

The Waltham Recreation Board held their September meeting on September 17, 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 and Jerry Walker. John Graceffa was absent.

Also present was Director Sandra Tomasello, and Assistant Director, Nick Abruzzi

Mr. 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 June meeting was made by Thomas Creonte seconded by Jerry Walker and voted unanimously.

In July, Director Tomasello received an email from Ward 3 Councilor, George Darcy requesting the Recreation Board's approval to hold (2) events to remove volunteer trees, remove tree stumps and re-seed a portion on the property known as the Wellington House, located at 785 Trapelo Road in Waltham.

A vote was taken via email with all Recreation Board members responding. Director Tomasello then contacted Councilor Darcy to confirm that the Board voted in support of the request.

A motion to officially approve the email vote was made by Patricia Curtin, 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 several of our self-supporting accounts have negative balances, as the carry forward amounts from last fiscal year have not been brought forward as of yet. This should be completed by the October 22, 2014 meeting.

Next on the agenda was the proposed schedule for the annual Youth Sport Presentations. Leagues/organizations will appear beginning at the October 2014 meeting and ending in January 2015. Two to three of these groups will appear at each meeting. Groups will present their financial report for their last completed season. They usually report about their enrollment, expenses, fundraising, fees etc. while also discussing requests for capital improvements of facilities they utilize.

Wayne Cook asked if we could require the person filling out the form attend, along with the president/vice-president of the organization.

A motion to approve the Youth Sport Presentation schedule as proposed, and request that both the person completing the form and the league/organization's president/vice-president attend was made by Wayne Cook, seconded by Gary Vallerand and voted unanimously.

The 2014 Preliminary Summer Program review was next on the agenda. Director Tomasello praised the phenomenal staff this past summer.

Due to the public school's closing of the 2014 school year going into our first week of summer because of several snow days, the Recreation Department adapted the schedules for those programs that began the first week. Enrollment numbers were lower the first and second week of our summer season.

Director Tomasello also talked about Anna Connelly's retirement and the effects it had on the Kaleidoscope program. Adam Dallaire had been training to take over the Kaleidoscope program from Ms. Connelly beginning August 4th. Unfortunately, Mr. Dallaire suffered an injury which prevented him from acting as Program Director. Kaleidoscope's Asst. Director, Kara Greeley stepped up to the plate the last two weeks of the program.

Rec. Supervisor, Kim Scott oversaw the programs held at Prospect Hill Park – Summer Fun, PreK Program and the LEAP program (with high numbers this summer). And Rec. Supervisor, Kathy Gross was in charge of the Chill Zone programs.

The opening of the new water spray elements at Nipper Maher Park, brings it to a total of (9) facilities at parks that have a water spray devices.

Before the spray parks opened in June, a leak was detected at the McDonald Playground Spray Park. Capital funds were sought to re-construct underground piping and new asphalt, delaying it's opening a few days. The sealcoat painting will take place within the next few weeks.

The Recreation Department has developed partnerships with a number of outside agencies and individuals to provide additional programming during the summer. (Ex.: Drama, Science, Lego and Sports). The larger service provider like SkyHawks and ThunderCat require contracts and bidding. This year is the third and final year of the current contract. Asst. Director Abruzzi will begin discussing 2015 plans with the groups and bidding regulations with Purchasing Agent, Joe Pedulla.

Thomas Creonte inquired who chooses the max enrollment number. Asst. Director Abruzzi noted that some agencies, like Thundercat, choose lower numbers because of staffing, while SkyHawks have higher numbers. Asst. Dir., Nick Abruzzi said that the Department does not want to have kids sitting around, because there is not enough staff

An attendance chart was provided, comparing figures from 2013 and 2014. Director Tomasello noted that a full report will be provided at the October 2014 meeting. It was also noted an error in calculations this chart will be revised for next month.

Next was an update of the Prospect Hill Park Stewardship Program. Director Tomasello provided Board members with a reporting chart, submitted by Chris Leary from the Stewardship Program. The chart describes the date of observation, stewards' comments and their recommended action.

Director Tomasello added another column stating her comments on the information. She provided as information only, reporting that there are currently (21) steward volunteers.

Mr. Leary plans to attend the October meeting to address the Board regarding these reports and the stewardship program. Director Tomasello suggests reviewing the report provided, her comments and she will supply the updated report received for the month of September.

During the Director's Report, Director Tomasello provided a copy of the fall program brochure for Board members. She also told them on-line registration began on August 25th and walk-in began on September 3rd. Registration started a little slow and some programs had to be cancelled due to low enrollment.

Assistant Director Nick Abruzzi has been working with the Race Around Waltham events. The organizers of the event Kathy and Tim Irving sent Asst. Dir. Abruzzi an update on the most recent event the PBR5K race held at Prospect Hill Park on Saturday, September 6, 2014. He said it was a pleasure to work with them. A summary was provided to each Board Member.

The Grand Opening of the Learning Trail at Nipper Maher Park is scheduled for Thursday, September 18th. Employees of Sallie Mae and the United Way will be on hand at the event. Mayor McCarthy will be at the event which has been a long time coming. An ice cream truck will provide free ice cream to those attending.

Director Tomasello reminded Board members that the City Open Space Survey completion deadline is September 30th. She encouraged Board members to submit their comments to the Planning Department.

Concerning Pond End Tot Lot construction is moving along.

New standard park signs are being installed at the following locations: Cornelia Warren, McDonald, Lowell, Bobby Connors Playground and Hillcroft Playground

The ribbon cutting for the new sign for the walking pathway at Lazazzero Playground will be scheduled for a date in October. The sign will honor the late Edward F. Callahan, former Ward 2 City Councilor.

Engineering work continues at Cedarwood Playground. The City will be inspecting a 30" main drain pipe that runs across the property. It may need to be repaired or replaced. Once determined, final cost estimates can be totaled to seek funding.

Water table and Hazel Street run-off options are still being studied for Drake Playground.

Inquiries have been received about possible improvements at Hillcroft Playground. Director Tomasello noted that the basketball area is in tough shape, estimating its age to be more than 40 years old.

Our (2) new employees have not been cleared to begin work as of yet.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen O'Brien, Clerk

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

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

Also present was Director Sandra Tomasello and Assistant Director Nick Abruzzi.

Chairman, Richard Scanlon called the meeting to order t 5:30 p.m.

Director Tomasello explained that the improvement project at the Pond End Tot Lot was being subsidized by a grant from the State of Massachusetts along with capital improvement funds. Chairman Richard Scanlon had signed paperwork on behalf of the Board to accept the grant. She was recently informed that the State requires the signatures of the majority of Board members. The official grant paperwork was signed by all Board members present.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of the candidate to fill the position of Recreation Facilities Supervisor. This position became available with the transfer of Mr. Melvin Lopez-Flores from Recreation to the Custodian Division at the School Department. Mr. Lopez-Flores had worked as the Rec. Fac. Supervisor position for approximately one year.

Director Tomasello explained that Personnel Department received one application for the position. Mr. Edward Kelley, Jr. who has worked part-time at the rink for several years was that applicant. She explained that in the past the (3) Recreation Facilities Supervisors were paid out of the Recreation budget during the rink season and then their wages were paid through the Consolidated Public Works (C.P.W.) Department. This fiscal year their wages will be coming entirely out of the Recreation Budget.

Asst. Director Nick Abruzzi, who was Mr. Kelley's supervisor while he was employed part-time spoke highly of him, noting he was very capable and trustworthy, and that he was confident of Mr. Kelley's expertise in working at the facility.

After further conversation, a motion to approve the appointment of Edward Kelley, Jr. to the position of Recreation Facilities Supervisor was made by Jerry Walker. The motion was seconded by Gary Vallerand and voted unanimously.

Next on the agenda were interviews of (2) candidates presented as finalists for the position of Recreation Supervisor. This position became available as a result of the retirement of long-time employee, Anna Connolly.

Director Tomasello explained that a screening committee consisting of Director Sandra Tomasello, Asst. Director Nick Abruzzi, Recreation Board Chairman, Dick Scanlon and Personnel Director Kristen Murphy reviewed the (12) applications received for the opening.

They reviewed all the applications and selected (4) to be interviewed by the screening committee. The top two (2) candidates were selected for a final interview before the Recreation

Board this evening. Director Tomasello noted that (3) of the (4) had worked with the Recreation Department.

Applications, resumes and letters of references had been provided to Board members for review, prior to tonight's final interview.

The first candidate to be interviewed was Jackie Theoharis. Her back ground is in education along with theater and dance. She has taught drama in several communities including the summer Drama program in partnership with International Dance Project.

Ms. Theoharis is currently supervising a PreK dance program in conjunction with our fall programs. She had planned on instructing a Theater, Song and Dance program, but due to low enrollment, the program was cancelled. She also worked during the summer months instructing an Art Adventure program at Prospect Hill Park.

Ms. Theoharis was excited at the prospect of a position with the Waltham Recreation Department, having worked closely with Recreation Supervisor, Kathy Gross.

She had many ideas for expanding programs offered, from preschoolers through adults. Some of the many she suggested were a story time program for preschoolers, cooking classes and robotic programs for youngsters and to expand on adult programs, a computer/social media class and volleyball league.

Chairman Scanlon asked Ms. Theoharis where she wanted to be in (5) years. She replied that she would be working at the Recreation Department, satisfying the needs of everyone.

Stacey Tully noted that she put a lot of thought into her interview.

The Board thanked Ms. Theoharis for coming.

Next to be interviewed was Kara Greeley. Ms. Greeley explained that her interest in the Recreation Department began when she watched an older sibling attend some of our summer programs and then had the opportunity to do so herself, when she became eligible.

Ms. Greeley has worked part-time during the summer with the Recreation Department for (7) years. She began as a Spray Park attendant, then moving on to a Programs Instructor for (5) years and then the Assistant Director at the Kaleidoscope Program for (2) years.

When asked about her background, Ms. Greeley explained that she majored in Biology, hoping to go into the medical field. She traveled to Costa Rica for a semester while in college, on a medical mission offering medical assistance to villagers and also learning Spanish.

However, while working with children, she realized her passion was working with kids. The past summer she had to step up and take over for Anna Connolly when she retired. Ms. Greeley took over the responsibility of becoming the Director of the Kaleidoscope program.

Director Tomasello explained that Rec. Supervisor, Adam Dallaire had been training to take over for Ms. Connelly, but an injury prevented Adam from filling in. Ms. Greeley did an outstanding job of supervising both the instructors and participants.

Ms. Greeley talked about programming, hoping to expand youth programs with media programs, adult enrichment programs for adults and inter-generational programs in conjunction with the Council of Aging.

Chairman Richard Scanlon inquired about where she anticipates she'll be in (5) years. Ms. Greeley responded that she will climb the ladder in the Department and be the Director of Recreation.

The Board thanked Ms. Greeley for coming.

Director Tomasello informed the Board that the screening committee unanimously recommended Kara Greeley for the position. Both applicants had strong resumes, great experiences and good ideas to expand programs and services to the Waltham residents, but the committee felt as though Ms. Greeley would be the best fit for the Department.

Nick Abruzzi talked about Ms. Greeley's willingness and readiness in stepping in to take over the supervision of the Kaleidoscope program this past summer and that she was very responsible with her duties.

Jerry Walker inquired about how she will be evaluated and would there be any mentoring.

Mr. Abruzzi noted that she will be exposed to all of the Department's operations. Director Tomasello commented that for a period of time she will be working alongside the other Recreation Supervisors, as well as spending time with Asst. Director Nick Abruzzi herself. It takes a full year to experience each season's program offerings.

A motion to approve Ms. Kara Greeley for the position of Recreation Supervisor for the Waltham Recreation Department was made by Gary Vallerand. The motion was seconded by Thomas Creonte and voted unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made by Thomas Creonte, seconded by Stacey Tully and voted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen O'Brien, Clerk