

Planning part of parks committee

By [GARY BUDZAK](#) July 11, 2023



SUNBURY — The city's Parks and Recreation Committee held its first meeting of the year on Jan. 4.

Among the topics of discussion was the master plan for Freedom Park, and "the lack of available sewer services at the park," the minutes said. "The committee also briefly discussed the proposed community center at Freedom Park and ... noted that funding for such an endeavor is well beyond the City's capacity at the moment."

Freedom Park is at 830 State Route 61 N., Sunbury.

In new business, rules and regulations for Sunbury Memorial Park (the city-run cemetery) were reviewed.

On Feb. 1, the committee answered questions about J.R. Smith Park and gave an update on phases 3 and 4 of the Fallen Heroes Trail. Clearing has started on phase 3, and funding for phase 4 is being readied.

The March 1 meeting included plans on improving downtown connectivity with parks, repairs needed to restore the Lions Building at J.R. Smith Park, and a firefighters disc golf tournament at Freedom Park March 19. Town center planning was further discussed on April 5.

The committee held public forums regarding future plans for J.R. Smith Park in the Town Hall on April 13 and 15, which The Gazette covered in a prior story. Feedback from the forums was compiled and presented at the meeting on May 3.

Also on May 3, the committee was briefed "on a request to remove the field lights at J.R. Smith Park and move them to the baseball fields at Big Walnut Elementary school," the minutes said. "The Committee agreed that if the baseball association wanted to take down and transport the lights they could be purchased from the city. Additional research on the current use of the light still needs to take place before a final decision can be made."

There was also discussion on "the ongoing drawdown issue with the reservoirs." To drawdown is to lower the water level. "A meeting has been scheduled with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to go over the proposed plan and review other piping issues," the minutes said. "The final solution on a drawdown plan is still pending."

Youth fishing derbies are commonly held at the city's reservoirs.

The Parks and Recreation Committee consists of City Council members Tim Gose (chairman), John Grumney and Dave Martin. In 2020, the city collaborated with its engineering firm and citizens to develop the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

For more information, visit sunburyohio.org.