

**Huron Joint Recreation District
Regular Board Meeting – Minutes
Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020 at 6:30pm
Huron City Municipal Building, Huron, OH**

Members Present: Christine Crawford, Rene’ Franklin, Gordon Hahn, Jennifer Kilbury, Jodi Mast, Jonathan Merckens, Julie Spitzley

Present from City of Huron: Mike Spafford

Present from HPRD: Doug Steinwart, Brian Croucher, Rick Reinbolt, Dan Weaver

Members Absent: Bryan Edwards, Tom Solberg

Community members in attendance: None

- 1. ROLE CALL OF MEMBERS:** See above.
- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Ms. Kilbury requested motion to approve minutes from Sept. 1, 2020 meeting. Motion by Ms. Mast; seconded by Ms. Franklin; minutes approved.
- 3. AUDIENCE COMMENTS:** None
- 4. NEW BUSINESS**

a. Discussion regarding “Road Diet” concept for US Rt. 6

Mr. Steinwart stated he asked Mr. Spafford to discuss this concept with the Board, as a quality of life issue. Mr. Spafford explained that “Road Diet” describes re-imagining the use of existing pavement to form Bike Lanes. This is accomplished by reducing existing four vehicle lanes to three lanes, with the center lane used as a turn lane. The existing “shoulder” space on both sides is then used to form bike lanes. He distributed a graphic to the Board illustrating how this could apply from Berlin Road to Williams St. to form a bike line on either side of Rt. 6. He noted that there are several areas, due to concrete medians/bridges, where this cannot be applied.

Mr. Spafford continued—A major objective is to slow traffic down, so we do not have a four lane highway running through the middle of the City; also to encourage people to use this as a residential-friendly area; in addition to a quality-of-life benefit, since there is no bike-friendly way to get from the west side to the east side. This concept was developed through ODOT traffic studies, in collaboration with the Federal Highway system. Due to prior negative public feedback, council had previously sought to replace the existing infrastructure as it was.

Now that we have had the benefit of working through the summer with the two-lane configuration, it is an opportunity for council to revisit the subject. Since we cannot do permanent striping this Fall, we can do temporary striping to “test run” the concept. This will allow real experience in traffic flows, as well as the opportunity for the community to experience the concept. Ms. Crawford commented that the prior negative comments had focused on the light / round-about at Berlin Road. She said now we are hearing many positives on a Bike Lane from the community. Mr. Spafford also addressed various questions from Board members. Mr. Steinwart pointed out that the plan is an extension of the “connectivity” we have been working on in our department. He suggested that the Board give it some thought, and consider crafting a letter to Council.

b. Fall Park Improvements

Mr. Steinwart updated the Board: We are working on installing a water line at Nickel Plate Beach to bring a line into the Park near the Changing Room building; with a concrete pad for outdoor “shower towers”—plus a foot washing station and drinking fountain. This has been our most frequent request from beach users for many years. We are working with the Water Department on this project.

Mr. Steinwart continued -- we are also working on “touchless” conversions in some of our park restroom facilities. Local governments were awarded CARES Act funds, which allow us to do this project in response to COVID; really good upgrade to our public restroom facilities. Mr. Steinwart stated that Rick and Dan are also working on the “Quads” Shelter at Fabens Park. Replacing damaged wood, installing new fascia, and re-roofing. Also upgrading Fabens Park batting cage, re-purposing artificial turf from the Kalahari Field. We will also be doing some field restoration at Fabens this fall.

Mr. Steinwart continued Board update: Huron is hosting the National Walleye Tour Championship, through the non-profit Fish Huron Ohio organization, on October 14-16th at the Huron Boat Ramp. This event receives a lot of media coverage, which spotlights Huron. We were able to obtain a grant from Lake Erie Shores and Islands to produce an event video for future use in promoting our area. Additionally, Mr. Spafford and I attended a meeting in Port Clinton with ODNR Div. of Wildlife. They are interested in installing a public fish cleaning station at the Huron Boat Ramp. It is in the initial stages of a long-range State plan.

Mr. Croucher updated Board on Fall Ball: One of our largest programs; it began on August 15th and finished on October 4th. We had one rain-out for each baseball and softball. We had 31 baseball teams and 16 softball teams participate; softball was affected by COVID this year as it is recreational teams, versus traveling teams in baseball. Baseball participation continues to grow. COVID guidelines caused us to change the schedule after week one, and then changed again right before the end of the season. The program ended well with positive feedback. He listed teams that participated from a dozen surrounding communities. Concerning Sport Force impact on the program, he stated: No, in the number of teams; Yes, for umpire availability. Mr. Steinwart commented that the amount of work that goes into getting the fields ready is remarkable.

Mr. Steinwart added that we continue to work with the Fish Huron group on a public art project; you will probably see some social media information of the funding efforts.

5. CHAIRMAN COMMENTS: Ms. Kilbury stated that Mr. Solberg asked her to pass-on that the parks and Boat Ramp look great, and thanks to the department for their hard work—Ms. Kilbury agrees. Mr. Spafford stated that we have been working to salvage some parts of Winter Fest, working with Chamber and small businesses; while adhering to COVID guidelines. We do have a deadline of Nov. 1st to commit to fireworks. Ms. Mast stated support of bike/pedestrian lanes. Mr. Reinbolt thanked Carmeuse-Huron Operation for the donation of a new bench on the ConAgra site. Ms. Spitzley stated how special this group was to her father; Mr. Hahn stated that he would like to see Parks & Rec do something that would honor Dr. Dreffer. Mr. Steinwart stated it is an opportunity to honor Dr. Dreffer, Tom Solberg Sr., and Don Ritzenthaler. Mr. Hahn said he does not have a suggestion right now, but Ms. Spitzley thought that the ConAgra property may be a possibility.

6. ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Ms. Spitzley, seconded by Ms. Mast.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Irvin, Administrative Coordinator
Huron Parks & Recreation