

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

..... Ad Hoc Community Recreation Committee

A meeting of the newly created Ad-Hoc Committee of the Village of Brooklyn Heights, Ohio was held on August 13th, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. with Councilman Les Foote presiding.

Present at roll call:

Mayor:	Mike Procuk
Council:	Les Foote, Matt Walsh, Joe Blados, Mark Lasky, Jen Presot
Clerk/Treasurer:	Aaron Frank
Recreation Dir:	Dale Krzynowek
Council Candidate:	Shane Tommer, Tom Lahiff
Special Project Coor:	Joe Presot
Residents:	Chelsea Colver, Bob Crocker, Mr. Stepka, Jerrod, Dale, Shane, Glen

Councilman Foote called the meeting to order beginning with a statement of the meaning of Ad Hoc. It means it's a temporary committee, no end date, identify tasks, things that can be collectively worked on. When they feel they have accomplished things then the committee will cease to exist. The time table could be 1 year, 3 years or longer. This committee is combined of council and community. The people will generate the idea/road map of what this committee is all about. Being reviewed are the good ideas that were brought up at the last council meeting and can add to it at any time. Items to discuss today:

- Upper part of park, most focus
- Basketball court
- Tennis court
- Fence surrounding park and courts
- Aesthetic improvement
- Volunteer opportunities, fundraising, grant writing
- Lower staircase going down to Park Drive
- Dorset Mini-Park
- Traveling costs

Chelsea Colver of West 5th Street states her opinion that the whole upper park needs to be looked at and start from scratch. Looking at it from the back where the land is unstable, eroding & can't plant grass there because it's too shady. Neighbors don't want the noise. The area would better service everyone if it was a sitting area with some plants. This is the area by the staircase and bathrooms. The equipment is outdated and broken. Items still good can be relocated to other parts in the park. Full court basketball is not needed. Nobody uses it. The tennis court has one net up and it's rarely used. Neighbors don't want to hear it in their back

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

.....

yards. Need to review the park for a better spot to relocate the courts. She feels it would be best to create a walking path with more green space. Chelsea has been in touch with West Creek Conservancy. They are meeting to discuss a grant for playground equipment which needs to be replaced.

Robert Crocker of Tuxedo Avenue agrees the upper part needs to be redeveloped and offered a \$500 donation to get started and suggests naming it 'The Community Concerned Citizens of Brooklyn Heights Park'. He does not agree with relocating the basketball courts and taking it away from the kids for two years. The area can be utilized more than it is right now. There are two tennis courts that nobody uses. Things are overgrown and ugly. Robert stated the basketball court was there when people moved in that area and it should not be taken away from children to make a few people happy. He feels if you take away from the children then you're not teaching them anything. You're not letting them develop into the children they are and they lose respect for everyone. Robert walks the streets of Brooklyn Heights and sees eye sores everywhere. He played basketball with a teenager and within five minutes the police were dispatched and he was ID' d He feels there is no reason the other basketball backdrop is not up to play full court basketball.

Councilman Foote explains there is always going to be a give and take. What we'll try to do with this committee is find compromise, try to make level 1 for useful, more aesthetically pleasing, and create a long term plan. We do not want to focus the entire meeting on the basketball aspect of Level One. It doesn't have an easy solution. Mr. Crocker's point has been made.

Robert Crocker does not agree with making Level One a green area. He feels there is plenty of park with sitting areas. He suggests making it a rec center with a pool and a new playground area. He wants to know why the water fountain doesn't work, why the water is turned off.

Chelsea Colver said half the time the fountain is filled to the top with stagnant water as it does not drain.

Mayor Procuk explained the water in the upper park has not been turned on in fifteen years. The lines are shot, there's a liability involved, and it's old-fashioned. When the park board gave up on home days about seven years ago, we stopped patching up the tennis courts because they weren't being used so decisions have to be made where to put the money. We applied for a grant for upper-park last year and did not get it. The village was allowed to resubmit by June 1st which was done. The Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources that we are refurbishing our park in phases.

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

.....

Phase 1:

- Improve handicap parking

- Install new sidewalks to the ball field

- Install sidewalk from the handicap parking area

The village received \$50k from the county lottery funds and was spent. The resubmission for a grant for the upper park was requested in the amount of \$112k for three things:

- Completely replace and modernize the splash pad

- Install new lines and motion sensors

- Funding to resurface the tennis courts and basketball court

He said they did not request anything for fencing because they were already at \$112k for \$150k project. Those things are in the works as we speak. The other thing mentioned and maybe a possibility is to get these activities under roof. The Mayor has always envisioned something like Elmwood Park in Independence. It's a giant field house with basketball and volleyball courts, a giant meeting room and several other rooms. Joe Presot and the Mayor have worked on that many times over the last 20 years and Joe did a rendition for the complete upper park.

The amount is over \$3 million. That would take getting a bond issue passed to fund it. That would change the whole complexion of the upper park. Playground equipment is extremely expensive because of liabilities and designs. The unit at the bottom of the hill was \$50K to purchase and install. The park board and home days funded the playground equipment and the service department erected it.

You cannot do that anymore. Everything has to be done by certified personnel because of regulations. People's needs, wants and ideas are being reviewed. The Mayor agrees with Mr. Crocker about keeping the basketball court. Brooklyn Heights is the only community around that has any basketball court what-so-ever. No courts in Valley View, Cuyahoga heights, Newburgh Heights, maybe Seven Hills and 1 or 2 courts in all of Parma. There is only a half court here because it was found to be effective. When there were problems, the hoop was taken down for ten days and put back up along with some signs. The residents have used without any problems that the Mayor is aware of. A full court basketball court is just not going to happen.

Les Foote: Thank you Mayor. Anyone else want to add anything.

Shane Tommer: I have a suggestion for a fundraiser such as selling bricks with resident's names on them and have them put in the park.

Les Foote: It's been used in other places but unsure if we are at a point to move forward with that. We have to identify where those funds would go but it's an idea for down the road. It's definitely heard and noted.

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

.....

Glen: I am on Chelsea's bandwagon. I like the idea of opening things up. I live next door to the kiddie park which gets used. I would like to see the park opened up from the 'cage'. I feel, as things move on, it would be better if more green up there.

Resident: I would like a compromise where they beautify the area but still have the asphalt for a playing surface. Put up some landscaping to beautify the entrance. Right now there is a huge 'WWF cage looking thing' so if you put up some evergreens that will grow and take up the volume of the fence and soften everything up would be a considerable compromise and not expensive.

Les Foote: It would depend on the future of the tennis courts which is in the middle of everything. If we keep the tennis courts and resurface them, the courts require that type of fence. There's a walkway on the other side of the fence.

Chelsea: Since it's up to the residents to put up their own fence, there are different fence styles. The park should have one style fence put up behind the tennis court for the residents. The park area should be fenced in with one way in and one way out to make it a bit safer. I know the equipment is expensive but it lasts a long time. The equipment at this park is approximately 50 years old. It's a good investment. \$50K is better than \$3 million. There's too much asphalt. I agree with keeping the basketball court but you really need to talk to the residents of West 5th Street. It should be heavily weighed on their opinion if they want that noise in their backyard or if they want it moved.

Mayor: I totally disagree with you. There are 1,500 residents in this town who pay taxes.

Chelsea Colver: You took down the basketball hoop because people were complaining.

Mayor: No, I took down the hoop for the security of the village. What you describe as asphalt, for years, was the site of the home days. I have nothing against residents on 5th street vs. residents on Dorset. I'm just telling you that I have residents living on Belmont who call me up and say there's a freeway behind my house, do something about it. The house was built in 1970 and they bought it last year. I can't fix that.

Chelsea: Right, but one problem does not negate the other so we created this committee because this park is not working for everyone. Their opinion is extremely important on the life of the basketball hoop and courts. It's important to poll everyone.

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

.....

Mayor: Well we have a difference of opinion. How many people here live on West 5th?
(He did not state how many raised their hands)

Resident Dale: Going back, it seems like the consensus is that there will be a tennis court, half-court basketball, and as a potential compromise that they can both be located along the hill versus the West 5th Street property. It can be turned so it opens up West 5th Street and creates a buffer zone.

Matt Walsh: I've lived in the village since 1986 and I can count on two hands seeing anyone playing tennis even when the courts were in better shape.

Dale: I see kids play kickball there.

Les Foote: Okay, so it's a multi-purpose playing area. The area needs the cage/fence when the kids play ball so they aren't retrieving it from resident's yards. Call it a cage or whatever you want but it's a necessity.

Resident Brian: Regarding the courts being shut down by the mayor for whatever reason, noise, profanity....what's the option of recycling the asphalt and putting near the volley ball court? It will be used about six months out of the year. That alleviates one issue, put up a fence and no need for a light. Nobody plays at night.

Matt: That's not a bad idea. That would open up the court area to make something else.

Resident Mr. Stepka: I agree with Brian, changing the basketball court 90 degrees changes nothing as to where the hoop is. The only thing I can think of is that it would put it closer to my backyard. That's all I want to say.

Resident Shane: To remove some asphalt, what about getting rid of that skating rink and put in trees, shrubs, bench, trash cans, and a walkway. That would be a way of getting rid of some asphalt without touching the basketball court or tennis court. Put a walkway from Diamond One to the bathrooms around the side.

Mayor: Yeah, not a problem.

Resident: I am thinking get rid of the tennis courts because nobody uses them and put in 2 half court basketball side by side and move it farther north.

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

.....

Mayor: That's away from your house and right behind Mr. Stepka's house.

Les Foote: Sir, people here tonight said they use the tennis court, so let's get away from the comment that 'nobody uses it', it does get used. They use it because it's there, we offer it and it's a beautiful thing. Please just honor other people's opinions.

Resident Jerrod passed out paperwork for a proposal for the Village of Brooklyn Heights to hold a farmers market. Matt interrupts because that isn't what the meeting is about and he is taking valuable time away from all the people who want to talk about the park. Matt suggests he come back to the council meeting next Tuesday and discuss then. Jerrod insists it has to do with the park. Les told him to summarize his proposal. He went on about his family history in the village and things he learned in his travels. He wants to use the village to host a farmers market and teach and help residents build planter beds, having the village provide supplies to build a mini greenhouse with soil, and seedlings to grow their own food to sell at the farmers market in the park. Les said it was worth discussing at the next council meeting and there are other areas in the village to hold a farmers market.

Robert Crocker wants to know about the park security. Are they paid, what are their hours, what are their duties, how do you become a park security person? He feels if they are paid they should be held accountable for their position. He sees them on their cell phones and walk pass trash in the park and do not pick it up.

Mayor explains they are paid, not sworn police officers, they are the eyes and ears of communication to dispatch police or fire if needed. You can apply at the Police Department before the season starts around April. The job is listed on the website and in the Breeze.

Back to the park / playground conversation, a resident suggested getting shredded up tires to put under the swing/ equipment for safety. Les agreed it's a good idea. They need to look at alternative surfaces and costs. This could be better than mulch. There's mulch and wood chips under the equipment now. The Mayor stated that there are regulations on what they're allowed to use. While tires may be a good idea they may get too hot and burn the kid's feet. Then there's a liability. Residents still feel there's too much concrete. The Mayor agrees they should get rid of the ice skating rink. It was used to pitch a tent over for home days. They need to get a price for removing the concrete. They do what makes financial sense to pay either an outside source or the village workers. The Mayor also stated they requested funds/ grant to put in a splash pad. Other cities have them and they are popular. Some residents suggested that it be for the village residents only. Some sort of card or badge would have to be made. The grant requested is 89 pages long and expect an answer in September.

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

.....

Resident Shane commented on the condition of the ball field. Some people got hurt last year because of divots. There are hills back by the outfield fence that should be graded. Mr. Henry created the plans to regrade it. It's just a matter of getting the funds.

Les Foote questioned Chelsea Colver on the grant she requested from West Creek Conservancy for the upper park. He's all for beautifying the park with new equipment and shrubs and walkway but is uncomfortable going to a village business and asking for huge sums of money to make the changes to the park. They all agree on removing the ice rink, cleaning up that area and put a new apparatus there, new landscaping. Need to focus on area between ball diamond and tennis courts and hopefully get some grant money to do all of this. Chelsea is meeting with director of West Creek in one week. Les wants to be included in the meeting and emails moving forward.

Referring back to Mr. Crocker's question about the pay rate for the park specialists, they make \$16.75/hr for 2019. The budget was \$17,000, the average per employee was \$2000-\$4000. Mr. Crocker doesn't feel that money should be spent on the park specials and feels the residents are willing to volunteer to do this job and police the park. Matt Walsh strongly disagrees with him. He feels it is money well spent on this position with them being the eyes and ears to keep the park and residents safe. People are not going to police the neighborhood for free. The Mayor pointed out they have a hard time getting people to fill this position so if Mr. Crocker want to step forward next season for this position and donate his check back to the village then feel free to do so.

Resident Shane has concerns about the park specials not doing their job. Last year someone took a picture of an employee riding his girlfriend on a golf cart. It was addressed and nothing was done. This year the same person watched a car drive to the 2nd diamond, park behind the back stop while a game was in play and go to the concession stand. The park specialist sat there and didn't say a word until Mr. Lasky and others directed him to tell the guy to move. Shane wants to know why the same person is still staffed here. He feels park security is the way to go if you have the right people. It was reported to the Chief. Les stated that the decision to have park specials was made years ago and cannot count how many times problems have been averted because of them but at the same time things that should not happen cannot be excused. The points are well taken. As far as the park itself, Level One is the main focus. That area has lagged in changes and improvements since home days have ceased. So there has been discussion of removing most of the asphalt, taking the fence down, creating green space, maybe getting some playground equipment, keeping the basketball court, maybe getting some grant money to refurbish the tennis courts, maybe painted the fence it salvageable, some of it needs to be repaired. The discussion of reconfiguring the courts was also on the table, eliminate one tennis court, we don't need two. The Mayor will

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

.....

get a price for the removing the ice rink and for relocating the basketball and volley ball court. The request for grant money is to refurbish existing surfaces to use the park at capacity.

Les Foote summarizes things that could happen:

- 1) Taking the skate rink out
- 2) Cutting tennis court in half
- 3) Moving basketball court to Level Two

These are all doable. Maybe a field house but that's farther along. Les stated the lower staircase need to be rebuilt. It's closed right now. Council can find the funds, get a contractor and do that. Maybe there's a volunteer opportunity if anybody in the room is a carpenter. Matt thinks it would be better to put the stairway down the back to the playground rather than going into the road. The stairs were constructed in the 90's, they are old. It needs to be re-engineered because of the slope, it should come to a landing. There is no answer for the staircase right now.

Resident Shane commented on a smaller set of stairs in the park that goes to a gravel road that were rebuilt. He spoke with Chris from the village when they were torn out and he said they are being rebuilt. A month later they were done. Shane thought the city did the work so he suggested rebuilding the lower staircase. Les said it needs an engineer to build it safely and correctly.

Resident questioned sports traveling costs because it's on the agenda. Matt Walsh advised that someone blurted out that the rec programs don't service the kids so the residents have to go to travel situations and that costs them money so that's why it's on the agenda. Les is not sure when that will be addressed.

Chelsea would like to all meet in the park together to walk around and review changes discussed. Les and Matt said to meet September 10th, 2019 at 6:30pm at the skating rink. Matt stated these are council committee meetings, they are posted in 5 places, they are put on agendas that are hand delivered to the houses and they are on the social media and website. Les Foote can send an email also.

Les Foote addressed 'elect chair' on the agenda. Since this is a community generated committee, the opportunity for anyone to chair this committee is there. Les is happy to continue on as the chair. It was put out there so if anyone is interested in chairing the committee then it can be turned over to that person. Chelsea raised her hand as being interested.

VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

.....

Jerrod brought up the personal home greenhouses again. The dimensions are 8' x 10' so it would be enjoyable, not back-breaking work. They would cost about \$50 per unit.

The meeting will continue September 10th at the ice rink and that will conclude the meeting.



Les Foote

Ad Hoc Recreation Committee chairman