

The Waltham Recreation Board held their February meeting on February 29, 2012 at the Waltham Community Center, 510 Moody St.

Present were: Wayne Cook, Bill Fowler, Lisa Limonciello, Richard Scanlon, Stacey Gallagher Tully, Gary Vallerand and Jerry Walker. Patricia Curtin and Thomas Creonte were absent.

Also present were Recreation Director Sandra Tomasello and Asst. Director Nick Abruzzi.

Vice-Chairman Richard Scanlon called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. He announced that the meeting is being filmed by WCAC, Waltham's local cable channel and will be played on the local channel at a later date.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2012 meeting was made by Wayne Cook seconded by Jerry Walker and voted unanimously.

In review of the statement of accounts, Director Sandra Tomasello noted that the operating accounts are healthy and there were no changes from last month in Capital Accounts.

This month appearing before the Board for the annual presentation of Waltham youth organizations were: Prospect Hill Ski Team and Waltham Youth Soccer

Appearing before the board from the Prospect Hill Ski Team were Treasurer, Kirsten Sorin and President, Brian Bower, who took over the presidency from his wife, Roni Sue Pomerleau Bowers. Ms. Bower, who has been coaching for 20 years in the program, will continue in that capacity.

When asked by Director Tomasello to briefly update the Board on their organization, Mr. Bower noted that the program currently has 96 kids enrolled. They are currently skiing at Blue Hill Ski Area. The facility will be closing this week, ending with a BBQ Pig Roast. The lease for the current company running Blue Hills will expire this year. The company, from New Jersey, plans to submit a bid to remain at the facility. Highlights for the organization each winter include a couple of visits to Ragged Mountain in N.H.

When asked about the drop off in their numbers by Wayne Cook, Mr. Bower noted that the team had relocated to Nashoba Valley a couple of years ago, and the decline in participants was because parents did not like the commute to that facility.

Next representing Waltham Youth Hockey was Treasurer, Paul Aborn. Mr. Aborn talked briefly about the programs offered, explaining that the numbers are down due to players leaving and going to select leagues. The fee for the in-house program is \$740.00 and the fee for the travel program is \$1,325.00.

Director Tomasello asked about the number of non-residents and if the fees were the same. Mr. Aborn confirmed that players from several communities (Weston, Wayland, Newton, Watertown) participate in the program and that fees were the same for non-residents. She also asked if Waltham got any coaches from outside of Waltham; Mr. Aborn answered that they have a few.

Wayne Cook inquired if the league offered financial assistance/scholarships for Waltham participants, along with non-residents. Mr. Aborn confirmed that they offer assistance to all and noted that they also offer a payment plan.

Director Tomasello asked if the league would consider expanding the in-house division of the program in hopes of attracting more recreational players vs. an emphasis on the more competitive travel team offering. Mr. Aborn noted that the league has looked at this, but there doesn't seem to be support for such, with more support and commitment to higher levels of competition.

The next issue addressed was the Fitch School property. Present at the meeting was Councilor Stephen Rourke chairman of the City Council Ad Hoc Committee. Mr. Rourke was there to inquire about what the Recreation Board would like to see at the facility.

Mr. Rourke briefed the Board on the property and talked about the two (2) properties as they are listed. Lot "B" is the new spray park that was completed nearly last fall and planning to open this summer. The parcel of land was a wading pool, before the spray park. This property, which was part of the Fitch School under the School Department was deemed surplus and transferred ownership to the City; with the spray park under the care and custody of the Recreation Department's jurisdiction.

Lot "A" is the parcel that was being discussed, consists of the former Fitch School, a parking area, a small play structure and a ½ basketball court.

Councilor Rourke said that the Mayor and City Council must decide what to do with the property – keep it, lease it, lease part or sell it.

Several meetings and discussions have taken place – with suggestions to turn it into a parking lot for the area residents, lease all or part of the building out for a child's daycare or even an adult day program.

He also mentioned that when talking about the property with the City's Purchasing Agent, Joe Pedulla, Mr. Pedulla suggested that the City put out an R.F.I. (Request for Information). This process would allow individuals to present to the city their ideas for the property.

Councilor Rourke was seeking the Board's input as to what they would like to see done with the facility.

Former School Committee member and current Recreation Board member Jerry Walker, has visited the site and talked about the condition of the property. He noted water damage in the school and does not believe the gym is worth saving.

Wayne Cook asked if there were any historic elements of the building. Councilor Rourke noted that if the building stays and renovations are done, the front façade of the building should be saved, if possible.

Questions arose about saving part of the building and adding additional parking areas. Or if the building was leased would there be some allotted parking spaces for those using the spray park. Others thought the entire area could be turned into a neighborhood park with additional parking for it and the spray area.

Discussion continued among members about the area being turned into a “green space”, as there are very few such areas in that neighborhood.

Jerry Walker motioned that Director Tomasello send a written response of the Board’s thoughts on the matter to the Ad Hoc Committee as requested by Councilor Rourke.

Board members also asked Councilor Rourke to keep the Board informed of the programs made with this issue. Councilor Rourke stated he would and thanked the board for their time.

Next on the agenda was the annual request from the Susan G. Komen-Boston, 3-Day Cancer Walk. They again request using the Veteran’s Memorial Complex on July 26 – July 29, 2012.

Lisa Limonciello inquired if there had been any problems with the property after the event. Director Tomasello said that area is in pristine condition when over . Jerry Walker who first opposed the request, said they do a wonderful job.

Jerry Walker made a motion to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Wayne Cook and voted unanimously.

Next for consideration was the annual election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Recreation Board.

A motion was made by Jerry Walker to elect Richard Scanlon Chairperson. The motion was seconded by Stacy Gallagher Tully and voted unanimously.

Gary Vallerand motioned to elect Jerry Walker Vice-Chairperson. The motion was seconded by Bill Fowler and voted unanimously.

During the Director’s Report, Director Tomasello reported that the spring brochures went to the school this past Monday.

A communication sent to the Mayor was forwarded to board members concerning dogs on the fields at Nipper Maher Park. Since Board members received this communications last week, the lock on the gate at Jake Dennis Field at Nipper Maher Park was cut and the "No Dogs Allowed" sign was removed from the fence.

Discussion followed concerning: enforcing the no dog rule, implementing fines, construction of a dog park and if it was built how they would have to work with a volunteer group to oversee the facility.

With no resolution, the situation will continue to be monitored. It may become necessary to restrict dogs from all park properties.

The vacancy for the position of Facilities Supervisor I at the Veterans Memorial Rink was posted internally. Two (2) applications were received from City of Waltham employees, one from within the Recreation Department the other from another department.

Director Tomasello, Asst. Director Nick Abruzzi and Chairperson Richard Scanlon will conduct interviews. They will report back to the Board with their recommendations at the March Board meeting for approval.

A construction meeting is scheduled with Ron Marini for tomorrow afternoon in preparations of some beginning construction for Lazazzero and McCabe improvement projects.

Summer employment applications will become available starting Monday, March 5, and will end on April 27, 2012.

During Other Business, Gary Vallerand volunteered to paint the building/concession stand at Cornelia Warren Field. Director Tomasello said that she would contact Men's Softball League to see if they would donate the paint. Dick Scanlon also offered assistance from Waltham Pop Warner Football program should Gary need help.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Bill Fowler, seconded by Gary Vallerand and voted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen O'Brien, Clerk