

The Waltham Recreation Board held their December meeting on December 9, 2020 via a Zoom Meeting.

Present were: Wayne Cook, Patricia Curtin, John Graceffa, Jennie Scafidi, Richard Scanlon, Stacey Tully, Gary Vallerand and Jerry Walker. Absent was Tom Creonte.

Also present were Director, Nick Abruzzi and Assistant Director, Kim Scott.

Chairperson Richard Scanlon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He announced that the meeting was being recorded through the Zoom app and would be shared to WCAC, Waltham's cable channel and would be shown on the local channel at a later date.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2020 Recreation Board meeting by Jerry Walker, seconded by Tricia Curtin. All were in favor.

The monthly bills report for the last month will remain in the Recreation Department Office. Director Abruzzi requested that the Recreation Board stop by the office in the next week to review and sign the bills report.

Director Abruzzi reviewed the Statement of Accounts explaining that the two pages detailed operational and capital budget accounts. Director Abruzzi stated that routine expenses and spending has occurred. The Recreation and Rink personnel accounts have seen an increase in the balances. Due to a new laborer's union collective bargaining agreement, the increase was appropriated for raises. All accounts are in good standing.

Annual Youth Sports Presentations was next on the agenda. The first group to present was the Waltham Youth Basketball Association (WYBA), represented by Brian Wilder, Treasurer. The League's packet of information was provided to the Recreation Board prior to the meeting for review. Mr. Wilder explained that the 2019-2020 season was comparable to years past, with steady numbers in all age brackets. The Waltham Youth Basketball Association partnered with the High School program to create community relations among the City's basketball players. The High School team spoke to the youth players about their experiences. The League continued to be financially stable.

The plans for the 2020-21 season are still being finalized. There is no plan for an in-town program, at this point. Waltham School Department gymnasiums are closed as well as city buildings, challenging WYBA to be creative to find alternative gym time. Mr. Wilder stated that he was looking into partnering with the Waltham Boys and Girls Club for gym time as well as other private gyms. The Metrowest League, where the WYBA travel teams compete, will be holding weekend games at their Foxboro location.

The Recreation Board had questions on State of Massachusetts youth sports regulations and how the sport has been played up to this point. Alternative gym locations were also discussed. The Recreation Board thanked Mr. Wilder for his time.

The next youth sports presentation was Waltham Girls Basketball, represented by Stacey Meehan, President. The League's packet of information was provided to the Recreation Board prior to the meeting for review. Ms. Meehan stated the 2019-2020 season was

consistent to years past. Enrollment was steady. Each team was able to complete the regular season but not all travel teams were able to complete the post season.

For the 2020-2021 season, Waltham Girls Basketball opened registration to evaluate if there was interest. At this time, there is one team per age bracket for a travel program. Girls Basketball has been using Chapel Hill - Chauncy Hall School to practice. This location will no longer be available after December 2020. Similar to the Waltham Youth Basketball Association, the Waltham Girls Basketball program is looking into alternatives to practice and to hold an in-town program. At this time, they will be participating in the Metrowest League's travel program on weekends, in Foxboro. The Recreation Board thanked Ms. Meehan for her time.

The next item on the agenda was the 2021 Prospect Hill Park Permit Application and Fee. In the Recreation Board's packet, there were three pages provided. The first page was a five-year review of fees and statistics. There were no picnic permits issued in 2020 due to COVID-19. The next two pages were the 2020 Picnic Permit application and the proposed 2021 Picnic Permit application. Recommended changes to the 2021 application include reducing the number of group gatherings from three categories to two categories. It is recommended to eliminate the largest gathering size (40- 80 individuals, requiring a police detail). A large group gathering of that size would be considered a special event and require the Recreation Board's approval. An adjustment is also recommended to the two smaller gathering sizes to be under 15 individuals and 15 to 39 individuals. It is proposed to increase the second category from 39 individuals to 45 individuals. It is not recommended to adjust the fees as they increased for the 2020 season. Issuing of the 2021 picnic permits would be dependent on State of Massachusetts regulations.

A motion to approve the 2021 Prospect Hill Park Permit application and fees was made by Gary Vallerand and seconded by John Graceffa. All were in favor.

The 2021 Waltham Community and Cultural Center (WCCC) Facility Use Application and fee was next on the agenda. Three years of statistics were provided to the Recreation Board with usage and fees. Director Abruzzi drew attention to the decline in the 2020 usage, as the building closed beginning in March due to COVID-19. No changes have been made to the form and there is not a recommendation to increase fees.

A motion to approve the 2021 WCCC Facility Use Application and fee was made by Wayne Cook and seconded by Stacey Tully. All were in favor.

Late filing of the Capital Budget was presented next. Director Abruzzi stated that the instructions for the Capital Budget was recently sent out to Departments. The capital budget needed to be completed and returned by December 11, 2020. The first page provided the current projects. Two new projects include the funding phase for construction of Prospect Hill Park and McDonald and Thompson Playground. The other projects, in the process of being closed out, include Wellington Farm Restoration, Cornelia Warren Park as well as the Elsie Turner Field/Graverson Playground projects.

The second page provides a five-year schedule for capital improvements. Projects specific to the Veterans Memorial Skating Rink are required in the leasing terms with the State. The last column of the schedule, reflecting fiscal year 2026, itemizing new projects

being requested. The new projects included improvements to Lowell Field, improvements to the Waltham Community and Cultural Center as well as a new ice resurfacing machine for Veterans Memorial Skating Rink.

A motion to approve the Capital Budget was made by Gary Vallerand and seconded by John Graceffa. All were in favor.

Director's Report:

Graverson/Mokema Project – Survey work has been completed. The contractors are scheduled to begin removing fill from this site on December 14, 2020. Weather permitting, this project will be completed in the next few weeks.

Wellington House Farm Restoration Project – A final walk through of this property with City Councilor George Darcy recently occurred and the final payment to the contractor has been processed. The Recreation Department is working with Councilor Darcy to continue future restoration to this land.

COVID- 19 - A staff member has been informed that a participant in their program has tested positive with COVID-19. The Recreation Department is working with the Health Department to provide contact tracing and communicate with all program participants impacted.

Veterans Memorial Skating Rink Update - Governor Baker has issued new regulations this past week. The staff are waiting for the specific guidelines to be released. The guidelines will be reviewed and protocols will be updated as needed and the staff will be trained to meet the new guidelines, accordingly.

Prospect Hill Park Tree – A large tree that was leaning across a trail and identified as a safety hazard has recently been removed. Thanks to the efforts of Park Ranger, Adam Green and City Tree Warden Kevin Thompson for taking care of this safety hazard.

Monsignor McCabe Stairs - The deteriorating stairs at Monsignor McCabe Playground have been removed by CPW.

Field Application – The Recreation Board's updated definition and field application has been sent to the Law Department for review as seen in the Recreation Board's packet. Director Abruzzi has spoken with the Law Department and will have information for the January 2021 meeting.

Parent Letter - A letter from a Rink parent showcasing the great customer services they experienced was provided to the Recreation Board. Director Abruzzi is proud of the staff at the Rink and appreciates their efforts.

Holiday Card – A holiday card was sent to the Recreation Board from Lynne Lazaro. She wanted to express her gratitude to the Recreation Board in helping to honor her dad, Joe Lazaro. Director Abruzzi said Lynne Lazaro has been a pleasure to work with and her energy has been inspiring.

Girl Scouts Night Hike – A Girl Scout troop organized a night hike on Monday, November 23, 2020. There were 12 youth and two adults. The troop met with Park Ranger Adam Green to review safety protocols and provided a detailed plan for their activity. The event was a success and everyone had a good time.

Other Business:

Happy Holidays to everyone!

A motion to adjourn was made by John Graceffa and seconded by Jerry Walker. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly A. Scott
Assistant Director