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**Recreation Board Minutes  
February 7, 2024.**

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

So Moved - Ann Brennan

Second - Clare Ceballos

All In Favor - the motion is approved

Roll Call of Members

Eric Acton - Present

Ann Brennan - Present

Roger Carroll - Chair - Present

Clare Celallos - Present

Aly DeAngelo - Absent

Patrick King - School Bd. Representative - Absent

Lorie Ann Feibel - City Council Representative

May I have a motion to approve the January minutes

So moved - Ann Brennan

Second - Clare Ceballos

All in favor - the motion was approved

**Into The Woods Festival - Recap - Tim Pitts and Joe Miesse**

Mike Price - The Into The Woods Festival was held Saturday, September 29. Overall the event went well. There was coordination with the Celebrations and Events Committee and the Bexley Recreation staff. We provided set up support the week leading up to the event and most of our man power was concentrated on the day of. Roughly 20 staff hours for set up and roughly 34 hours on the day of the event.

I would suggest a ticketing system that while free, does allow us to have a good idea on attendance for various controls.

Joe Miesse - Mike summed it up well. We would have liked a few more people. We had no issues. We had more people later in the day. Like Mike stated, have some sort of a ticketing process to track numbers.

Tim Pitts - It's a challenge ticket when the event is free. Its hard to make people wait in line when the event is free.

We were not able to meet the 1,500 people to make a positive financial donation to the organizations which was the whole point of the event. It was meant to be a free event in support of nonprofits. So that was really important.

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It looks like a possible date for this year is Sunday, September 29. We learned we went a little too late and it was a little too cold. We learned this city was probably not ready for a music festival. We learned even more rigorously it was going to be a family event. Maybe open at 11:00 and things would be over by 6:00. This is what we are proposing for this year. I think it will be bigger. We are attempting to get more name recognition. We can make set up and clean up a little easier. Make things flow a little better.

Joe Miesse - We got a great response from everyone that attended.

Tim Pitts - We are having a really fun September Brewfest September 1, Smoke and Fire in the middle of September and InTo The Woods on September 29. From the perspective of what we are doing for the community a really fun month is planned.

Mike Price - The Harvest Fest is October 11. As the Main Event group is looking at the massive amount of events we are trying to spread things out. Try to have events 2 weeks apart as best we can. This would take some pressure on the maintenance staff and also the community has time between events.

Lori Ann Feible - The volunteers for the Harmony Project were great and the event brought in a lot of people who were not from Bexley and were impressed with the park

Roger Carroll - You mention you were able to make donations. Who did you give it to and how much did you raise?

Tim Pitts - Harmony Project, Birdie Light, Alzheimer's Year Of The Park \$5,000 to each entity.

Clare Celballos - Where did the money come from?

Tim Pitts - Sponsors, sale of the bracelets and merchandise and donations.

The first year there are a lot of costs we will not have moving forward.

Clare Celballos - Do you think you may have too many things in September? How do you distinguish the difference? Are they the same?

Tim Pitts - I understand three events in the same month. In To The Woods really has become a family affair. With the field and playground listening to music. I think Smoke and Fire is more of a food event. The Brew Fest is brewery focused with 30 breweries.

Roger Carroll - Does the location work for you?

Joe Miesse - Yes. It's a pretty big area and we are looking at reorganizing it and condensing it.

Roger Carroll - September 29 is doable for you?

Tim Pitts - Yes it is what is available and what works best.

Roger Carroll - We can make a decision by the next meeting.

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### **Pickleball Lights Discussion - Meryl Neiman**

Mike Price - We want to discuss the potential of lights at the pickleball courts.

I will give you a little background. The courts opened in 2020. The courts were designed with conduit for the potential to add lights. There was concern about the noise. We had a very public process and did not receive objections to the courts. Since they have been built, we also have not received formal complaints about the noise. A concern we had was the noise since it is a different experience from tennis. But I am happy to say we have not received an overwhelming concern about noise.

On November 10, 2023 I met with Meryl Neiman and Jan Kanas and Kathy Weissberg to discuss their hopes to have pickleball lights installed at the Jeffrey Park Pickleball Courts. We discussed the process, concerns, and general thoughts on the addition of pickleball lights.

We talked about the current Jeffrey Park Preservation and Enhancement Committee meeting on the park plan. We discussed that the Recreation Board was the governing body on Jeffrey Park.

Since the November 10 meeting Meryl and I have talked on a number of occasions. Meryl and Jan attended a Preservation and Enhancement Committee meeting to advocate for lights at the pickleball courts.

In December 2023 we sent letters to residents along Clifton Ave. to inform them of the discussion about the potential addition of pickleball lights and asked for them to reach out with any feedback. We received 3 against and 2 for the lights.

Meryl and Jan have asked to speak to the board about their desire to see lights added to the pickleball lights.

Mike Price - Introduced Meryl Neiman and Jan Kanas.

Meryl Neiman - I live on Clifton Ave. and hear the pickleball playing at my house. I started playing last summer. I was struck by the reality that Pickleball ended early after summer and was problematic. But then wondered why the tennis court had lights. I asked my neighbor and they were fine with the lights. So Jan Katy and I began this process and created a survey to find out what people at large thought. Ninety-four people had no objection, one person objected on behalf of the neighbors. Many people made comments and found this was something people felt very strongly about as to why we needed lights. Many thought the lights should be on a timer. Some of the things people raised were that you can't play in the dark. Students have less time with no lights, People who work and have no flexibility when they can play. Other people talked about how this was such a wonderful intergenerational community experience. Just from my experience I have met more people playing pickleball than all the years I lived here. I have noticed that after playing people go into Bexley to restaurants.

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Some mentioned equity in that the tennis courts have lights and pickleball lines that are not very good, and here you have beautiful pickleball courts that have no lights.

Again I wanted to say as a neighbor the pickleball noise has not bothered me because when we moved here about 10 years ago I knew I was moving across from a park but not a sanctuary park but a community center park. The pool is very active and a lot of noise comes from that. There are camps and kids. And St Charles behind us has a host of other noises.

We don't move to live where we live to have quiet. Also the way it is set up there are trees there and also its our front yards that face the pickleball courts. When I am in my backyard I am not on top of it. And none of us in terms of our outdoor living space. I did do some research on it because I know the pickleball world is struggling to respond to the noise issue. There are rackets and balls that make less noise. There is also acoustic fencing that has been very successful. I hope that is something you could consider.

I hope the Enhancement Committee would add pickleball plans to their plans for the park. The Enhancement Committee is made up of arborists and naturalists which is great for that purpose. But it doesn't make them a representative of the community body in terms of neighbors and pickleball players, that is a bigger community and a neighbor I am concerned about not hearing the voices of those people.

I do think a community meeting would be a good next step.

Jan Kanas - In the evening at dusk at the pickleball courts the players are trying to eke out the last remaining minutes of light to get their games in. I don't know if injuries are caused because of lack of lighting. But I think it should be some strong consideration of some idea about limiting the hours of play on the pickleball courts. It is important to think about the safety of those people who are going out at dusk and having a difficult time playing out there. It's not so safe. We noticed that they will turn the lights on at the tennis courts that slightly illuminate the pickleball courts but not fully and they use the existing lights to play pickleball sort of in the dark. I was just thinking, well if you just turn those lights around, because the tennis courts are under utilized, to the pickleball courts, that could be a solution.

Probably in the grand scheme of things there is probably more of a beautification issue. The issue could be identified with down lighting for light pollution purposes for the pickleball courts that are highly utilized and the tennis courts that are underutilized. The safety issue is important and should be raised whenever the community gets together to discuss this.

Roger Carroll - How did you circulate the survey?

Meryl Neiman - A couple of ways. There is an app for the people that play on the Bexley courts. I shared it in that. I sent it to the neighbors.

Roger Carroll - Would the fence that is there now be replaced or is it like a tarp of some sort what does that entail ?

Meryl Neiman - It goes inside and sort of like a tarp.

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Mike Price - It would be like the wind screens that are there now but filters the sound. It is much thicker. The little research I've done is that you cannot see through it. It is a thicker version and the noise cannot bleed out as much.

Clare Ceballos - Do you know how far the noise travels?

Mike Price - Its weather and seasonal dependant. I can tell you I can hear when I am walking up to the Mansion, especially when there are no leaves on a tree.

Meryl Neiman- I don't know how deep it goes into Lions Gate of Bishops Square. But that would be another thing to find out and also when does it make sense to have the lights turn off. It might be a good idea to look at other public pickleball courts asn see what the lighting situation is there.

Kathy Weissberg - You have St. Charles and football games with lights and soccer and bands and all the other activities there. Then you have the Swim meets and the lights go on till 10:00 and pool parties And we have the lights at Capital, I live in South Bexley.

It seems to me it is minor to worry about the pickleball lights when all these other facilities have lights and noise. I talk to people in Bishop Square and they say to me they can hear it but they are right out there playing so it is not disturbing anyone.

Roger Carroll - We want to keep the process open. Thank you for your comments and we really appreciate you coming.

### **Commonwealth Park - Public Workshop Recap**

Mike Price - We had a public workshop on January 24, 2023. We had roughly 50 or so in attendance. The focus of the workshop was to discuss the potential unification of Commonwealth east and west ,closing Columbia between the two parks. Mayor Kessler and I want to take the board through a little of the presentation and give you a sense of what we thought the take away was from the workshop and answer any questions from the board and talk about our next steps.

Mayor Kessler - Presented the plan from the meeting.

Mayor Kessler -When we take away asphalt surfaces it is just a win-win situation. We promised a follow up workshop after the discussions with the board and maybe a Council resolution. What we are really looking for from you is yes it makes sense to connect the two parks and we will figure out the details later. The time frame is important since the street is torn up and we don't want to put asphalt back if we decide to close it.

Clare Ceballos - Do you know what the traffic study results were?

Mayor Kessler - The volume of traffic was low

Mike Price - In the public meeting many things were of concern, parking, traffic, costs, and some things not directly related to Commonwealth events held at Jeffrey and the Governor's mansion.

Ann Brennan - Did residents from around the park respond ?

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Mike Price - The vast majority of folks that live around the park did not speak at the meeting. They were there but they did not speak. One did speak.

Mayor Kessler - One came against and left in favor.

Mayor Kessler - I have actually been trying to track what the sentiment is. Generally the people who reached out to us are in favor with some opposed.

Ann Brennan - What was the consensus of those against it ? Was it budgetary? Was it traffic issues?

Mike Price - I wouldn't say there was a consensus. They didn't all coalesce around one issue.

Mayor Kessler- A couple of the comments were budget , was it expensive, is it necessary.

Some concern is that it will affect their route of travel to work or airport. If you live on north or south Columbia you will become the next Bullitt Park I would think it would be a desired position.

Mayor Kessler - I would ask for feedback and recommendation to council for or against.

Roger Carroll - Does it have to be tonight?

Mayor Kessler - No it does not have to be tonight

We would like to get first reading at council next week but if you want to wait until your next meeting that is OK also. Council will not act without your recommendation. After this meeting we want to send out letters just to give an update as to what is going on.

Lori Ann Feibel - This park is named Commonwealth because it is for the wealth of the community. I would venture to guess that everyone, except for the few around the park, in the community would love to have the enhancement and more green space. I live on the corner of the park and I am out in my front yard a lot and there has not been a noticeable increase in traffic.

Roger Carroll - To me the things that are really important is the safety factor of closing the street and the design will make it more attractive.

Roger Carroll - Do you want more discussion and save it for the next meeting or do you want to vote on it now. Any thoughts.

Eric Acton - We played sports at the park in the 1960's , flag football. Watching it become a park is very important to me because I have taken my cross country team there for over 40 years and to have it blocked off a little there will be safer and I only see good things.

I also remember blocking Mound St. at Pleasant Ridge and that transformation has been phenomenal. The proposed plan is a great enhancement to the park.

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Roger Carroll - May I have a motion to support the connection for Commonwealth Park.

Ann Brennan - So moved

Clare Ceballos - Second

All in favor - The motion is approved.

## **Year of the Parks**

### **Four Season Shelter House**

Mike Price- We had a kick off meeting with the team from MSA on January 25, 2024.

We look at the programming needs for the facility and at the inspirational imagery for aesthetics.

We scheduled more planning meetings.

### **Skate Park**

Mike Price - We held the Skate Park public workshop on January 18, 2024.

We had a very strong turnout for the workshop. We received a lot of positive feedback. Hunger presented two draft plans. The feedback by and large was very happy with the plans. We took the feedback, and the committee met with Hunger on January 24, 2024 to discuss the workshop and provide additional feedback on design.

The committee will be meeting with Hunger tomorrow at 3:00 pm to review a final design for the committee to approve. The design will then come to the Rec. Board for approval as well.

### **Preservation And Enhancement Committee Update**

Mike Price - We had a committee meeting on January 10, 2024 to finish reviewing the draft plan and provide additional feedback prior to the public workshop. We have a public workshop scheduled for tomorrow February 8, 2024 at 5:00 pm at the Senior Center to review the draft.

### **Ice Rink**

Mike Price - The rink opened on January 14 and ran through January 21, 2024. During that time we had 563 skaters. Everyone loved the location. We had some challenges getting water to the rink for maintenance but we made it work. We filled up a truck that carries water and hooked it up for water. If we had a Four Season shelter house there it would make it a little easier. We had the Clifton Shelter House Shelter at the other location that provided some warmth and a four season restroom available. We still have the rink set up and we will see if we get one more cold snap before the season is over.

Aly DeAngelo - Will you put it there again next year?

Mike Price - It depends. I want to see about the Four Season Shelter. If we have that being built and we have the infrastructure there I think we would like to put it there. Also we would like to add more uplighting on the mansion.

Mike Price - Thank you to all the staff because it is a tremendous amount of work.

### **Jeffrey Woods Festival**

Mike Price - The Jeffrey Woods Festival is Saturday, March 2 starting at 8:00 am. The tapping process will take place on February 24 at 9:00 am at the Memorial Shelter House. The Woods Festival includes the wood chop shop, maple syrup production, sawmill demonstrations and some crafts.

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### **BCF Poker Fundraiser**

Mike Price - The event was held on February 2, 2024. We had 95 participants up from 73 in 2023. We have not received the numbers yet from BCF but overall the event was a big success. I am confident BCF raised more money than ever before.

The sponsors were Jimmy Johns, Seventh Son, Prices Macho Mustard, Bexley Media Group MAD Fun Studios and Linear One Technologies.

### **Nature Programming**

Mike Price - We held the first Nature Program of 2024 supported by a grant from Constance Paul Memorial Fund at the Bexley Community Foundation. We are holding nature programs throughout the year that are all free and support by the Community Foundation

On Saturday January 27 we held an introduction to Falconry and Birds of Prey in the Carriage Court at Jeffrey Mansion. We had 34 registrants. It was an awesome event. I would like to pass along kudos to Barb Triffon for pushing for more nature programs and for her involvement in developing our Nature Programming. She is involved in the execution of this grant and the programs that are funded by this grant. Thank you to Kevin Smith from the Recreation Department staff for his organization of the program.

The next program is Saturday March 9 at 10:00 a.m. at Jeffrey Mansion. The Ohio Wildlife Presentation and Rescue: This will be an informative and fun presentation and history of Ohio Native Wildlife

Clare Ceballos - I have a question. Why doesn't Bexley Rec. do drop-ins for workout classes ?

Mike Price - The biggest issue is we have a limited amount of space so we have no idea how many may drop in. Many of the classes are sold out.

Natalie Mullin - Some instructors do not want drop ins. We have done it in the past but it really is up to the instructor and we have limited space.

Recreation Centers have many instructors and so they can offer classes at a variety of times and you can stop in if you have a membership. They are set up a little differently than we are. We have done it before and we can revisit it.

Roger Carroll - May I have a motion to adjourn the meeting,

Ann Brennan - So moved.

Clare Ceballos - Second

All in favor - The motion is approved