

**Huron Joint Recreation District  
Regular Board Meeting – Minutes  
Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2024, at 6:30 PM  
City Municipal Building, Huron, OH**

**Members Present:** Tom Solberg, Matt Grieves, Julie Spitzley, Jonathan Merckens, Roger Blevins, Missie Huntley

**Present from HPRD:** Doug Steinwart, Brian Croucher, Rick Reinbolt

**Present from City of Huron:** None

**Members Absent:** Elizabeth Laffay, Eddie Wimmer

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve May 7, 2024, minutes as presented; by Matt Grieves and seconded by Jonathan Merckens. Approved unanimously.

**Audience Comments:** None

***NEW BUSINESS***

**A. New Business**

1. **Berlin Road Park Update – presented by Doug Steinwart:** Mr. Steinwart referenced the masterplan in front of the board members. The plan was finished last fall, and the department is using this as their guide moving forward. The City's capital improvement fund helped with a parking lot (installation of a larger parking area (DL Smith) and wider more expansive entrance) and adding a dock on the north side (EZ Dock System) was install this past July. Two more additional posts were just ordered to help with the stability. The dock does offer a little better access to the pond in the deeper end for fishing. The focus is on the passive park with a catch and release fishing opportunity. Staff is working on a Park Sign structure, however prior to that a name must be established. A survey was launched looking for suggestions. The survey closed Sept. 1 with 109 suggestions/submissions. A list will be compiled, brought before the HJRD to weigh in on the name, then finally a short list will be presented to Council for final adoption. Internally the property has been called Berlin Road Park or 624 Berlin. Mr. Steinwart encouraged the board to visit the park. Good progress has been made this summer with the Parks Department and the Street Department. In the future a fish restocking program is being considered. Aqua Doc has confirmed a variety of fish are in the pond and we are looking to restock the pond later this fall. The department is working with Brady Signs for design, materials and potential budget number in place for next year. Also working on a fishing derby for youth next year. Fish Huron, Ohio and Kedas Foundation for volunteers and promoting youth fishing. Aqua Doc is also interested in potentially helping with the derby. Hope to make this an annual event. A Board Member asked if the dock will be removed during the winter months? Mr. Steinwart confirmed it will not, there is not a lot of current or movement allowing for the dock to stay in place.
2. **Summer Programs Update – presented by Brian Croucher:** Highlights for the Summer include – Safety Town Program took place in June with 65 kindergarteners registered this year. Twenty-five youth volunteers comprising of middle and high school students. The second year back after the school transition from last year. The program was well received. Most of the time Safety Town is the first introduction to a young family to the Parks & Rec. Department. A special thanks to the Lion's Club who took on a rebuild of 6 buildings with EHOVE students. The Lion's Club took on the project, solidified the funding, worked with EHOVE and produced 6 new buildings for this year. There are conversations happening for potentially a couple of more buildings this winter. Internally, the department purchased

new stop signs, railroad crossings, traffic lights, etc. A whole new facelift on the program took place this year. Mr. Steinwart chimed in with reminding the Board not only is this the first program for the kids, but for the parents to, allows them to get to know us. A Board Member asked about the stability of the numbers. Mr. Croucher confirmed they have held strong at the 65-75 range. Mr. Steinwart continued having the program at Woodlands, helps the participants familiarize themselves with the school. The partnership with the school is very valuable as many of our programs take place inside them. Mr. Croucher added also new this year, Tracy McGinny has helped with the program for the past 15 years. She assisted with building an actual manual/curriculum for the program moving forward. Following Safety Town, the Extended Safety Town program took place. Both sessions were full with an additional 30 participants. A third section of Arts & Crafts was added due to popularity for ages 5-9. Junior Fun camps had 25 participants. Youth Sports Camps are partnered with the High School teams and coaches. Some of the money brought in goes back to their programs and volunteer hours are also issued. New this year, tennis was brought back and offered to 18 participants. Over 225 kids in the camps in all. Working with golf to expand their offerings for next year. Dawg Daze program took place with 30 teams, 24<sup>th</sup> year. There was a huge disruption from rain this year, however with a lot of work on the fields, the tournament took place. Rick and his crew, along with Doug who came out on Sat. to help with the fields. All the teams were appreciative and enjoyed the weekend after all. A week later Fall Ball began. Currently, the tournament is two weeks in and has 2 weeks to go. Softball on Sunday, Baseball on Saturday with a total of 30 teams. The department is turning the corner and looking toward fall with the upcoming festivals. (Pumpkin & Winter) planning is well underway on both. A Board Member inquired about Officials for Fall Ball? The umpires have been plentiful this year, not always the case. A Board Member asked if any of the field were lite? The answer was no, not the fields.

**3. Misc. Parks & Recreation, presented by Mr. Steinwart:**

- a. Parks are still busy, this weekend at the Boat Basin is Rotary Rocks – rescheduled from earlier in the summer. 5-10PM this Saturday.
- b. Sept. 14 – the Lake Erie Grady White Club will host their Youth Challenge Fishing Event, the third year HBB has partnered with them. They bring together young people with disabilities for a fishing experience followed by a cook-out hosted by the Walleye Wounded Heroes.
- c. Sept 28 – partnering with the Kedas Memorial Fishing Derby. The second annual event for this program.
- d. The staff hosted Erica Krause from Senator Brown’s office around mid-august. This is fairly new for our City to host someone of sort. A couple of grants had been applied for and she came to learn more about those, toured the Boat Basin, and learned about the secondary water intake.
- e. Waterfront Plan Update – this past winter a grant was received through Coastal Management to update the waterfront plan. Focusing on the Showboat Property to the west to the beach behind the Water Plant. OHM is going to present on Sept. 24 a work session to present some ideas, grab feedback, etc. What can we improve, what amenities, connectivity, parking, will be discussed from Show Boat to the Water Plant. This will be implemented over time when funding, sources, and grants are available.
- f. The Lion’s Club proposed projects following a recent meeting with them. They asked for a list of ideas of projects for them to partner with. They are committed to building 2 more Safety Town houses in 2025. The HBB Shelters and the Nickel Plate Shelter are all good structurally but for long term we would like to see some type of siding on the peaks, posts, etc. They are interested in helping with that, they have a good relationship with EHOVE through the Safety

Town houses. Rick pulled together a supply/material list and they are on their way to finding donations and partner with EHOVE again.

- g. The Huron Baseball/Softball Program would like to see the quad (4, 5, 6 & 7) covered dugouts. The fencing is new out there so this is going to require a little engineering. We are meeting with the Engineering Department to review the options to get the players some shade while they are out there. The Lion's Club is interested in assisting with this project as well.
- h. The Lion's Club is also interested in partnering with us on Berlin Road. We would like to put some benches out there soon. Ideally the benches should be in concrete for long term use. This could be another partnership we work on together. Partnerships are a great resource.
- i. The budget process for 2025 has begun with the new finance director for the City. We are scheduled to make a presentation to the Finance Committee sometime in mid-October.
- j. Mr. Steinwart thanked Brian C., Rick, Evan, Bryan E. and all the full time and part time guys for all their help this past season. This department operates 24/7 – between the Boat Ramp, Fish Cleaning Station, maintenance, etc. Boat Basin and Fabens Park – open 7 days a week.

#### **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Solberg thanked Missie and Roger for joining the committee. Mr. Merckens congratulated the team for a successful summer, you are very appreciated and thank you. Mr. Blevins thanked the team for their hard work. He commented on his family haven taken advantage of the Parks & Recreation Department over the years. Mr. Croucher. welcomed the new members. Mr. Steinwart. thanked Mr. Merckens for his feedback and encouraged the board to reach out anytime with questions, comments, concerns. Mr. Mercken's asked about replacing the trees around the tennis courts. Mr. Steinwart stated the trees have caused some of the problems at are out there. Every tennis company we have dealt with has supported the reasons not to have trees based on the problems they create. Shade sails has been suggested, wind screens have also been suggested. The wind speed out there can be very strong so that is something to take into consideration. Mrs. Spitzley mentioned how much she appreciated the Safety Town program and what it really means to the community. Mr. Grieves thanked the team for all they do for the City. Mrs. Huntley also thanked the team and for welcoming her to the board.

Mr. Solberg announced the next meeting to be Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024.

#### **OTHER MATTERS – ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Spitzley; second by Mr. Merckens

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Kilbury