

**Oxford Recreation Board
Meeting Minutes
10 / 8 / 20**

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Present: Craig Bennett; Rich Kammer; Mike Smith; Kevin Ackley; Wes Cole
Absent: Holli Morrish and Ken Bogard
Staff: Casey Wooddell & Deanna Barbour

III. Reports

a. Recreation Director

i. Community / Special Events

Halloween Circus – Mr. Wooddell advised this year we have a new event for Halloween. In years past we've had the Trick or Treat OPRD style in the uptown parks that included a dog costume contest, games, kids costume contest and candy. Due to COVID this year we've arranged for a drive thru circus. People will enter the drive thru Circus off of Tollgate drive, with the circus performances going on in the outfield of the baseball diamond. Special artists include an aerialist, wheel walker, stilt walker and more. OPRD will also distribute candy in a fun and safe way to all kids who come through the parade. Mr. Wooddell noted we are expecting a high volume of traffic for the event and worked with the Chief John Jones of the Police Department for traffic options and controls for the event. Mr. Wooddell said hopefully this will bring in visitors from out of town that will also support local businesses. Mr. Bennett asked will you allow donations? Mr. Bennett said an example would be when you go to see Christmas lights in Eaton they accept donations to help keep the event running. Mr. Wooddell said OPRD is looking at a similar option to donate. This event costs \$5000, with \$2500 of that being paid by the Oxford Community Foundation. Mr. Wooddell said he will check with the Foundation about the possibility of doing this for this event. Mr. Wooddell added he appreciated Mr. Bennett bringing that up.

Veterans Day – Mr. Wooddell advised Veterans Day this year will be done virtually. We will have many local representatives, including Mayor Smith, do a recording and attach clips of each part of our regular ceremony and put it all together in one big video. Mr. Wooddell noted we will still have the wreath uptown at the memorial wall along with the red and white carnations for people to place in the wreath in remembrance for a loved one who served.

Holiday Fest – Mr. Wooddell noted Holiday Fest is usually scheduled for Dec. 5, the first Saturday of December. Mr. Wooddell said due to COVID, we will not have all the events we normally have uptown. The general plan is to have a drive thru type Santa visit. Right now it's looking like Santa in a drive thru tent, this would allow for some sort of interaction with Santa and allow for Santa to give them a gift. This is what has been discussed so far, definitely more details to come.

Mr. Wooddell added the City is working together with the Chamber, Arts Center and PACO to do a winter wonderland uptown in hopes to bring people uptown to visit businesses. Mr. Wooddell suggested maybe live stream of a Miami football game uptown would bring help drive businesses. Mr. Bennett noted he just learned Miami has a home football game that day on Dec. 5th, and it states the game says most likely early afternoon for the game.

b. Talawanda Schools / Sports

Mr. Wooddell noted the most he knows about Talawanda is they are playing a football game against Belmont on Friday night. Adding OPRD is streaming it on the big screen in the gym during our teen lock in that night. This gives the participants the option to watch the game or play video games in the teen center.

Mr. Wooddell advised School by the Pool ends on October 16. Talawanda goes back to school on Tuesday, October 20th. Our School by the Pool Education Instructor, Jennifer Jones, has been called back to Talawanda to teach. While we are sad to see the program end, we are happy school will go back in session and Ms. Jones back to work.

Mr. Wooddell asked Wes Cole what Friday night football will look like for this upcoming game. Mr. Cole advised this Friday's game is with Dayton Belmont at 7pm at Talawanda High School. Mr. Cole said the game attendance will be like all our other games this year and tickets are only sent out for family, close friends, etc., to keep the attendance numbers limited. Mr. Cole noted if we win this weekend, we will play the following weekend. If we lose, we can still play if we can find another team to play. It will be a play it by week situation. Mr. Cole stated games will be played live stream on Chatter Box Sports. Mr. Wooddell said I know you spoke with Ryan about this Friday adding we're going to live stream your game for our teen center event that night. Is there a charge for the Chatter Box service? Mr. Cole said yes, there's a monthly fee and you can stream the service at the TRI. Mr. Wooddell asked who's doing the camera work? Mr. Cole said Chatter Box is teaming with us and doing all our home games and they also partnered with around 10 schools around southwest Ohio. Mr. Cole said our media class is pretty good and Chatter Box decided they would allow our students to help out with the video work for the games.

c. Miami University

Mr. Bennett noted the home football game schedule for now is Wed Nov 4, Tuesday, Nov 17 & Saturday, Dec 5. Mr. Wooddell asked is Dec 5 the last game. Mr. Bennett said no Dec 12th is the last game. Mr. Wooddell asked are there 7 games total? Mr. Bennett confirmed yes.

Mr. Wooddell asked Mr. Kammer how are things on the Rec side at Miami. Mr. Kammer noted they're doing a pretty cool thing with a program called "Bikes, ghosts and gears" in October. You can call the Rec Center to set up this bike tour. Miami has a fleet of bikes available for use and they are taking the people / students on this haunted bike tour of Miami facilities. The advertisement doesn't say if it's for anyone or if only for students. Mr. Ackley said this is more for students. Mr. Kammer said Miami is also partnering with other organizations for the hike a thon as a virtual challenge that is being promoted by the Healthy Coalition which is for all of Oxford.

Mr. Ackley said the ice arena is staying cold. We currently have small options for students and we have all our youth programs going. Mr. Ackley noted originally all his activities/sports were approved, and then that changed and he was told not to proceed with those plans. Mr. Wooddell said we saw the Miami baseball team here using the batting cages at the TRI ball field. Mr. Ackley said he thinks sports are coming back little by little; adding skating just got on the ice yesterday and hockey is starting this Saturday.

IV. **Old Business**

Mr. Wooddell advised he would like to plant the seed of an idea with this Board for a moment and let them contemplate it a while and then come back and review it in November. Mr. Wooddell noted there are \$0 dollars in the 2021 City Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for Parks and Rec projects. Mr. Wooddell stated the City had to make some difficult decisions to cut budgets back and all parks and recreation projects were pushed back at least a year. Mr. Wooddell continued on to note the upcoming projects listed in the CIP plan for 2022-2024, which are as follows:

Pickle Ball / Tennis – Mr. Wooddell advised this is a 2020 project, but will be pushed to spring 2021. It includes a combination of tennis and pickleball courts and will be in the same location as the existing tennis courts. The TRI Board is still deciding between concrete and asphalt courts, and finalizing the layout. The City and TRI are scheduled to split the total cost of the project.

OCP Ball Field – Mr. Wooddell shared his screen to display a diagram of one of the baseball fields at OCP that currently does not get a lot of baseball usage. Mr. Wooddell described how making a few changes to the field by adding 2 additional fields will allow for more usage and be very beneficial for tournament play. This set up works well for families and will give more options for play. We are working on getting part of these fields done for fall. Mr. Wooddell stated we did not get the CIP money we applied for but we are going to do what we can. We think these additional fields will get heavy usage, especially by 8-12 year old teams.

Dog Park – Mr. Wooddell advised the current Dog Park is located on Morning Sun Road. The park is really small for a dog park but it has served its purpose. Due to the small size it's difficult to keep grass alive there because it is so heavily used. Mr. Wooddell feels moving the dog park to a bigger location would be a great option. Mr. Wooddell showed a template of the size of the current dog park and the new possible site off Bonham road. Mr. Wooddell stated this area definitely offers more room, and offers a very large grass field, with a great location right across from Leonard Howell. The Bonham road option will give a lot more space both for dogs and for parking. Mr. Smith said just by observation it's a great location and if we move forward we need to coordinate with Miami because they were renting that field for football parking. Mr. Wooddell said he has spoken with Miami and they have indicated earlier this year they did not intend to use that field for parking any longer. Mr. Wooddell added this location is also adjacent to the walking trail and seems like a great addition to that area.

Playground replacement program – Mr. Wooddell advised Oxfords City playgrounds are getting older. We currently have several playgrounds that are near 20 years old, adding we did replace one in 2018 at Leonard Howell Park. Mr. Wooddell would like to begin the process of a plan to start replacement. Playgrounds start around \$30,000 and go up from there. Mr. Wooddell stated the one at the Community Park is a large playground and replacement would cost around \$150,000. Mr. Wooddell stated there are grants and other options out there to look into also, but wanted that to be something the board members are considering.

Future plans – Mr. Wooddell asked the Board to start thinking about things they would like to see included in the next 5 years CIP plan. Mr. Bennett asked has anything been discussed regarding the old pool site and a plan for the future? Mr. Wooddell said he hopes the joint TRI/Recreation Board meeting coming up will help shed some light on things the TRI would want to do with that space. Mr. Wooddell said just like everything else, when COVID hit things got pushed back a little. However, they do want to do some sort of multi-use indoor space. Not huge but big enough to serve the small region around

Oxford, as well as serve our parks and recreation needs with youth basketball. Mr. Wooddell added it sounds positive this season that we'll be able to get into some Talawanda facilities for gym use, so we can move forward with our basketball season. Mr. Cole said he spoke with Jake Richardson this morning and he knows he's talked with the other coaches about gym availability also. Mr. Cole noted with our schools going back in session we should be able to have those games come in and all should run smoothly if everyone follows the rules. Mr. Wooddell said this is vital for us; we have 240-260 kids that will play basketball this season and gym availability is the deciding factor. Anything we can do to get into some of those gyms would be helpful, asking if Mr. Cole can help us do it that would be greatly appreciated also.

TRI Property – Mr. Wooddell gave a brief description on the City and TRI's relationship and lease agreements, noting the City pays the TRI each year to run the parks and recreation operations from the TRI building and grounds. Mr. Wooddell noted that cost is around \$40,000 per year right now, and increases by about 2% each year. Mr. Wooddell is focusing long-term, stating the Skate Park needs repair work, outdoor basketball courts have cracks, the TRI playground is from 2001 and all these are in need of updates. Mr. Wooddell noted however, the TRI does not have a lot of money, reminding the board members the TRI is a non-profit and relies heavily on the money from the lease agreement with the City. Mr. Wooddell said if the City continues to pay the TRI \$40,000 a year, factoring in the 2% per year increase, in the next 25 years we will have paid them over \$1.2 million. Mr. Wooddell asked, could we do something to put some money upfront now and say we're going to do an upfront renewal on some of the facilities and instead of a 2 year lease agreement, could we do a 25 year lease agreement? Mr. Wooddell noted he wanted to get the Board's opinion and see if this would be mutually beneficial plan for both the City and the TRI. The City could save money long-term, and the TRI could get new facilities in the short term. Mr. Smith stated he likes the initial idea. Mr. Smith said long term we would like to have our own Parks and Recreation services but doesn't see any immediate money for that. Mr. Wooddell added, the TRI property is an outstanding location and hopes to see parks and recreation run operations from this location and continue the positive relationship with the TRI for many years. Mr. Kammer asked does the TRI maintain the grounds? Mr. Wooddell noted yes, utilizing the money the City pays them to do any repairs and maintenance to the grounds. The TRI uses the lease payments towards the TRI grounds and facility maintenance and updates. Mr. Kammer asked where the 2 year lease stemmed from. Is it originally from the TRI, or was it a random number? Mr. Wooddell said he does not have the answer to that, but knows it's been this way for a while. Mr. Wooddell advised there are many government grants the TRI cannot go after because they are a non-profit, but if we have a 25 year lease we can then go after grant funding because it would be for the City. Mr. Kammer said if there is something that could be mutual between the two, to the work the City would want to put into this, it could be a good thing. Mr. Wooddell said the more he thinks about the projects the TRI is wanting to do, such as the tennis/pickle ball court, he finds himself thinking more long term. Mr. Smith posted the question, "When we finish the bike trail, and that levy expires could it be renewed and used towards Parks and Recreation facilities? Mr. Wooddell said I'm glad you mentioned this, because the existing levy is technically a parks and rec levy and thinks it would be good to start thinking about this now. We're only in year 2 of the existing 10 year levy, but 8 years is going to go fast. Mr. Wooddell reiterated the existing levy may only be used for the OATS trail, and it's important that the community doesn't believe there is any other intentions with those funds, but we should start considering this soon and allow the public to decide if they would like to support a continuation or renewal of a similar levy for other facilities. Mr. Bennett thanked Mr. Wooddell for his long-term vision thinking, noting this shows what kind of leader you are for Parks and Recreation and he really

appreciates it. Mr. Wooddell thanked Mr. Bennett for saying that, adding he wants to look to the future 5-10 years from now and the possibilities of what that will look like. Mr. Ackley asked does this plan take care of the concept of indoor basketball courts? Mr. Wooddell stated this is very exploratory plan and has lots of options for both indoor and outdoor facilities.

V. New Business

Mr. Kammer asked does the City offer a personal finance class for the community? He didn't know if there was one in general available that would meet for a month to educate our community on financial literacy. Or have they ever tried doing something like that?

Mr. Wooddell noted he is not aware of any being done in the City and Parks and Rec has not offered one. Mr. Kammer doesn't know if it's something we would be interested in having, or something we could offer for not too much money for the community to take. Mr. Wooddell said a class on money management would be a good thing to get people educated on especially with all the unpredictable things going on right now.

VI. Next Meeting: November 5 – 11:30am

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Bennett second. All Aye. Meeting adjourned at 12:32pm.