

The Waltham Recreation Board held their November meeting on November 18, 2020 via a Zoom Meeting.

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

Also present were Director, Nick Abruzzi and Assistant Director, Kim Scott.

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

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2020 Recreation Board meeting by Jerry Walker, seconded by Wayne Cook. All were in favor.

The monthly bills report for the last month will remain in the Recreation Department Office. Director Abruzzi requested that the Recreation Board stop by the office in the next week to review and sign the bills report.

Director Abruzzi reviewed the Statement of Accounts explaining that the two pages detailed operational and capital budget accounts. Director Abruzzi stated that routine expenses and spending has occurred. A new section could be found on the Capital Budget page. This new section focused on COVID related expenses that have been reimbursed from the FEMA/COVID funding back to the City of Waltham. All accounts are in good standing.

Annual Youth Sports Presentations was next on the agenda. The first group to present was Waltham Wrestling Club, represented by Mike Collins, President and Nichole Collins, Treasurer. Mr. Collins shared that the 2019-2020 season was completed and part of the post season was able to occur. Mr. Collins was grateful for the use of the Prospect Hill Lodge for practice space. He noted that the room is not quite large enough for the League's needs and they will continue to look elsewhere for future opportunities. A question was asked if the Waltham Youth Wrestling Club could work and share space with the High School program? The answer was that the wrestling room is not situated in an easily accessible common area and the Waltham Youth Wrestling Club would have the additional cost of custodial fees. For the 2020-21 season, COVID regulation prohibit the traditional season of wrestling to occur. The Wrestling Club will be looking to partner with a local boxing company to encourage aerobic fitness and conditioning. The Waltham Youth Wrestling Club will be going into their fourth season in 2020-21. The Recreation Board thanked the Waltham Wrestling Club for their time and involvement.

The next annual sports presentation for the evening was Waltham Youth Lacrosse, represented by David Becker, President and David Kern, Treasurer. In 2020, Waltham Youth Lacrosse began their winter skills session. Less than a month into the skills session, COVID regulations required the League to shut down for the remainder of their season. Waltham Lacrosse had created expenses, expecting the season to begin, including uniforms, dues and memberships as well as other equipment. With the cancelation of the season, Waltham Lacrosse also had to refund the players that were aging out of the program. With the uncertainty of the 2021 season and regulations,

Waltham Lacrosse is looking into options to keep the youth active from skills and drills opportunities to a modified season. Mr. Becker asked if there were options of moving Waltham Lacrosse to a City field, if the Waltham School Department does not allow rentals, this coming spring. Director Abruzzi requested that when Waltham Lacrosse knew if they needed alternative fields to contact him to discuss what facilities were available. Waltham Lacrosse will be opening registration in the near future to evaluate the interest for the upcoming season. The Recreation Board had additional questions about the incurred expenses from last season as well as the League's preference of grass versus turf facilities. The Board thanked Waltham Lacrosse for their time and involvement.

The Waltham Track Club provided a document summarizing their past year and plans for 2021. As in 2020, the Track Club looked to continue a relationship with the Waltham Recreation Board but will not request financial support. The provided document outlined how the Waltham Track Club provided Spring conditioning via Zoom. The summer season allowed for 13 cohorts of athletes to work out in stations while being socially distant and wearing masks.

The cross-country program followed a similar format as Summer track and was well received. The Track Club was just notified by the Waltham Public Schools that they will not be providing winter permits for facilities. The Track Club will resume Zoom conditioning sessions and hopefully prepare for an outdoor spring/summer season.

The next item on the agenda was the presentation for the proposed design to McDonald Playground and Thompson Playground by Arsen Hambardzumian of NESRA Engineering, LLC. The presentation provided an overview of the proposed improvements to McDonald Playground to include: basketball/futsal court, children's playground area with equipment for ages 2 – 5 and 5 - 12, a zip line, green space, shade shelter with picnic tables, splash pad, exercise equipment, site amenities as well as improved street side curbing and walkways.

The presentation for improvements to Thompson Playground included: splash pad, exercise equipment, basketball/futsal court, children's play equipment for ages 2 - 5 and 5 – 12 with spinning elements and a tire swing, as well as a new wall along the far side of the park and improved site amenities.

The Recreation Board had discussion regarding the improvements and the design layout at each location. A motion to approve the final design for McDonald Playground and Thompson Playground was made by Gary Vallerand and seconded by Tricia Curtin. All were in favor.

A presentation on the Prospect Hill Trail System by Park Ranger Adam Green was next on the agenda. Mr. Green detailed areas of concern within the park as well as options for improvement. His plan focused on identifying the utilized and dormant trails within the park, providing appropriate trail signage, clearing trails for safety and removal of poison ivy, closing trails that become overgrown due to lack of use or lead off the property and work to improve the trail map system. A cost estimate and timeline were provided based on a few alternatives for improvement.

The Board had conversation about the comprehensive presentation and thanked Mr. Green for his attention to detail. A motion to approve the recommendations for trail improvements was made by Gary Vallerand and seconded by Wayne Cook. All were in favor.

The next item on the agenda was Athletic Field and Recreation Facility Permit definition. Based on the discussion held during the October 2020 Recreation Board meeting, the Recreation Board provided suggestions for a definition of an “Organized Group Use” to be added to the permit application. Language from other local permit applications were taken into consideration.

The definition presented to the Recreation Board for consideration:

***Organized Group Use: Meeting any of the following conditions: (A) league, games, practice, tournament, clinics, instruction, special event; or other use where a fee is charged for participation, (B) any use with 12 or more people.***

A motion to approve the “Organized Group Use” definition was made by Jerry Walker and seconded by Tricia Curtin. All were in favor. The Athletic Field and Recreation Field Permit application with the new definition will be forwarded to the Law Department for review.

### **Director’s Report:**

**Graverson/Mokema Project** – The initial site clearing has been completed. The area is now being surveyed prior to the contractor removing the necessary fill. The work is anticipated to be completed prior to winter.

**Wellington House Farm Restoration Project** – The land clearing project is just about completed. The final walk through of the site will be scheduled in the near future.

**Winter Programs** – The Winter Brochure has recently been released to the public. This winter’s offerings will include a combination of in person/outdoor only programs, virtual programs as well as “at home” boxes. The Recreation Staff has done a great job transitioning programs traditionally held indoor to a variety of outdoor locations.

**Veterans Memorial Skating Rink update** – The Rink reopened, November 7, 2020, after the State mandated two-week shutdown. The staff have been trained and updated on new protocols. With the curfew in place, the evening groups have been suspended as the building will close each night by 9:30 p.m.

**Fields update** – The fields closed for the season on November 15, 2020 and no permits will be considered until the spring of 2021. Gann Academy will continue practicing for one additional week.

**Monsignor McCabe stairs** - The stairs at Monsignor McCabe Playground that were mentioned during the October 2020 Recreation Board Meeting, will be removed by CPW

hopefully before the next snow storm. CPW determined this would be the best course of action for the deteriorating stairs.

**Waltham Youth Football** – An adult member of the Waltham Youth Football program has been diagnosed with COVID – 19. Official written notification was requested from the League regarding this situation. The Recreation Department requested that the Health Department be notified as well as the participants and parents. The regular season was over and the individual had not had contact with players for over a week.

**Safety light on Totten Pond Road** – Director Abruzzi recently met with the City of Waltham Traffic Engineer, Mike Garvin, to discuss a plan to add a new safety light, a Hawk System, to the cross-walk area in front of the Veterans Memorial Skating Rink. Mr. Garvin's recommendation will be presented to the Traffic Commission, on Thursday, November 19, 2020. The plan is to schedule this safety upgrade to be on the same timeline as the Prospect Hill Park improvement project.

**Other Business:**

Conversation from the Recreation Board was had regarding the success of the "at home" kits. Recreation Board members would like to share photos of the projects being created. Additional conversation was had to confirm that the Recreation Department was aware of graffiti that had been found in Prospect Hill Park as well as a few other concerns. Director Abruzzi stated that he is working with CPW and Park Ranger Adam Green to provide a timely resolution.

An update on the infield project at Nipper Maher Park and Monsignor McCabe Playground was requested. Director Abruzzi stated that funding it being sought. A request to confirm the dug outs at Nipper Maher Park were locked was made. Director Abruzzi will have someone confirm and lock, if necessary, tomorrow.

A motion to adjourn was made by Tom Creonte and seconded by Jerry Walker. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kimberly A. Scott  
Assistant Director