

The Waltham Recreation Board held their October meeting on October 22, 2014 at the Waltham Community and Cultural Center, 510 Moody St., Waltham MA.

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

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

Chairman Scanlon called the meeting to order at 5:35 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 Recreation Board Special meeting held on, September 10, 2014 was made by Jerry Walker and seconded by Thomas Creonte and voted unanimously. Next, a motion was made to approve the minutes for the September 17, 2014 Monthly Board Meeting. This motion was made by Thomas Creonte and seconded by Jerry Walker, and voted unanimously.

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

In reviewing the Statement of Accounts, Director Tomasello noted that there were no longer any negative accounts balances due to funds brought forward from FY 2014 accounts, especially for all revolving accounts.

Next on the agenda were Annual Presentations of sports leagues. First to appear was Waltham Youth Baseball League. Outgoing President, Brian Wilder was present to introduce incoming President, Bill Hanley and the league's Treasurer, Sean George. Brian reported that this past season was very successful, financially and number of youth in the program. Their numbers were the largest they have had in 5 years. This was the first year they have seen a large jump in numbers in the younger levels. Bill Hanley as incoming President mentioned thier numbers for the Little Sluggers summer league, with games were played on Wednesday nights throughout the summer. This program he feels kept numbers stable in their Fall Ball program. Treasurer, Sean George reported that due to an increase in sponsors and registration along with a very profitable fundraiser held in the beginning of the season, the WYBB Board was able to set aside \$3,000.00 to renovate Lazazzarro Park's shack and other small improvements. Board member Thomas Creonte asked what was the opening day fundraiser? The fundraiser was a "Family Fun Day" with donations from the 99 Restaurant baseball games, a parade etc. Director Tomasello noticed no Vice President nor Secretary listed on the officers list for 2015. Are they recruiting for the vacancies? Bill Hanely stated that no others have currently volunteered, but a large number of people assist him and the Treasurer with league responsibilities. She thanked Brian for his time as President. She commended him and those who assisted him with the task of operating the program from (2) different locations, especially during construction at both parks.

Warrendale Little League was next on the agenda. League President John McLaughlin presented the Board with a copy of the 2014 year book. Also in attendance representing the league was Vice President, Andrew Arena, Treasurer, Bill Burgess and Assistant Treasurer, Sean Bryant

(WHS Student). John McLaughlin was the first to speak, he began by informing the Board that his registrant numbers at the lower levels were “steady” and his major league numbers were extremely high. They had a wait list of approximately 40 kids. He proceeded to thank his Board of Directors. Patti Hovsepian will be stepping down as shack coordinator. John thanked Patti for her years of volunteering including her years that she didn’t have a child in the program. Warrendale Little League won both the Minor and Major League divisions in The City Tournament. They also hosted the 9 year old Cal Ripkin Tournament. Their summer ball program had (4) teams participate in the Suburban Summer League. He was pleased to report that the 9 year old team from Warrendale won the league’s championship in their bracket. Past concerns with youths loitering behind the shack and closing off the cut through to Mayall Road have helped prevent vandalism to the shack. They also thanked the City for including the new security lighting in the same area, which also illuminates the new batting cage. Treasurer, Bill Burgess was next to speak, he introduced his Assistant Treasurer, Sean Bryant to report to the Board their finances. Mr. Bryant reported that their income is higher than it had been, largely due to Patti Hovsepian cutting costs in the shack. Bill Burgess introduced students that Watertown Savings Bank wanted to recognize who participated in the Emerging Leaders Program. John McLaughlin Jr. will be Assistant Treasurer for the 2015 baseball season. The following students were recognized: Megan Irving, Charles LeClair, Jillian McLaughlin, Kaelyn O’Connell, Cameron Egan, Victoria Arena, Hunter Duarte, Sean Bryant (Assistant Treasurer) and Kathleen McLaughlin (Past Assistant Treasurer). Victoria DeFabritis, Margaret Carr and Taylor Pinzone also Immerging Leaders received College Recommendations. A round of applause was given to all participants, Chairman Richard Scanlon congratulated all the students and thanked Warrendale Little League for their presentation.

Waltham Babe Ruth was next on the agenda, representing the league was President, Vincent Failla and Treasurer, Larry Gelineau. Mr. Failla reported that a new Board took over the league, for the 2014 season. They met regularly beginning in the fall of 2013 into the spring of 2014 to create an improved program for the 13-15 year olds. Numbers were low. They had enough players to field 8 teams, 12 players per team. In years past they had 14 teams in the prep league. The only concern was that they would have 13 year olds playing against 15 year olds. They reported the 13 year olds did fantastic and they had a very competitive year. Due to bad weather they only played 10 games out of a 14 game schedule. They were able to complete playoffs by the 4th of July holiday. There were low numbers for the Lou Tompkins League try outs, which was a disappointment. They had the numbers to enter a team in the Arlington Summer League. The team won the championship. With a rise in little league numbers they hope to see a rise in their numbers as well, for 2015. They feel the Middle School Baseball teams reduced their numbers. Assistant Director, Nick Abruzzi is hoping that the Middle School Baseball team schedule will be available earlier next year so families and players can plan better. Treasurer, Mr. Gelineau thanked the recreation Board for helping put together a committee to revamp the league. Although the new redesigned sponsorship Board, new water heater and large amount of baseballs, absorbed a lot of their money, they should be in good financial shape in the spring. Mr. Failla will stay on as President as long as it takes to make the league strong again and he thanked Recreation Assistant Director, Nick Abruzzi and Recreation Board Member Gary Vallarand for their participation in “re vamping” the league. Board member Jerry Walker recognized there were (80) sponsors in the (3) baseball leagues, “presented this evening acknowledging commendable community business participation.”

Next on the agenda, was the acceptance of a bench that will serve as a Memorial for Mr. Wayne Abbot. Mr. Abbot was a Waltham Public Schools Custodian for many years. He volunteered much of his time to Nipper Maher Park as a coach in the Little Nippers Baseball League. His Family donated this bench and would like the bench located in a spot near the baseball diamond # 1 at Nipper Maher Park. A motion was made to accept the bench and the proposed location by Wayne Cook, seconded by Stacy Tully, the vote was unanimous.

On the agenda next was The Prospect Hill Stewardship Program. In attendance representing the program was Head Steward Chris Leary, Councilor Daniel Romard and Sonja Wadman with the Waltham Land Trust. Chairman Richard Scanlon began by expressing his concerns for the excessive number of emails being sent by Mr. Leary to numerous city officials in the past (3) months when matters relative to the park need to be addressed with the Recreation Board. He felt the Board was being accused of not doing their job. He also wanted to make it clear that this new program was not going to become a political matter. When the proposal was presented for Board approval, it was granted with an understanding that communications would be with the board for action. He also mentioned the master plan for the park, stating that changes additions and/or updates to the plan would be discussed by the Board with budget items whether for general maintenance or capital would be discussed as the Board planned its budgets. Chairman Scanlon recognized the Board not in session during July and August, and Chris not available in September, therefore this being the first opportunity to meet and discuss the work of the stewards. Chairman Scanlon asked for respect of the Board and patience and understanding that improvements have been made and will continue to be made with continued funding, resources and personnel.

City Councilor Daniel Romard responded by telling the Board that he was sorry for any misgivings and he hoped that going forward communication would be better. He distributed a handout which was an update of the Stewardship Program. The handout highlighted the progress of the program since beginning in the spring of 2014. Councilor Romard also reviewed the challenges and sought Board guidance on a number of issues. He suggested the Board give more feedback to the Stewards and asked if it might be possible to organize a committee to meet with them during summer months when the park is at its busiest. Chairman Scanlon, suggested a subcommittee of the Board for this purpose. Councilor Romard also asked the Board to consider a budget request for permanent personnel, whether in the C.P.W. Department or the Recreation Department solely dedicated for the Prospect Hill Park. Possibly a "Park Ranger". Chairman Scanlon stated that the Board is dedicated to continuing to keep Prospect Hill Park one of the best within the state. Chairman Scanlon then asked Director Tomasello to respond to the Councilor's remarks, Stewardship monthly reporting logs and communication problems with Chris Leary. Director Tomasello began by thanking all those associated with the Prospect Hill Park Stewardship Program. She fully supports the program and the volunteers, but feels in order to move forward, better communication that the Board is responsible for over (20) park properties. She stated that the Master Plan for Prospect Hill Park exists as a tool to help develop, restore, and guide the city with decisions concerning the park. Although the plan was developed some years ago, it still has value. Should it be updated? Absolutely. Input from all park users and citizens of Waltham should be included in a future plan, not just those items in the Steward's reports. The city is also currently updating its "Open Space and Recreation Plan", another valuable resource of information gathered from the residents of Waltham. Director Tomasello

liked the idea of a subcommittee within the Recreation Board. She also reported that all the information within the steward Reports that concerned C.P.W was immediately forwarded to C.P.W. Director, Mike Chiasson. Director Tomasello also mentioned a few examples of items that have been addressed within the report logs. Most upsetting to the Director was an email sent directly to the Recreation Department informing the Board of another City Councilors' recent support and assistance. It was Director Tomasello's feeling that all of Waltham's City Councilors' would support the Stewardship Program, and that the message sent was purely political in nature. We should all be focusing our energy in doing what's best for Prospect Hill Park in working together to make the Park an enjoyable place to visit. Board Member Patricia Curtin then asked if they understood all the good that had been accomplished in the park in recent years. Considering the Stewardship Program just started this spring, she asked that they be patient and give the Board time to digest the information in the monthly reporting logs. She mentioned the number of parks the Board oversees, also stated that the Board hears many different opinions on these matters. There are reasons why some things are the way they are i.e. the number of trash barrels. She explained why maintenance decisions consider information they may not be familiar with. Barrels are not utilized in some areas, due to past practices of people placing their household trash in them or used for cleaning out their cars. Chris Leary then asked to speak in response. He stated he would like to see the rules and regulations enforced with more supervising presence in the park, a park ranger for the park and he likes the idea of a committee. Chairman Scanlon also announced that the matter of possible encroachment on park property has been referred to the City's Law Department. Councilor Romard thanked the Board for their time and asked for their support of the logo presented in the packet. The logo was designed by a Waltham High Schools Student. A motion was made by Thomas Creonte, to approve the Prospect Hill Park Stewardship logo, seconded by, Wayne Cook, the vote was unanimous.

Chairman Scanlon then asked if any members would be willing to serve on a subcommittee for the Prospect Hill Park Stewardship Program. The following members volunteered Stacy Tully, Wayne Cook Patricia Curtain and Gary Vallerand all volunteered to be members of this committee.

Next on the agenda was the 2014 Summer Report. Director Tomasello reviewed in depth the Summer Report hand out. (see attached)

She continued by saying we yet again had great staff, excellent weather and our overall numbers were great. The most significant change this summer was the retirement of our Program Director, Anna Connolly after 33 years with the Department, although we're happy to have Kara Greely hired as her replacement.

Director Tomasello began her Directors Report talking about Veteran's Memorial Rink. The Recreation Departments is in its tenth year of operating the rink, 2014 will bring skate rentals to the rink with 40 pairs of skates purchased (see flyer). The opening date was delayed due to mechanical problems with the compressor. Excessive heat and humidity also contributed to difficult operating conditions. Director Tomasello acknowledged the dedication of the rink personnel, working around the clock to monitor the system and keep things running. Mr. Abruzzi goes above and beyond, by monitoring systems on his home computer to be assured the system doesn't go into alarm status. As you know an audit has been done in the rink operating

systems, and it is anticipated that major renovations are likely in the near future. The Rink opened September 15th. It opened later due to warm weather and issues with the compressor. Capital funds in the amount of \$29,000.00 were used to replace a part on one of the compressors.

As part of the of the RAW (Race Around Waltham) series Tim and Kathy Irvine sponsored the 5K Greenway run, it was very successful. Proceeds from the event were donated to the Waltham Land Trust. Director Tomasello then talked about the playground/park renovations. She reported Pond End Tot lot is on schedule. A design service is being sought for basketball court at, Hillcroft Playground, as Phase I renovations. Phase II for the park will address other park improvements.

In other Recreation business Board Member Richard Scanlon proposes that in the future the Recreation Board may want to think about discussing with youth sports leagues the conflicts caused between youth sport groups, especially for those sports being offered Spring, Summer and Fall. Board member Jerry Walker also raised concern for conflicts with meeting academic benchmarks, and kids playing High School Sports, and the importance of allowing kids time to play and enjoy the benefits of all that comes from that.

With no other business, a motion to adjourn was made by Thomas Creonte, seconded by Gary Vallerand and voted unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa DiBlasi, Clerk