

The Waltham Recreation Board held their December meeting on December 10, 2014 at the Waltham Community and Cultural Center, 510 Moody St., Waltham MA.

Present were: Patricia Curtin, Richard Scanlon, Stacey Tully, Gary Vallerand, John Graceffa, Jerry Walker, and Thomas Creonte. Wayne Cook was absent.

Also present were; Director Sandra Tomasello and Assistant Director Nick Abruzzi.

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the October meeting (tabled from November) was made by Jerry Walker seconded by John Graceffa and voted unanimously.

A motion to approve the minutes of the November meeting was made by Jerry Walker seconded by John Graceffa and voted unanimously.

The monthly bills were circulated and signed by all Board members.

In reviewing the Statement of Accounts, Director Tomasello noted that the first page reflected current balances in General Operating Accounts and the second page lists appropriations and balances for Capital Improvement Accounts.

Next on the agenda was a presentation by Brandeis University Biology Professor Eric Olsen PhD. and student, Matthew Chamberlain. They were proposing the idea for an Interpretive Trail at Prospect Hill Park. Professor Olsen began by saying how grateful he is to the City of Waltham for having such great lands for his Biology class on site of the Brandeis University campus and within the Waltham Community like at Prospect Hill Park. After distributing materials to the board that were prepared by the Brandeis University Field Biology Class of 2014, student Matthew Chamberlain explained his hand out consisted of information the students gathered during visits to the park in addition to the pros and cons to having this type of trail in the park. Professor Olsen explained, the Kiosk and the project is mobile. He feels it would be beneficial to the community, as it could be used by schools as a learning tool. The community, and Boy Scouts could also be involved. He asked that the board consider a collaboration with him. This has been a class project his students have been working on all semester. He's not sure where funding for the project will come from. Board member Jerry Walker liked the concept, he proposed the Board set a date for an onsite walk of the proposed trail location, before the Board take an official vote on the matter. Board member John Graceffa believed it would be a good way to bond the University with the community. Jerry Walker made a motion in support of moving forward with the Interpretive Trail Project as proposed, by scheduling an onsite walk through with Professor Olsen and his students, motion was seconded by John Graceffa and voted unanimously.

On the agenda next was the 2014 Youth Sports Group Annual Presentations. First to present was Waltham Girls Softball. Representing the group was President, Stephen McGovern and Treasurer, Leo Cardarelli. Mr. McGovern began by telling the board that the organizations' participants range in age from 4 to 18. He continued by saying that this year was the first year they used the U system. Everyone agrees the level of play was higher. Mr. McGovern reported that this year at the T ball level they decided to play indoors at Northeast School Gym the first few weeks of the program.

The U12 and U14 teams traveled 6-7 times. Due to some issues they were not able to finish their game schedule. Their numbers dropped, he feels due to traveling concerns. Director Tomasello stated after reviewing prior year reports that the Girls Softball Program was always a spring program that operated from April to June. Ending the season at the end of the school year. It was not until the last year or so that they expanded to offer programs in the summer and fall, with more emphasis on competitive play. Mr. McGovern discussed a new league they participated in, the Middle Essex Girls Softball League. This league is for girls who may not have the ability to play "club" softball, but would like to travel. Chairman Richard Scanlon expressed concern for Mr. McGovern's direction of the program, more towards travel team softball vs. in house play and recreational softball. Mr. Scanlon then directed the Board's attention to the documents provided and asked why there were no board members listed as requested. Mr. McGovern indicated that he did not list any members because they recently held an election that may need to be rescheduled, as a complaint has been received from the Attorney General's office against the Girls Softball Program to Mr. McGovern for not following the Open Meeting Laws. Board member Jerry Walker spoke to the seriousness of the complaint, having years of experience and knowledge on the subject as a school committee member and advised Mr. McGovern to respond immediately to the complaint. He also advised Mr. McGovern to organize board members to solve any disagreements and conflicts for the betterment of the program and participants. Mr. McGovern attempted to explain his reasoning for not responding to the complaint. Mr. Walker stated the board would not discuss any further matters relative to the Girls Softball Program until the complaint was resolved. Mr. Walker then made a motion to table any further business with the Girls Softball Program until the matter is resolved. The motion was seconded by John Graceffa and all voted in favor.

Requesting to speak on the matter was Mr. Kevin Ferguson. Chairman Richard Scanlon permitted Mr. Ferguson to speak. Mr. Ferguson explained his role as a parent of a daughter in the program, as well as recording secretary on the board of the Waltham Girls Softball Program. He stated he was the one who filed the complaint with the State Attorney General's office. Only after many failed attempts to resolve his and other parents concerns about the election with Mr. McGovern. He also provided the board with a copy of the Middle Essex Girls Softball Leagues' By Laws. Mr. Ferguson thanked the board for allowing him to speak and he was pleased with the action taken by the Board. He looks forward to a resolution.

Mr. McGovern then asked if the board would help the Girls Softball Program resolve the problem. Mr. Walker stated he first must resolve the official complaint and then the Board and staff will assist in helping the group reach a compromise. Director Tomasello stated the Recreation Department has assisted other groups in the past, but Mr. McGovern has to understand we will assist however we can to help bring peace and recommend solutions, but the board for the Girls Softball Program will ultimately need to make the decisions as a unified group.

Next on the agenda was Waltham Track Club, represented by President, Joe Tranchita. Director Tomasello began by recognizing the rise in numbers within the organization. Mr. Tranchita discussed how well the Winter Indoor Track program is doing and that he has an energetic coaching staff. He continued by commending parents and volunteers for all their assistance with the program. There is great community support for the program. Jerry Walker thanked Mr. Tranchita for his years of service with the track club and expressed how lucky our community is to have Joe involved with the program. Joe continued by saying that the community and parent participation is fantastic. Director Tomasello thanked him for all his dedication and hard work in continuing a strong track program.

Waltham Youth Soccer was next on the agenda. Representing the group was, Vice President Julie Babcock, Treasurer Dan Taylor and Waltham Youth Soccer Board Member; Kevin Felton. Ms. Babcock was first to speak. She reported that numbers are rising for all levels and gender. She reported that they have to wait list children at every level. Their biggest challenge is field space, she feels that they may have to schedule Sunday field times. She informed the board that the league hired a full time referee assigner. This year each coach must be certified through the Mass Soccer League. The certifications for coaches have different levels for different age groups. Although there is a fee to obtain this certification the league reimburses all coaches who receive the certification. They would like to give the children a club soccer experience without the club soccer price. Chairman Richard Scanlon thanked them for their presentation.

Next on the agenda was Waltham Girls Basketball, represented by Reid Lyons. Mr. Lyons began by informing the board that numbers for the program continue to be steady. This year the program has more female coaches, some being Waltham High School students, and most former players of the program. Mr. Lyons expressed his wishes that they could be a better feeder program for the Waltham High School Girls Basketball team. This year their numbers only supported (2) travel teams. He feels that this is due to AAU and Middle School teams. The program has been consistent in this community for 22 years. Board member Jerry Walker thanked him for the presentation.

Next to present was Waltham Youth Basketball Association by treasurer, Michael Wilder. Mr. Wilder expressed how lucky the program is to have Stacey Connors and Brian Wilder coaching 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grade teams, who play at the Fitzgerald Elementary School Gym on Saturday mornings. With their experience of playing basketball at the college level they share a lot of knowledge of the game. McDevitt Middle School Gym is where the 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels games and practices are held. For the first time they were able to create (2) travel teams at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. There will always be a place for any child to play, but he feels the program needs the competition of travel. When asked by Board Member Jerry Walker what he feels is their biggest hurdle, he feels amount of gym time and the expense is their biggest challenge. He expressed his thanks for the use of the gym at the Waltham Community and Cultural Center on Thursday nights, free of charge. Board Member John Graceffa thanked Mr. Wilder and his family for their continued service to the program, for many years.

Next for review on the agenda, was the FY 2020 Capital Improvement Budget Proposal. Director Tomasello noted the only changes were minor from the proposal first submitted in November.

Director Tomasello also noted there were minor adjustments to the (5) year budget proposal to updated cost estimates and quotes provided in the energy audit listed for the Veteran's Memorial Rink and some park improvement projects. The biggest challenge, and priority, are safety issues which we will need to seek funding for. Board Member Jerry Walker inquired about the warranty on the turf fields. Director Tomasello informed him that the warranty was expired and they would need to be replaced. Also noted was the significant drainage issues at Hillcroft Playground. Mayor McCarthy is have engineering investigate the issues. Director Tomasello proceeded by saying the Community Meeting for the Hillcroft Playground was well attended by the residents, with drainage issues expressed by the majority of those in attendance. There was a motion to accept the Capital Improvement Budget for proposed as submitted FY 2015-2020 made by Board Member Jerry Walker, seconded by Stacey Tully, voted unanimously.

The Community Development Block Grant Proposal-Year 41 was next on the agenda. Director Tomasello began by recommending the \$500,000 that the grant offers be utilized at Peter Gilmore

Playground, Koutoujian Playground, and at the Waltham Community Center. These are the parcels that meet the grant requirements. Director Tomasello explained the city is limited as to how the money can be spent and it's unrealistic to take the money at one time. Her suggestion is to ask for smaller amounts as needed at the different playgrounds slated for renovations. Board Member Jerry Walker made a motion to accept Community Development Block Grant Proposal, as submitted-Year 41 be, seconded by Gary Vallerand, voted unanimously.

Review of the 2015 Facility Use /Field Permit Application Fees was next on the agenda. Director Tomasello began by recommending the fee structure remain the same, \$100.00 for a 2 hour time period, for field usage. This fee is charged those organized groups where fees apply. Waltham Youth Groups and WHS sports teams who utilize the fields are not charged a fee. After a brief discussion, a motion to keep the same fee for 2015 Facility Use/Field Permits and Building Use Permits was made by Jerry Walker, seconded by Stacey Tully and voted unanimously.

Next for review was the 2015 Picnic Permit Fees. Director Tomasello reviewed the hand out which was a spread sheet that showed the number of permits issued over the past (5) years has remained the same, noting the larger picnic areas with pavilions were most popular and most had the most fees collected. Director Tomasello recommended the fee's remain the same for a (4) hour time frame. A motion for the 2015 Picnic Permit Fees to remain the same was made the Board Member Stacey Tully, seconded by John Graceffa.

Prospect Hill Park Stewardship Subcommittee was next on the agenda. Subcommittee Chairman Gary Vallerand reported that there was a meeting of the subcommittee held, December 3, 2014 at 4 pm, at the Waltham Community and Cultural Center. A copy of the minutes from the subcommittee meeting was distributed to all Board Members for review. Mr. Vallerand reported that he was able to read the 1997 Prospect Hill Park Master Plan and agrees that a new Master Plan should be done eventually. In order to create a better line of communication with the Stewards he would like to plan a meet and greet with the subcommittee and Prospect Hill Park Stewardship members. He would like the subcommittee, along with the Stewards input to devise a plan to prioritize issues. Mr. Vallerand suggested that the subcommittee meet with Councilor Dan Romard, Chris Leary and Sonja Wadman before meeting with all the Stewards at the "meet and greet." He would also like the subcommittee to reach out to Gloria Champion of the Prospect Hill Park Advocacy Group, given all her years of volunteerism to the park, the master plan, history and dedication to protecting the beauty of the park and natural habitat. Director Tomasello was pleased with the subcommittee's enthusiasm and suggested that they create a calendar of meetings with the Stewards. She also suggested that the Stewardship Program appear annually before the Recreation Board similar to the Youth Sport Organization appearances.

Director Tomasello continued by updating the progress of construction at Pond End. She reported that the weather has been hindering the completion of the project. She would like at least 95% of the project complete by the end of 2015. She announced that the Cedarwood Playground Project maybe going out to bid soon, she is just waiting for approval from Mayor McCarthy.

Director Tomasello reported that Winter Registration was a success. She reported a few surprises, Disney on Ice, "Frozen" registration was not the "hot seller" as expected, but there was a significant rise in skiing and snowboarding lessons offered at Nashoba Valley Ski Area. She explained you can never predict. Director Tomasello informed the Board the Veteran's Memorial Rink public skating is in full gear. The number of participants in the public skating program is overwhelming,

reporting that an additional skate guards are necessary, and skate rentals are sell outs for adult sizes and steady for children's sizes.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa DiBlasi, Clerk