

The Waltham Recreation Board held their September meeting on September 16, 2020 via a Zoom Meeting.

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

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 June 10, 2020 Board Meeting by John Graceffa, seconded by Jerry Walker. All were in favor.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the July 29, 2020 Special Board Meeting by Jerry Walker, seconded by Stacey Tully. All were in favor.

The monthly bills report for the last few months of FY 2020 and the start of FY 2021 to present date will remain in the Recreation Department Office. Director Abruzzi requested that the 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 two pages detailed operational and capital budget accounts. Both sheets are reflective of the June 10, 2020 meeting as carry forwards of accounts through the City of Waltham Auditing Department have not been completed. The Statement of Accounts should reflect actual numbers for the October meeting.

Next on the agenda is a review of the Summer 2020 programs. Director Abruzzi noted that many modifications to traditional programs occurred this past season. Programs were held 100% outdoors. Programs operated on a half day schedule as well. Health screenings occurred each time participants arrived and PPE's were worn whenever six feet of social distancing could not be met. "At Home Box Kits" were also available as an alternative to summer in person programming. The summer was a success and Director Abruzzi was extremely pleased with staff and overall summer operations. A more detailed report of the Summer 2020 season will be provided at the next meeting.

Proposed 2020-21 Waltham Youth Organization Presentation Schedule was the next item to be discussed. The proposed schedule is similar to years past and each Waltham organization would appear before the Recreation Board to provide a review of their season. A motion to approve the Proposed 2020-21 Youth Organization Presentation Schedule was made by John Graceffa and seconded by Tricia Curtin. All were in favor.

The protocols developed by the Waltham Recreation Department based on State of Massachusetts regulations for Covid 19 for Veterans Rink and Fields was next on the agenda. The Recreation Board was given the protocols to review. These protocols summarize the State of Massachusetts Reopening Standards, Phase 3 Step 1 (effective August 17, 2020). These protocols are given to the designee requesting to rent either a fields/facility or ice time at the Veterans Memorial Skating Rink. The designee must sign and acknowledge all guidelines for field and facility use.

Board conversation was had educating the Community through signage on face mask requirements. Conversation continued with how the Health Department is working with the Recreation Department to improve health and safety within the Parks. Basketball hoops were recently taken down because of numerous complaints of athletes not following reopening standards. Recreation Board members expressed how appreciative they are to the staff working in the parks disinfecting and educating, each day.

Veterans Memorial Skating Rink – Live Barn was the next item on the agenda. As the State of Massachusetts Reopening Standards, Phase 3 Step 1 (effective August 17, 2020) limit the number of spectators allowed at any youth and amateur sporting event, one spectator per athlete, the request to add Live Barn was presented. Live Barn would allow families to watch games in the safety of their own home. There is no cost to the City of Waltham and it allows families the option to subscribe to the service. The Recreation Department would be able to discontinue this service at any time. A motion to approve the use of Live Barn at Veterans Memorial Skating rink was made by Tom Creonte and seconded by John Graceffa. All were in favor.

Director's Report:

Opening Ceremonies – Bobby Connors Playground and Cornelia Warren Park reopening ceremonies were held on July 16, 2020. Both facilities have been extremely busy and well used. The contractors and consultants as well as Waltham Recreation Staff worked extremely well together and the results of both locations is tremendous.

Director Abruzzi offered congratulations to Dick Scanlon and The Lazaro Family for being honored at the ceremony.

Prospect Hill Park – Pre-Bid Meeting for capital improvements to the base area of Prospect Hill is scheduled for September 17, 2020. The Bid Opening is scheduled for September 30, 2020. Once the bid is opened, Director Abruzzi will seek funding. Construction scheduled to begin in late fall.

Fall Programs – Programs began this past Monday. Programs continue to be held 100% outdoors. The Department is excited to be offering inclusive golf lessons and Veterans golf lessons at the new putting green at Cornelia Warren Park. A continuation of “At Home Box Kits” were also continued this for the fall season.

Veterans Memorial Skating Rink – The Rink reopened on September 10, 2020. Recreation Staff have met with all rink users’ groups to review new health and safety protocols. The community has been patient as everyone becomes accustomed to the new procedures. Modifications will occur as time progresses as needed. Director Abruzzi provided a special thanks to Assistant Superintendent Ed Kelley and his staff for all their hard work, patience and efforts during this reopening

Wellington House Farm – Belko Construction has begun the land clearing. The removal of trees will begin in the near future.

October Meeting – Mayor McCarthy has requested to appear at the October Board meeting to discuss permitting at our parks and how to prevent unauthorized users. The existing application and policy have been sent to her and the Recreation Department will research other communities’ policies.

PHP Signs and Trail System – Adam Green, Park Ranger, has been working on a new trail and sign system. He'll present his ideas at the October Meeting.

Graverson Playground/Mokema Conservation Land Project – The next Waltham Conservation Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 17, 2020. The Commission will review and vote to approve the land clearing project at Mokema Conservation Land. Once final approval is granted from the Conservation Commission the Contractor will start the land clearing improvement. Completing this work at Mokema will satisfy all requirements for the Graverson Playground project and allow the Recreation Department to close out the project.

Other Business

McDonald Playground/Thompson Playground Project – These parks are at 95% design completion. They will be reviewed by Department Heads in the near future and will be presented to the Recreation Board. A tentative timeline has been created with the Purchasing Department for bidding. CPC received the application for funding for these parks at the September 16, 2020 meeting. If the money is funded through CPC the normal process of funding through Council will still apply.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly A. Scott
Assistant Director