



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Parks & Recreation Board

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Jan Ross, Chair
Eric Miller, Vice Chair
Ken Shepherd, Secretary
Chrissy Kaminski
Harvey McCleskey
Kevin McGinn
Donna Simmons

Nichole Butler, Clerk

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

7:00 PM

Gahanna City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Ross called the March 19, 2025 meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The agenda was published on March 14, 2025.

B. ROLL CALL

Staff in Attendance: Stephania Ferrell, Director of Parks and Recreation; Nichole Butler, Clerk; Brian Gill, Recreation Superintendent; Chelsea Heppert, Recreation Supervisor; Tyler Wilson, Recreation Coordinator

Present: 6 - Chrissy Kaminski, Kevin McGinn, Eric Miller, Donna Simmons, Jan Ross and Harvey McCleskey

Absent: 1 - Ken Shepherd

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Simmons, seconded by Kaminski that the February 19, 2025 Meeting minutes be approved. The motion carried the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Kaminski, McGinn, Miller, Simmons, Ross and McCleskey

Absent: 1 - Shepherd

Meeting Minutes 2.19.2025

D. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

E. HEARING OF VISITORS

F. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**H. NEW BUSINESS****Fee Waiver Request- Highpoint ES FP Gazebo**

Ross stated that the fee waiver request from High Point Elementary is attached to the agenda. Miller stated that there had been a request in April of 2024 for the same use. Butler clarified that the request last April was for a different grade at High Point but still for use of a shelter for lunch purposes after a field trip to the historical society. Ross asked for confirmation that the facility was available. Butler stated yes. McCleskey asked if the fee listed on the sheet was for a block rate of time or for the 1 hour they are requesting. Butler stated that because the shelters are not rented on an hourly basis the fee listed was for the block rate of time from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

A motion was made by Simmons, seconded by Miller that the Fee waiver request be approved. The motion carried the following vote:

Yes: 5 - McGinn, Miller, Simmons, Ross and McCleskey

Abstain, COI: 1 - Kaminski

Absent: 1 - Shepherd

High Point ES Fee waiver request

SPECIAL EVENTS UPDATE

Director Ferrell introduced Brian Gill, Recreation Superintendent. Gill stated that Recreation Supervisor, Chelsea Heppert and Recreation Coordinator, Tyler Wilson will be providing a 2024 wrap up of special events and volunteers within the department of Parks & Recreation, as well as a look forward to 2025. Heppert stated that she oversees special events, paddle programs, and volunteers and has been with the City of Gahanna since June of 2022. Wilson stated that he has been with the team since May of 2024. Heppert stated that in 2024 they were able to hire 22 seasonal employees to support Paddle Gahanna as well as special events from May thru September which was a record high as the numbers have historically been lower due to the evening and weekend hours of the positions. Heppert noted that in 2025, they have seen about 66% of staff return. Heppert stated that many of their staff are Gahanna residents and have grown up in Gahanna and continue to grow in Parks and Recreation. Heppert stated that Paddle Gahanna, which serves as the paddle boat and kayak rentals at Creekside Park ran for

approximately 15 weeks in 2024 between Memorial day thru a little after Labor day. Heppert noted that in those 15 weeks, there were 716 paddle boat rentals, and 253 kayak rentals. Heppert noted that the department is also able to offer kayak programs to residents including Celestial Paddles, Kayak 101, Big Walnut Floats, Camp Kayaking as well as using the kayaks for creek clean-ups.

Heppert highlighted the 2024 City of Gahanna Events noting that the Parks & Recreation department was able to offer 16 events, 5 (five) City of Gahanna events with an estimated attendance of around 25,000 people. Heppert highlighted some of the large events in 2024 such as Gahanna 175 anniversary, and the Great Gahanna Goblin Fest. Heppert stated that the department also supports or coordinates external events such as 5k events and other special events. Heppert stated that in 2024 there were 9 (nine) 5k events and 17 external special events. Heppert noted that along with overseeing special events, paddle programs and volunteers, she manages sponsorships for the department. Heppert stated that in 2024 the sponsorships provided a total of \$53,000 some being in-kind. Heppert noted that during some events they offer booth space for sponsors to apply to be present at an event. Heppert stated that in 2024 the department applied for a grant thru the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for Boating Safety Education, and in 2025 was awarded the grant. Heppert states this grant will help the department purchase additional kayaks, a new kayak trailer and more lifejackets. Heppert stated that they also have the opportunity to work with volunteers including over 300 volunteers from Columbus Academy, Gahanna Lincoln High School, the Gahanna Kiwanis, and KEMBA Financial Credit Union. Heppert noted that they are looking to grow the Volunteer program in 2025. Wilson highlighted that in 2025 the department will be hosting the Gahanna Market, formerly known as the Make Gahanna Yours Farmers Market. Wilson stated that there are many eager vendors and the vendor application is expected to go live on Tuesday April 1, 2025 in OpenGov, which serves as the permitting software thru the city. Heppert noted that many of the applications the department uses will be going to OpenGov including the 5k, Special Event and vendor applications.

Gill presented that each year the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) designates the month of July as Parks & Recreation Month. Gill states that each year the department tries to do something to celebrate the month. Gill stated that the theme that NRPA selected for 2025 is Build together, Play together. Gill stated that the department will be hosting a one day event for Parks & Recreation Month and is using the theme Build, Explore, Play, Join the Fun! Gill stated that the event will take place on Saturday July 12, 2025 at Friendship Park to allow community members interactive ways to experience aspects of our department, including projects that are both recently completed as well

as upcoming projects, scavenger hunts, paddling in the Big Walnut, the story trail and interact with many of our team to see what the department and our parks have to offer. Ferrell stated that a lot of the work done by the special events team is the work you don't always see, and that they are working very hard to make sure everyone has an enjoyable time while also being thoughtful and doing so with a smile on their face. Ferrell gave kudos to the staff for a job well done.

Miller asked if there was a fee for Paddle Gahanna. Heppert stated that the rental fee is \$10 per boat rental. Heppert stated that there is a QR code available at the mill race where the paddle boats are that will take them to PaddleGahanna.Com which allows them to book paddle boats. Miller asked where the Gahanna Market is going to be located. Wilson stated that the Gahanna Market will take place on Creekside Plaza, on the 4th Wednesday of the month from June thru September.

Ross asked if there was the ability to increase the number of volunteers the department utilizes. Heppert stated that they will be working towards creating sustainable, or consistent volunteer opportunities.

Simmons asked if the Smores in the Park events would return in 2025. Heppert stated that they will be back in the fall and more information will become available as it gets closer.

PR-Special Events Review 2024

I. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ferrell reminded the board that the State of Our City event will be taking place on Thursday March 27, 2025 at 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM at the Menlo at Edison on Science Blvd. in Gahanna and encouraged them to attend. Ferrell stated that Friday June 6 at 4:00 PM will be the official Grand Opening for the Mountain Bike Trail at Academy Park. Ferrell also stated that she had the opportunity to provide an update to city council on Monday March 17, 2025. Ferrell stated that this was a recreation operations update, and that the department will have the opportunity to present a park operations update to city council later in the year. Ferrell highlighted that the Gahanna Golf Course opened on Monday March 10, 2025 and this year is the 50th anniversary of the golf course and will be hosting. Ferrell stated that seasonal hiring has been in full swing and that the staff recruiting has been focused not only on hiring quality staff but also on retention of staff. Ferrell noted that the department focuses on making staff feel valued and wanted while also providing opportunities for growth within the department. Ferrell stated that many of the seasonals have started in a base level position and over the years have elevated to leadership positions within that area which also helps with retention. Ferrell noted that several weeks of camp weeks for in-house camps filled before non-residents were able to register and stated that this is even

with increased enrollment capacity from the year prior.

Simmons requested a list of parks that received Automated external defibrillator (AED) devices. Ferrell stated that she would provide the complete list at the next meeting but essentially any park that has programmed space.

McCleskey stated that he has enjoyed the mountain bike trail already and would love to get back out there and use it but has been thinking about the confluence of baseball season and mountain bike use as the paths are utilized for both. Ferrell stated that with the support of Mayor Jadwin and City Council, the city will be able to make additional improvements to the parking lot, playground and shelter house which will better assist the flow of the trail and will provide better understanding of multiple users and cross-pollination of use to introduce a better and safer route. McCleskey suggested there be an ask for cyclists to dismount from their bikes at the trail going between the baseball diamonds at Academy Park as when the diamonds are in use that trail is a high traffic area for spectators and suggested signage to aid in the safety. Ferrell stated that with the improvements and wayfinding signage this should improve but agreed that it could be an issue. Simmons stated that she has walked the mountain bike trail and it was a great workout. McCleskey stated it is a tremendous addition to the Gahanna Park system. Simmons requested to see the designs for the Academy Park Improvements. Ferrell stated that they will be presenting them to the board however there were significant design resolutions that needed to occur before presenting it. Miller asked what the Bally Sports Camp program was. Ferrell stated the Bally Sports Group is a contractor who provides sport focused programs and camps for the department and will provide summer camps that are focused on specific sports each week.

PR-February Directors Report 2025

J. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Bicycle & Trail Advisory Committee (BTAC)

Miller stated they did not meet. Miller noted that the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) has distributed more than 52 million dollars in federal funding for infrastructure projects in Central Ohio of which \$4,730,000 will be used for the Big Walnut Trail between Cherry Bottom rd. and Morse Rd.

ii. Gahanna Active Senior Advisory Committee (GASAC)

Simmons Stated the committee met on Tuesday March 18, 2025 and that the minutes are attached to the agenda. Simmons stated that they are preparing for the elections in May for their committee. Simmons noted that the current membership is 500 members. Simmons stated that the next meeting will occur on May 20, 2025 at 3:00 PM at the Senior Center.

PR-3.18.25 GASAC Minutes

iii. Natural Resources Advisory Committee (NRAC)

Kaminski stated they did not meet. Ross asked if there was a meeting planned. Ferrell stated that nothing is currently scheduled however there will be a section of property along North Hamilton Road that the department would like input from NRAC. Kaminski asked where the property was located. Ferrell stated that there is adjoining city property to Peace Lutheran Church that the church has developed a walking path on their property and would like to expand into the city property.

K. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Miller stated that he attended the Gahanna Soccer Association board meeting in March. Miller stated that the registration numbers are similar to last year and that they are in need of coaches for the season.

L. ADJOURNMENT