

The Waltham Parks-Recreation Board held their October Board Meeting on Wednesday, October 11, 2023 at the Waltham Recreation Department, 510 Moody St, Waltham, MA 02453.

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

Also present were Director, Kim Hebert and Assistant Director, Ed Kelley II.

Chairperson Jerry Walker called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

A motion was then made to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2023 Parks-Recreation Board Meeting by Tom Creonte and seconded by Gary Vallerand. All were in favor.

The monthly bills were circulated and signed by all Parks-Recreation Board Members.

Director Hebert reviewed the statement of accounts explaining that the accounts detail the balances in operational and capital budget accounts. Operating accounts have been updated to reflect up to date account information. One major expense was for repairs and upgrades to the gymnasium located at 119 School Street. Requisitions have been secured for new sport wall padding as well as repairs to the flooring. The City's Auditors are still currently working on updating the Capital accounts. All accounts are in good standing.

Annual Youth Sports Presentations were first on the agenda. Waltham Youth Baseball President, Jeff Paladino, accompanied by Treasurer, Jeff Krueger, provided a summary of the League's year and financial report. Mr. Paladino announced that Waltham Youth Baseball had 600 participants across all levels, with an increase in Babe Ruth participants, growing to 95 players. Mr. Paladino also highlighted Waltham Youth Baseball's summer season in which the U11 team made it to the District Final and expressed that the unification of baseball in Waltham has been helpful. Winter Clinics will also be held at Kennedy Middle School and be run by Extra Innings. The Board thanked Mr. Paladino and Mr. Krueger for their efforts and a great season.

Waltham Girls Softball was next on the agenda. Katie Browne, Treasurer, and Shannon Palao, Secretary, represented Girls Softball and provided a summary of the League's year and financial report. Mrs. Brown stated that this season, the league had as many participants as last season and was able to form two U8 teams. Two scholarships were provided to high school girls this season. The Board thanked Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Palao for their efforts and a great season.

Director's Report:

Infield Renovations- The infield renovation project began on Tuesday, September 19, 2023. RAD Sports (Rockland, MA) will begin renovations at Lazazzero Playground, then Nipper Maher Park and will conclude at McKenna Playground. These fields will be closed for the rest of the calendar year.

Communications on Open Space- As requested last meeting, a copy of the communications from volunteers were provided. There will be a presentation at the November meeting.

Veterans Memorial Rink- The Mayor has sent the request to the State to renew the lease as well as an option to buy the building/land. Also, a communication from Waltham Youth Hockey was provided regarding the cancellation of the 2024 February Vacation Tournament.

Halloween in the Park- Saturday, October 28th, 2023 at Prospect Hill. A flyer was provided

Traffic Commission- Director Hebert has been working with the administration at the Dual Language School for options/alternatives for employee parking. Director Hebert explained that parking in 510 Moody St. lot has been quite a challenge. Many times, the lot is filled by 8:30 a.m. and there is no parking for Recreation Staff. Council on aging programs and parents with toddlers must walk from public lots to participate in programming during the day. To the best of the Recreation Department's ability to accommodate, most day time programs have already been moved to other locations and Recreation Staff have been given staggered start times to alleviate issues during school drop off and pick up. Director Hebert has recommended the School request parking passes for the Chestnut Street lot, a short on block walk up Moody Street.

Logan Design- The CDBG funding has been approved for design services for Logan Park. We have sought quotes for design services and will be working on securing funding.

New Recreation Supervisor- We are excited that Mak Fenton has started his employment this week.

Pickleball Update- The online reservation system went live on the week Lowell Field reopened. The reservation system is similar to our pavilion rental system. We have received many mixed reviews regarding pickleball city wide. In preparation for the dedicated pickleball courts, and increasing Lowell Field from four to eight courts, research recommended installing sound dampening padding. Padding was installed prior to the reopening and complaints were received from neighbors about how it looked. The neighbors expressed that they would rather hear the park being used than have a view of the padding. The padding has been removed. Many of the previous issues encountered have been resolved around users of an app called "Playtime Scheduler". This app allows a user to set a date to meet someone of similar playing skill at a designated location. At times, this app has brought large crowds of nonresidents to Waltham's courts and these users have made the playing experience unpleasant for neighborhood users. Director Hebert had the app remove all Waltham Recreation pickleball courts from this app. An overwhelming number of complaints have come from nonresidents or large group users, as well as just someone looking for a friend to play. On the other hand, Director Hebert has not received any calls from upset court users regarding an unpleasant atmosphere, being asked to leave courts or courts being monopolized.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tom Creonte and seconded by Tricia Curtin, all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ed Kelley
Assistant Director of Recreation