea at this point is that it is a fundraiser with at least three beneficiaries. The City of Bexley would be one to help with The Year of the Parks. The reason I bring this up is that on weekends we cannot rent the mansion and if the City was not one of the recipients then we would have to change to organizers for the event.

Tim Pitts - I have put on the Brewfest and the PorchFest which are community events to raise money for Alzheimerzer.

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Joe Miesse - Tim and I got together this year . I am a lifelong Bexley resident. In 2016 I lost my brother to cancer at the age of 35.

For 20 to 25 years before he died we had an event called Miesse Fest. It was located at a farm near Deer Creek and it was music oriented with college friends from all over the country with 80 to 100 people. When he passed away. It grew to attract up to 5,000 people initially. We moved it to a private residence up in Clintonville. Where it was scaled down with 3 or 4 bands in the name of music and my brother the Miesse Fest live on. We also brought in the Harmony Project which my brother was part of it form early on and I then reached out to David Brown. I reached out to Tim since he had Brewfest and Porchfest going on. So we wanted to bring Meese fest and Harmony Project together.

Tim Pitts - We used to go to Duck fest and it was a very laid back family oriented music festival. and it is now gone . We thought this concept could be brought to Bexley and do something that not just benefits our foundation but other non profits. When I met . Joe and we both want to keep our causes to the forefront but to also share the wealth. Maybe pick 3 other non profits to benefit for the event

Tim Pitts - We thought a music fest concept, Jeffrey Jam, could be brought to Bexley and do something that not just benefits our foundation but other non profits. Joe and we both want to keep our causes to the forefront but to also share the wealth. Maybe pick 3 other non profits to benefit from the event. If this is something the community embraces then the non profits change every year.

We would like to have it at Jeffrey Park. October 7 from 2:00 - 10:00 p.m. Day long music festival with live music. The event would benefit the Harmony Project, Hops and Gather Foundation, Bexley City Year of the Parks Projects, Bexley Minority Parents Alliance. We would need your approval. We would need some city staff help. It would be live music, beer, wine, and food trucks. The setting the time of the year and length of the event makes it special.

Joe Miesse - The amount of support we all have in Bexley we could get significant sponsorships.

Roger Carroll - Is that how you expect to raise the money

Joe Miesse - That would be the core foundation piece and obviously donations.

Roger Carroll - Are the bands donated ?

Joe Miesse - No, that is the biggest expense.

Mike Price - We talked about letters to residents around the Mansion letting them know about the event.

Ann Brennan - It would be an issue damaging the grounds if it is super soggy from rain.

Eric Acton - I think if we should run a rope along the creek while drinking , it could be a huge liability.

Mike Price - with the liquor license we have to delineate where the alcohol is allowed to go.

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Roger Carroll - May I have a motion to approve The Jeffrey Jam Music Festival on Saturday, October 7, 2023.

Clare Ceballos - so moved

Aly DeAngelo - second

All in favor - the motion is approved

Commonwealth Columbia Project - Update

Mike Price - The design team will present the formal plan to the board at our next meeting.

Mayor Kessler - Presented and reviewed illustrations of the original Commonwealth Master Plan.

Mayor Kessler - So far we are under budget.

Roger Carroll - I saw something regarding the design is going before ARB

Mike Price - The Pergola design is going before ARB tomorrow.

Roger Carroll - Is the Pond part of this project.

Mayor Kessler - Yes and presented some illustrations of the Pond.

Ann Brennan - Will future maintenance costs come from the Recreation budget or the City budget.

Mayor Kessler - We funded an Arborist and they will be very involved in Commonwealth Park .

2023 Summer Activity Brochure - Natalie Mullin

Mike Price - Summer Brochure should be out tomorrow.

Natalie Mullin - Registration opens April 25

We try to disperse some of the registration dates for the more popular activities. For instance the COSI event activities

Directors Report

Year of the Parks Update

Skate Park Design

Mike Price - We received 7 proposals for the design. We will be reviewing with the committee on Thursday and work to select a firm for the project.

It is hard to get proposals when you do not have a finalized budget. After we select a firm we will start a design process where the public will have input .

Mike Price - With the Year of the Parks we are also looking at the playground at Jeffrey and adding some natural features. We have also had conversations about redoing the entire Playground at Jeffrey Park which is over 25 years old.

Ann Brennan - is it dangerous?

Mike Price - No, just dated. There is just a lot of maintenance.

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Senior Center Update

Mike Price - The Mayor, met with the Senior Advisory committee. Ann Brennan also attended. He wanted to give an update on the development that is planned for here. The Mayor met with Barb Greiner who is working here part time and is very passionate about the project. He met with her and heard her concerns with the project and her experience with the space. Parking is the continual concern with the project. We are blessed right now with abundant parking which really doesn't exist almost anywhere else in the city except for the space next door. It is unlikely we will find another space anywhere else in the city like this. The goal is to maximize parking. The Mayor has worked on concepts of on street parking that adds up to 20 spots along the frontage on both sides. It would also be a change to the Cassady corridor. The Mayor shared these ideas with the advisory committee. They still had questions and thoughts. The project is on hold as it goes through the court system.

COSI Science Festival

Mike Price - I want to thank Natalie for all the hard work on the COSI Science Festival. She has taken the lead on this and brought everything together, including a great team of collaborators from the Library, Bexley City Schools, CSG, Capital and St Charles.

Natalie Mullin - Yes this year St. Charles is involved so most of the city entities are involved. We were hoping to have Johnson's in but the timing of the day did not work.

On Wednesday May 3 CSG is hosting the beebot challenge for families and Fox's Bagels is hosting how to make a bagel.

On Thursday, May 4 Bexley Library is hosting two sessions of You Can Too Labs.

On Friday, May 5

Bexley Recreation is hosting a Bexley Food tour starting with Maple Syrup production and pancakes then heading to Cherbourg to learn about gluten free baking.

On Friday night from 6:00 - 8:00 we are doing a Science Festival Community event on Capital's front lawn. It's going to be Science Fair style with different stations. Activities will be presented by the Bexley Library, St Charles, CSG, Bexley Schools and Capital University. All will have booths with STEM activities and the events will be interactive. This will be different from our typical community so we hope to attract a good crowd.

We are looking at a rain site because we don't want all their hard work to go to waste.

Mike Price - COSI will have their big event on Saturday.

Bexley Bloomers

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Mike Price - The Bexley Bloomers are set to start up in a couple weeks. They are again looking for volunteers to help throughout the year. They are going to start meeting on the 3rd Saturday of the month to attract more volunteers. We are working with St Charles this year. They are having their 100th anniversary and they are doing an outreach where they are sending volunteers throughout the community on April 22nd and we hope to remove Honeysuckle.

Additionally they have asked if the board would consider a liaison from the board to the Bloomers.

Ann Brennan - In the woodlands?

Mike Price - Yes and on the edge of the woods.

Ann Brennan - I thought we were going to wait for the commission.

Mike Price - I sent a notification that we were going to remove the Honeysuckle and why it was important.

Ann Brennan - Not on the creek side.

Mike Price - No not on the creek side.

Ann Brennan - Birds need lower level plants as well as high trees as they migrate. If you remove all the Honeysuckle that will have an impact. I think it is a better idea to wait till we get the Forrester and a habitat person to give direction. I see the wildlife in the woods everyday and see how they live and manage. They need the smaller trees, even the baby owls because they can't fly very high. Wildlife needs levels to survive.

So if they go in there and remove everything all at once and there isn't a plan to replace those with smaller hemlocks or whatever a Forrester would actually recommend. That is going to be a major issue for the habitat.

I am not against removing invasive species but I am against taking it all out at once without a plan to replace the level of trees that the wildlife needs. Otherwise it will have a big impact.

Mike Price - I agree. We had communication with you and Barb back in December and I thought we were on the same page

Ann Brennan - I didn't understand exactly what was going to happen when we had that communication. I didn't think it was going to be everything. I don't like invasive species but we haven't done a good enough job to replace them.

Mike Price - We can't plant any material until we remove the Honeysuckle. Need to remove the Honeysuckle because it affects the makeup of the soil. Nothing can grow there. It actually impacts the soil makeup. We have to remove it.

Mike Price - April 22 is a time when the Honeysuckle is easily identifiable

Ann Brennan - I didn't understand you were going to go in there and remove it all. I thought it was going to be a planned removal which is why I wanted this commission to get going.

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Eric Acton - Sounds like you would be more comfortable with a plan after walking through and I would be willing to walk with you to find a balance there. Because you are saying it is going to impact the balance of nature and if that is true and if we know we want to eliminate some of that Honeysuckle and replace it with a different alternative we can find a balance there.

I think there is something to get the volunteers started and have some removal with the plan we are going to replace it. We are not going to leave the Honeysuckle then we have to figure out what we are going to replace it with.

Mike Price - One of the things I sent along to you was from Joe Boggs from the Ohio Horticultural Society and he says Honeysuckle adversely impacts plant diversity which impacts bird diversity. By allowing Honeysuckle to be there you are preventing the diverse native plant that you should have there and therefore the bird diversity falls as a result.

Ann Brennan - If you remove it there has to be a plan to replace it. If there is a plan I don't know about it. What I am suggesting is if you remove it you keep some lower perching trees for birds until we have replacement available. And don't remove the burning bushes.

Egg Dash

Mike Price - The Egg Dash was this past Saturday. Thank you to Ron Gould and the parks maintenance staff for all of the setup and tear down. Also thank you to Lauren Miller, Emily Perfect and Marshall Drewry for putting the event together. Also thank you to Scout Troop 6413 for volunteering throughout the event. We estimate between 500-700 kids and families attended. This year we also had the Easter Bunny attend.

New Hire

Mike Price - We did fill the open maintenance position. The job was offered to Daniel Motter who is set to start on Friday, April 14. Daniel was a Bexley High School and Otterbein University graduate. He previously worked the summer camp program and more recently he worked for the Otterbein facilities department.

Roger Carroll - I was just wondering about staffing for the pool and camp.

Mike Price - Natalie is meeting with Swim Safe weekly now and what we are seeing universally is that it is a much better hiring environment. Some of that is due to increasing the pay but also I think across the board a lot of municipalities are seeing that people are going back to most of this kind of work. We are close to being full with our camp staffing. We expect the number of campers we can serve will not be impacted by staffing limitations.

Natalie Mullin - ?

Eric Acton - What is that age ?

Natalie Mullin - Middle School age.
Roger Carroll - Is it like a mentorship?

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Natalie Mullin - The pool is looking great. We have 40 lifeguards hired. About 50% are trained. Plan on having the water in the pool by the first week of May and they hope to start some on site training after that. Pay rate is \$15.00 per hour. Swim Instructor goal is to have 16 to 20. Some of the lifeguards can be hired as Swim Instructors. We have a Pool Manager and one assistant manager and they are looking for a second assistant. They can now focus much more on the facility.

Roger Carroll - Was your Hiring Event any help with hiring staff?

Mike Price - It was great and they had 50 - 60 individuals come through. We had a little younger person come through which will pay off in a year or two. Overall we were happy with the event and getting to connect with young people that might be future employees. It is something we definitely will do again.

Mike Price - we are also putting on a teen night here on Friday May 12th from 6:00 - 10:00 p.m. We are actively developing more teen outlets. We would like to develop some school year events on a Friday evening or Saturday. Trips where they could go to a sporting event or the Halloween event at Cedar Point. We are trying to develop a community of activities.

Roger Carroll - Anything moving on the Jeffrey Park Committee or whatever the official name is.

Mike Price - The facilitator has not gotten back. It is Jason Sudy who works with OHM Advisors.

Roger Carroll - has the committee been finalized?

Mike Price - No

Ann Brennan - Can we go ahead and appoint the committee so when he gets back to you he will be ready to go. What is the hold up on appointing the committee?

Eric Acton - Can you share with me what that is?

Mike Price - It is a committee to help develop a plan for Jeffrey Park. For instance we have a hold on any development in the park. It would include forest management, best practices for maintaining the park.

Ann Brennan - Preservation and Enhancement.

Mike Price - I think that means identifying opportunities if there are opportunities.

Ann Brennan - Initially it was to address the woodlands.

Mike Price - It would be a committee designed to get a plan accomplished. It would not be a perpetuity committee. It would develop a specific plan. With approval it would then become the practice for maintaining the woodlands.

Ann Brennan - I am frustrated with how long the process has taken.

Roger Carroll - May I have a motion to adjourn

Aly DeAngelo - so moved

Eric Acton - Second

All in favor - the motion is approved