

## VERMILION PARKS & RECREATION BOARD

Minutes of March 18, 2025 - 6:00 p.m.

Tina Swinehart, Chairperson called the meeting of March 18, 2025, to order.

Roll Call: Tina Swinehart, Karen Viterna, Mark Musial, Phil Dombrowski, John Ross. Absent: Supt. Dr. David Hile, Liz Elden

Also, Present: Marc Weisenberger, Parks Operation Manager; Chad Kuhns, Recreation Director; Mayor Forthofer; Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk; Melanie Wood, Assistant Clerk of Council

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### Approval of Minutes:

K. Viterna MOVED; T. Swinehart seconded to approve the meeting minutes of February 18, 2025. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

### Correspondence/Presentations:

T. Swinehart noted there were two pieces of correspondence. The first letter was from Julie Horn regarding the ice-skating rink being replaced in the city park and it was read by all members. The other letter was from Bergan Dickinson and surrounding neighbors regarding the West Breeze Park renovations which include the pickleball courts and they acknowledge receipt of the letter which was read by all members. Both letters are attached hereto and incorporated herein as a part of the official record of proceedings.

### COMMUNITY EVENT GROUP USE PERMITS:

*-Beth Eberhard – Memorial Day Parade and Program – May 25, 2025 – 8am to 2pm (Victory Park)*

T. Swinehart described the event as submitted and noted there may or may not be a parade, but the Memorial Day program will happen. G. Fisher noted she talked with Beth who thought Rotary would take over for the programming. M. Musial said he is not aware of that. G. Fisher said she would relay the message to her, but they can reserve Victory Park this evening.

M. Musial MOVED; J. Ross seconded to approve the community event group use permit as submitted. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

*-Heidi Strickler – Easter Sunrise Service – 4/20/2025 from 6:45am-7:45am (Main Street Beach & Park)*

Heidi Strickler representing Harbourtown Community Foursquare Church explained the event as submitted. She noted the event will be on April 20, 2025 and she did submit the certificate of insurance to Melanie Wood. T. Swinehart asked if the event will be held on the beach. H. Strickler said they would be doing it on the concrete circle outside the lighthouse. They will advertise the event if they are approved. It will be held rain or shine.

P. Dombrowski MOVED; J. Ross seconded to approve the community event use permit as presented. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

City Council Representative Report: No report.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Forthofer said they have been having ongoing conversations with Malcolm who is the chairman for Amvets, and he is pushing hard to get the gold star memorial completed and dedicated on Memorial Day. There are two separate events on Memorial Day, the dedication they usually do around 8:00am or 9:00am at the clock and then separately there has been a parade, he is not sure if the parade will materialize this year. The gold star memorial is fully funded through funds from the Erie County Veterans Administration and the VFW.

Recreation Director's Report:

Chad Kuhns reported they finished the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade basketball season the first week of March. They finished the kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> grade skills camp yesterday. Registration deadline for baseball and softball is coming up on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

Service Director's Report:

T. Valerius reported that he and Marc Weisenburger met with Dana Corogin from Vermilion in Bloom at Main Street Beach last Thursday with the contractor and a couple of the material suppliers to finalize the plan for the observation area. It will be going in just east of the comfort station. Construction is set to begin on April 7<sup>th</sup>. T. Swinehart asked if it will include the foot washing station. M. Weisenburger answered yes. T. Valerius said they hope to get it done early and have no construction this year at Main Street Beach and Park.

Parks Operation Manager Report:

Marc Weisenberger thanked Karen and her committee for the time they spent on the pool over the winter. They will be reporting on the proposal under the pool subcommittee report. On April 12, they will be doing a beach and downtown park clean-up which they coordinate with the track team. May 17 will be the Lorain County clean-up day, and they are planning some things for Showse and Sherod Park for that day. West Breeze pickleball court and site improvement project is moving along. The drainage has been completed from Route 60 to the back of the park including the pickleball courts. The excavating for the courts is completed and the fabric has been put in and the stone has been leveled. The next step in the process will be the fence posts being installed. They have had two meetings with the various contractors they are using for the project and several of them have had some good input. One of the things they talked about was instead of putting the fence posts in the blacktop, they will put sidewalks all the way around the pickleball courts and put the posts in the concrete area. This will save the blacktop from cracking, and they will get a lot more longevity from that. They have also planned for the sidewalks to go along the parking lot to keep traffic contained in the parking lot. They have some additional site work that needs to be completed including dirt that needs to be removed and grading to get the parking lot useable and to tie it into the new drainage system so they can maximize that system. The site work has grown from the beginning of the project, he presented the board with updates of the work that has been completed and items that still need to be done along with a budget. He asked the board to consider an additional \$35,000 so they can finish the site work completed to where it would be ready for blacktop. The parking lot will be finished in a way that will be useable until they pour the final blacktop. The sidewalks would be ready to go, the drainage

would be ready to grade. They will complete this either later this year or next year as they watch the budget as they complete some of the existing projects. G. Fisher clarified it would not exceed \$35,000 and asked what fund it would come from. M. Weisenburger answered Fund 204. J. Ross asked if it was budgeted within the fund. M. Weisenburger answered they have funds available, and they have a good carry-over from last year as well as some funds coming in from 2025. M. Weisenburger noted they did need to do an extra 50 feet of drainage at Route 60 because they ran into some gas lines so there will be some additional expenses, otherwise the project is running smoothly.

M. Weisenburger said they will have a pre-construction meeting this Thursday or Friday for the splash pad with the contractor Everlast out of north Canton. The plans are being finalized and reviewed by the state health department right now. While that is being done, they can start some of the site work like the new four-foot fence that Elyria Fence will be installing which will separate the splash pad from the pool. One thing they want to do is try to reutilize the small shelter house which is in the area where the splash pad is going to go. There is no way to move it and keep it in one piece without damaging either the roof or the trusses so they will remove it and replace it at a later date. Once they see how it is being utilized, they can put in a shade structure for that area. There are also shrubs, and a tree stump they need to remove ahead of time. T. Swinehart asked if they will be doing all the site work in house. M. Weisenburger answered that Elyria Fence will be installing the fence, they will do the shrub removal, and the stump and shelter house removal will be done by an outside company.

M. Weisenburger said when they get to New Business, they would like to make a motion for acceptance of the proposed playground for Showse Park. They had five different companies submit plans and proposals and they were able to narrow it down, they took pieces from three different vendors that the committee liked.

He reported they are working with the two girl scout groups and their beach box and box for sports equipment at Showse Park and are having conversations about getting those put together. They also had an Eagle Scout approach them about doing a project as well and once he specifies what he would like to do they can bring that before the board as well. T. Swinehart asked if it would be for Showse Park or Main Street. M. Weisenburger answered it would be at Sherod Park.

Budget/Finance Subcommittee Report: No report.

Main Street Beach Revitalization Project:

T. Swinehart reported that they are working with Vermilion in Bloom to get the observation deck done before the start of the season and they are looking forward to it. She has been in conversation about benches for the teardrop cement area to the west by the lighthouse. Mayor Forthofer said everything they are talking about for this park is donor funded, and he can't say enough about how the city takes care of themselves and they will be dedicating the area once again in May. T. Swinehart said that Shore Thing is working to put more furniture on the observation deck as well, and things are going to be looking good this summer. Marc has been working on signs, and they look great.

Shows Park Revitalization & Transformation Project:

Jeff Lucas said they have a great committee who have spent tireless Tuesday evenings over the last month and a half meeting for about two hours each time. There has been a lot of time and consideration going into what they will be asking for this evening. The health and fitness equipment has been delivered, and it is now in the parks building. They will be putting together a crew to install the equipment along the health and fitness trail within the next month when the soil is ready. That project came in under budget.

They finished the selection of the playground equipment. Each of the five companies submitted two designs and it has been in front of a lot of people who are familiar with children, who have children, people who are familiar with parks, and people who are familiar with the newest and latest designs that kids will use. He believes almost everyone has seen the illustrations of the designs. They didn't just take it from one company, they went with the companies who had the most functionality and the most utility. It is a blend of a few, but all have a consistent theme, and you won't notice they are from another company. He presented the board with the playground design artwork. From the main company, they have structures that are for 2-5-year-olds and 5-12-year-olds along with a spinner. They wanted to have climb ability, they wanted to have some things with fun in it, but all of them have multi-function which is good. They went with another company for a unique log pile and with the third company they selected the swing set. The swing set elicits the artistic nature of the main structure which is from Ventura. It all has a beach-like tropical look and feel which is what Tiki Beach deserves so Showse Park will have nice playground equipment up on the mound. Once it has been approved and selected, they will have a computer drawing of exactly where each piece of equipment will go along with the fall zones which they need to have. They had an anonymous donor who wanted to donate something of unique value, and it was a sizable amount of money, and it will be coming along soon which is a double decker spinner. It allows people with disability to also participate in this beautiful piece of equipment. They wanted something specifically that no other park has, and he hasn't seen it anywhere else. Showse Park is going to be a beacon by which people are going to want to come and enjoy this equipment. The colors are very tropical in nature, very bright, festive and beach-like. M. Weisenburger said the color scheme ties in with the exercise equipment which is also being installed.

J. Lucas said there is one other element that Public Art Vermilion is looking to install. They wanted art that is functional and would be a compliment to the playground. J. Lucas presented a drawing to the board. T. Swinehart said she had had conversations with Marilou Susko of Public Art Vermilion and this was a concept they reviewed as a part of their group in deciding what to put at Main Street Beach and this is a very interactive piece, the design is nautical, and she believes they want to put it in the northern end of Showse Park. J. Lucas said it would be on the spot on the mound by which it will be the northwest end of the mound so there is optimal ability to take photos with the shoreline. T. Swinehart said it is 20 feet long and 5.5 feet tall, made of different materials. Public Art Vermilion will be getting donations and funding the project. They will also be maintaining the piece into the future. The parks board will need to approve the acceptance of placement of public art and interactive play into Showse Park and everything else will happen outside of the parks budget. J. Lucas said the beauty of it is that it fits Vermilion's theme which is fish, they celebrate the Festival of the Fish every June, so this aligns very nicely with the beach and the fishing right off the pier there. The artist is down in Columbus and will no longer take it fabrication. They will buy the concept and all the instructions to present to a local fabricator so it should reduce their cost as well and they will own the concept, so it is one of a kind. Mayor Forthofer said that with the piece of art that is at Main Street Beach, once it is installed, Public Art Vermilion will offer it to City Council to be acquired by the city and become a permanent piece of city property. K. Viterna asked if they got a policy set up for when they accept items that are donated to be on city property as if it is in perpetuity forever or if there is a cut off date of how long it can be on the property. Mayor Forthofer answered a it is usually offered in the terms of forever. M. Musial asked if there are any restrictions on being able to change the colors on the piece in the future. J. Lucas answered with the type of material, he doesn't see why they couldn't it is made out of wood and steel. J. Ross asked if he was thinking about sun fading on the piece. M. Musial said at some point it is going to fade; it is made of stained wood, and they have colors of equipment going up if they want to tweak it at some point are they allowed to within the art piece? T. Swinehart said the committee is very sensitive to the surroundings and they want it to be part of the park so they will get the right shades, so it looks good with the structure. M. Musial asked if the structure was a done deal but not the colors? Mayor Forthofer said an example was the piece of art that was donated to Sherod Park and some previous administration decided to paint it which is what they felt at the time was the appropriate thing to do. He is sure the same would apply

to this. M. Weisenburger said the colors that are on there currently coordinate with the colors they are proposing for the play structure so it should tie together really nice. T. Swinehart thanked Jeff and the committee as they have done a lot of hard work.

Recreation and School Relations: No report.

Vermilion Community Pool Subcommittee:

Karen Viterna said this will be a good year to have a membership to the Vermilion pool. They have done a number of things to increase the hours that the pool will be available, and they had an increase of only five dollars for the fact that they are adding a splash zone they know they will have additional chemical costs as a result of that. The other thing that is changing in the schedule is they will have members only swim, which they haven't had in the past. The learn to swim program is restructured, they took feedback they received at the end of the year last year and rather than trying to make four year olds pay attention for 45 minutes, they have broken things down into smaller groups and had shorter schedules for the classes and instead of four days, they will be doing it five days a week so they will be maximizing their attention spans and the ability to help them. They had really good feedback from the people who responded to their survey about how the children did advance their skills, so they hope this improves it even more so. They are able to offer water aerobics again one night a week starting after the evening swim lessons. The pool is able to be rented on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays for private parties for \$175 and can add an additional hour for \$85. T. Swinehart said they did have 13 rentals last year, which gave good revenue. K. Viterna said it was the best year they had. T. Swinehart said they have some guards coming back and the manager is going to help with training guards for next year. They got some answers on the open advertisement for lifeguards. There is an event at the elementary school tomorrow where all the activities being offered for kids for the summer are going to have tables in the gym and she will be attending with information about the pool. M. Weisenburger asked if they would need a motion to recommend the pool fees to city council. G. Fisher said the board will make the motion and accept pool fees, only pay raises would need to go to city council.

Public Art Subcommittee: No report.

Recreation Department Subcommittee:

John Ross said they have been discussing and finalizing some updates to recreation staff modeling for the last few months. They are at the point now to discuss a proposal or taking a recommendation to the administration however it does include compensation and asked if they should go into executive session to discuss. T. Swinehart said she doesn't feel like she is ready to have the discussion yet, they do not have all of the members, and she thinks they need to have more time before they discuss it. J. Ross said that it is fair, they can wrap things up in a formal format on one sheet that outlines changes and recommendations and leave the compensation out of it to be distributed for the next meeting. T. Swinehart said it is really important that they get a job description in writing that is descriptive in what it is they want to see. J. Ross said he shared an initial one and he did meet with Finance Director Hendricks and the mayor to get their thoughts as well and he can bring it to the board to get everyone's final feedback. K. Viterna asked if they should have that conversation during a regular meeting or during a work session. G. Fisher said it can be done in a regular meeting and anything that falls under hiring, firing, compensation would go into executive session. Mayor Forthofer said he commends Mr. Ross and Mr. Musial and all of those who worked on this project. He has often said the rec department is one of the last areas

which should have more attention to it. Chad has kept this running, but the opportunities for evolution are tremendous and it is worth the discussion and good deliberation. G. Fisher said she can add the initial discussion to the next agenda. T. Swinehart asked him to bring a report with a job description and goals for the rec department. G. Fisher asked if he would send it to her and then she could distribute it to everyone.

#### Rotary Park Subcommittee:

Mark Musial reported the Rotary club is having an environmental design group at their meeting tomorrow to present a couple of semi-final options to be considered. They had a meeting a month ago and were presented with five or six different plans to look at and consider and pick apart things they like and don't like. They are getting closer to final designs to present to the parks board. He asked Tony Valerius what the timing was for the water line installation. T. Valerius answered it will be in the fall. They had one bidder, and it wasn't a good bid because it was 20% higher than the engineer's estimate so they will have to rebid it again and with it effecting Romps on the other side they will wait until fall. M. Musial asked once it is in, will there be structures they need to worry about in the design side of things. T. Valerius said they will have a layout prior to construction which will be similar to the current plans they have now. M. Musial said if there are things right off the bat they need to exclude, it would be nice to know now. T. Valerius said he can show him the current plans to see where the water line is going to run. M. Musial asked if they could do things over the top of the waterlines since they would be buried. T. Valerius answered yes, they should be able to. M. Musial asked if there was anything from the waterlines that will come to the surface that they need to worry about. T. Valerius said no he doesn't believe so, maybe a valve. K. Viterna asked if the existing sprinkler system was in that line of construction and digging. T. Valerius answered it probably will be.

Pickleball Subcommittee: No additional report.

#### OPEN TO THE AUDIENCE:

Helen Taft of 3972 Edgewater Dr. said she appreciates the flagpoles that have been installed on Main Street. Her concern is migration on the lakefront – bird migration, bat migration, and butterflies. There are certain times of the year migration occurs. This time of year, the birds will be coming from the south and in the fall, they will be crossing the lake, heading back down south. At night, birds are attracted to light and will fly to light. The lights out program has just taken off in the state of Ohio. Buildings and artificial light sources are a huge impact on these little, tiny birds. If you think of the turtles in Florida, they turn the lights off, so turtles don't go towards the artificial light. If these birds were as big as turtles hitting windows, we would know about this, but they are just wee little migrating birds and butterflies. She is wondering without any disrespect to the American flag if they can consider lowering the lights, turning down the lights, or turning off the lights. The best lighting on any kind of waterway would be downward lights which would defeat the purpose of trying to illuminate the flag. She asked if this was a decision for the parks board or for city council. K. Viterna said she has been speaking with Jeff Lucas on the exact same topic because the lighting along the lakeshore does cause a lot of pollution so people can't see stars so she can imagine birds and butterflies are all affected by the lighting. Jeff has been working on a solar light as she described coming downward from the top of the pole and not emitting pollution up into the sky. Furthermore, the wavelength of the light he is looking at is one they are trying to do with LEDs, so it is easy on the eyes. H. Taft asked if there were any other ideas on how to mitigate. P. Dombrowski said if they were to turn the lights off, the American flag would need to come down at night, someone would need to

take it down and fold it up and store it properly and raise it again in the morning. H. Taft said peak migration is usually a month and a half in the spring and about the same amount of time in the fall. They are seeing a whole lot more of Canada at night than they used to. K. Viterna said she has gone as far as recommending the streetlights have a similar profile to not attract things to the light. H. Taft asked if they were the group she should be talking to. T. Swinehart said they are taking it into consideration and the results will be down the road. K. Viterna said they are more expensive so there is some consideration there.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

T. Swinehart MOVED; J. Ross seconded to authorize not to exceed \$35,000 to complete the site work at West Breeze Park for the Pickleball courts to be allocated from Fund 204. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

J. Ross MOVED; M. Musial seconded to authorize the City of Vermilion pool fee change as presented by Karen Viterna this evening. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

T. Swinehart MOVED; P. Dombrowski seconded to accept the conceptual design of the functional fish art as presented by Public Art Vermilion. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

K. Viterna MOVED; J. Ross seconded to recommend to City Council to prepare legislation to enter into a contract with GameTime/Playcore of Fort Payne, Alabama for a swing set package for the Showse Park Playground in an amount not to exceed \$13,500.00 to be allocated from the Parks Capital Fund and Fund 407 "Showse Park Revitalization & Transformation Project. Discussion: M. Musial said he thought Showse Park was being funded all by donations. T. Swinehart said the money is in the fund that is being held by the city, and they are dividing it up between the three companies to purchase the equipment. M. Musial said it is not coming from city tax dollars. T. Swinehart said it is fund 407, which is the donations. M. Weisenburger said there is a portion the board approved a while back to match the donations, but it has already been submitted and approved. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

P. Dombrowski MOVED; K. Viterna seconded to recommend to City Council to prepare legislation to enter into a contract with Playworld Mid States Recreation of Pataskala, Ohio for a log climber and a double decker cone spinner for the Showse Park Playground in an amount not to exceed \$36,500.00 to be allocated from the Parks Capital Fund and Fund 407 "Showse Park Revitalization & Transformation Project. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

J. Ross MOVED; T. Swinehart seconded to recommend to City Council to prepare legislation to enter into a contract with Landscape Structures/Penchura LLC. of Delano, Minnesota for the purchase and installation of a Age 2-5 Play Structure and a Age 5-12 Play Structure, and a Four-Seat We-Saw for the Showse Park Playground in an amount not to exceed \$138,000.00 to be allocated from the Parks Capital Fund and Fund 407 "Showse Park Revitalization & Transformation Project. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

Tina Swinehart adjourned the meeting upon no further discussion.

NEXT MEETING:

April 15, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m.

Location: Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion

*Transcribed by - Melanie Wood, Assistant Clerk of Council – 3/19/25*



## Gwen Fisher

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**From:** Bergan Krek <bkrek08@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 24, 2025 3:18 PM  
**To:** Gwen Fisher  
**Subject:** Westbreeze Park

**Caution:** This Email is from an **EXTERNAL** source. Ensure you trust this sender before clicking on any links or attachments.

Ms. Fisher,

I am writing to respectfully express my apprehension regarding the proposed Westbreeze Park renovations. While I acknowledge the necessity for improvements and commend the initiative, I have reservations about the current design's potential negative impact on the park's primary users: families and the neighboring community.

Westbreeze Park's unique value lies in its convenient location and family-friendly environment. Its proximity to residential areas makes it an irreplaceable recreational resource for children and their caregivers. In contrast, alternative parks, though larger and potentially better equipped for organized sports. With more accessible parking. The proposed renovations risk fundamentally altering Westbreeze Park's character, thereby diminishing its vital role within the community. The children that come to play in the field here do not play pickle ball.

I propose a comprehensive review of the current plan, incorporating a detailed analysis of park usage patterns and a thorough assessment of community feedback. Is there any way the surrounding houses and neighborhood have a vote on what is put into the parks? This collaborative approach would ensure the renovations truly benefit all residents and enhance the neighborhood's quality of life. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns and explore alternative solutions that preserve the park's current strengths while incorporating necessary improvements. A meeting to discuss this further would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Bergan Dickinson & surrounding neighbors

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone



## Gwen Fisher

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**From:** juliehorn@woh.rr.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 23, 2025 3:17 PM  
**To:** Gwen Fisher  
**Subject:** Ice skating ring

**Caution:** This Email is from an **EXTERNAL** source. Ensure you trust this sender before clicking on any links or attachments.

Hi Gwen!

I was told you were the person to send a message to so I am hoping you can help.

I see all of the ideas for the parks that are being updated. Which is very exciting! One thing that needs to come back (because there isn't a lot of activities in our area most of the winter) is the ice skating ring. We have had one in Vermilion for as long as I can remember. My parents used to ice skate before I was born! So we have had one for YEARS! Decades even I would say. But they took out the last one for the fire station (which is important also, of course!) and never put it back in anywhere.

If we had one in one of our parks.... Maybe closer to the downtown area, if that's possible, it would bring people in to skate then grab lunch or a warm drink uptown. But it also gives our community.... Especially families.... Something healthy to do during the cold winter days. I would love to see it put back in somewhere. When I was little we used to ice skate at West breeze park. Right now they have nothing there. Just the small playset and a big empty field. I think that would be a great spot to put it back in for the winter and then change it to something else in the summer. But I don't care where they put it .... Just so they put one back in. It would be a great attraction if people knew where it was. The one we had on Douglas not many people even knew it was there. We found it by accident. So it needs to be in a park. But I would really like to see it put back in somewhere at one of the parks. Its been a long time tradition having one in vermilion. It needs to continue. Another idea would be over by the city pool? There is a play set over there and maybe the ice ring would work over there. We definitely have plenty of options of where it could go, I just really want to see one put back in vermilion so families have a physical activity to do together over the winter. Thank you for listening! I really appreciate it!

Thank you again so much!

Sincerely,  
Julie Horn

