

# PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

City of Findlay  
October 16, 2023

---

## MINUTES

### **ATTENDANCE**

Members Present: Rob Martin, Chair, Matt Cordonnier, Jeremy Kalb, Josh Palmer, Gary Pruitt, Jim Seebald.

Staff Present: Dave Honse, Lisa Mansfield, and Kathy Launder.

Guests: Sarah Perrigo, Findlay-Hancock County Economic Development.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the August 21, 2023, Parks and Recreation Board were not able to be approved due to lack of a quorum.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Greenway Trail Phase II Project Update: Kalb stated that seeding and grading is being completed. The bridge is scheduled to arrive October 25. Once the bridge arrives, State Route 568 will be closed for 45 days to set the bridge and pour the deck. In the spring, will follow up with seeding. Will be open for use over the winter.

Downtown Recreation Area Update: Director Martin stated that the City is getting additional environmental reviews completed. This project is on idle until the environmental report is received.

Fort Findlay Playground Project: Kalb stated that he provided the Board's feedback to the consultant. Fencing all around the playground is included in the original concept. The consultant will update the renderings in November. Looking to bid the project in winter 2023-2024 and construction in 2024.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

A.F.T.E.R. Hours Report: Sarah Perrigo, Project Coordinator with Findlay-Hancock County Economic Development, present the A.F.T.E.R. Hours Report. At the June board meeting, they were talking about how difficult it is to retain young talent. The board stated that young professionals should be reached out to find the answers. A group was made up of young professionals from a range of different industries, 28 years and younger, four-year college education, and not originally from Findlay.

One area that received attention is an area that the City of Findlay and Hancock Park District already do well – walking paths. The task force expressed excitement about the extension of the bike/walking path out towards Riverbend Park and wished that there was a more cohesive and comprehensive walking path system throughout our community. Some of the residential neighborhoods in Findlay are cut off from these amenities by major thoroughfares with unsafe pedestrian crossings (i.e., Tiffin Ave.) or are too far removed from the existing trails and require individuals to drive to them. Walking paths are a great, accessible form of recreation that allow people with different abilities and exercise preferences to use them in a non-structured fashion.

Another recreational amenity that spurred discussion was an indoor recreation center. Not only would this asset facilitate recreation in the winter when weather may otherwise prevent it, it would also provide a safe space to exercise in the summer as we see hotter and hotter temperatures that are hazardous to individuals' health

Sport equipment and bike rentals could help facilitate physical recreation and the use of public parks. Many young professionals live in smaller apartments and don't have the space required for equipment storage. Instead, it would be more convenient to be able to rent equipment such as bikes or kayaks, or

even smaller items such as badminton sets, bocce ball, croquet equipment and more. These rentals of smaller items could be a great way to see further activation within open spaces such as Emory Adams park. It is worth noting that Zonta Landing currently offers kayak rentals, but the limited hours of operation and lack of credit card capability have deterred task force members from utilizing the service.

There are church softball leagues, company ultimate frisbee leagues, and neighborhood pick-up basketball games but finding them can be a challenge. Through the grapevine, individuals often hear about these various adult recreational leagues that exist within the Findlay community but are unsure how to get involved. The task force expressed interest in these leagues such as soccer and sand volleyball if they knew how to find them and become involved. If an entity would take charge in consolidating these opportunities and facilitating participation in them, these leagues could be extremely influential in the retention of young professionals. It would create a platform for building friendships which are critical to an individual's happiness in their community. While not quite a "league," structured outdoor fitness classes could be another great way to further utilize our existing parks and promote health within the community. This could be accomplished through partnerships with local fitness organizations and could include yoga, Zumba, and cardio drumming. If one fitness organization didn't want to undertake regular programming, it could become a series with a different group hosting the event each month during the summer. These types of public/private partnerships could add a lot of value to our existing recreational opportunities.

When shown the concepts for the City of Findlay's proposed Downtown Recreation Area, the task force was willing to forget about all their other suggestions if they could just have that park. In many of the cities that young professionals are flocking to, there are parks and riverwalks along water features downtown. The Downtown Recreation Area would create a space that individuals felt safe and happy to pass time in and would create pride in an area that is otherwise an eyesore. It would also create a very favorable entrance into our downtown and facilitate connectivity with areas north of the Blanchard River. The Downtown Recreation Area would be transformational for Findlay and the task force expressed their overwhelming support for this development.

Director Martin stated that this report validates what the City is already doing and other conversations that we are having. Sarah stated that part of the conversation was messaging. Perrigo stated that it is difficult reaching people her age. She doesn't necessarily have the answer. Doesn't know what social media platform that would be. It is not the newspaper. Director Martin stated that when talking with companies considering a move to Findlay, they ask what is there to do for employees when they are not working. When we have shown the Downtown Recreation Area conceptual design, it is what companies are looking for their employees. That will attract and retain employees. It will create many opportunities for engagement. Councilman Palmer stated that it is nice to hear confirmation that the Downtown Recreation Area is very popular with young professionals and looking forward to pushing it through. Mansfield suggested that information regarding recreation leagues be forwarded to the companies themselves to distribute to employees. Perrigo stated that is a great idea. Most of the information she received regarding Findlay when first moving here was through her employer or coworkers.

Lincoln School Playground: Director Martin stated that Lincoln School is in the process of being sold by Findlay City Schools to a developer. Change of zoning has recently been approved. Working through the obligations of keeping the historical integrity of the property. The developer noticed that every time he is on site the playground is being used frequently. Community members have asked if the playground will be maintained and be available for area children. If this sale comes to fruition, the developer has offered to donate the southwest playground to the City and will split the parcel. They will tear out the southeast playground but will give the equipment to the City for the southwest playground area. If everything goes as planned, wanted to give Parks and Recreation Board a heads up since there is a commitment to own and maintain the playground. The equipment is not new. Optimistic that it will last another 7-10 years before we would have to replace the equipment. City would be responsible to replace. Does the Board see value in owning? Cordonnier stated that it makes sense. It's a good idea of keeping a park in the neighborhood. Councilman Palmer stated that kids always use that playground. Will have to go to Council as we move forward for final approval.

Review of Recreation Fee Schedule: Mansfield stated that the last time we increased ice rates was in 2018. The increase for 2024 will be 3% which puts us in a good range with other expenses. In line with other recreation arenas. The proposed increase in fees are middle of the road. We changed vendor for pizza for birthday parties which is the reason for the increase. Increasing shelter house, band shell, green space, park rentals and overnight camper parking by \$5.00. This helps to cover our costs and is still comparable.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Recreation Department Report: Mansfield reported the following dry floor events being held: MMA, Friends of Findlay gathering, hot tub sale, Hancock Leadership and Hancock Youth Leadership kick off, and sports car show. Held the United Way Campaign kick off in September. In August, the Special Olympics regional softball tournaments were held at the Diamonds. The ice was put back on September 9. October is busy with Findlay High School Hockey. At the end of October, the Diamonds will close to regrade and top dress the fields.

Parks Maintenance Department Report: Honse reported that they painted the kiddie pool. The ballfield lights at Rawson Park and Cooper Field will be replaced over the next two years. The tennis court at Rawson Park was paved. Will let set over the winter. Will stripe for tennis courts and pickleball courts. In 2024, the poolhouse roof and windows will be replaced. With the Hancock Park District grant dollars we will tuckpoint the restroom at Riverside Park, replace Bernard Park basketball court, repave and reseal the pickleball court at Riverside Park. Per request of neighborhood, will add toys for older kids and really little kids at West Park. Looking to move the basketball court at Riverside Park from the parking lot at the Kiddie Koral to off of Hemphill/McManness bridge area. The shuffle board court has been removed and grass has been planted. Will be adding climber toys and make the ground area turf rather than mulch. Add some musical toys. Mansfield stated to keep in mind that tennis is actually increasing at a higher rate than pickleball.

## **OTHER REPORTS**

Hancock Park District Report: Pruitt reported that they have two outdoor recreation programs this fall. One is a Hike It program. This is the ninth year for the program and had 160 participants so far which is the highest number they have had in 9 years. When participants register, they get a free hiking stick along with maps and a list of 11 trails throughout Hancock County. Always try to do a mixture of City parks, Park District parks, and village parks and sometimes State parks. Try to promote places that people may have not been before. Program is from September 1-November 30. If hike 8 out of the 11 trails they will get medallion. It can be affixed to the hiking stick. The medallion changes every year. The ages of participants range across the board and attracts families. Fall float trips started last weekend and will last weekends through November 5. The Blanchard River in the fall is beautiful with the trees changing reflecting on the water and the colorful leaves floating on the water. The float is from Riverside Park to State Route 568 bridge and back.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board is scheduled for November 20, 2023, at 4:00pm in the Mayor's Conference Room of the Municipal Building.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Launder  
City Clerk