

The Waltham Recreation Board held their April meeting on April 16, 2014 at the Waltham Community and Cultural Center, 510 Moody Street, Waltham, MA

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

Also present were 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 March meeting with the correction noted in Tricia Curtin's e-mail message to the clerk of the Board and read by Director Tomasello was made by Jerry Walker, seconded by Stacey Tully and voted unanimously. The March meeting notes have been corrected.

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

In review of the Statement of Accounts, Director Tomasello noted healthy balances within operating accounts, reminding board members that spending will increase as summer programming supplies and materials are purchased and youth sport organizations seek re-imbursement for operating expenses. She noted no changes in capital improvement accounts.

During the Director's Report, Director Tomasello announced that all natural turf fields were now open, having opened the synthetic turf fields earlier in the spring. Prospect Hill Park was also opened on April 14th.

Director Tomasello reviewed the summer program registration process, explaining on-line registration which began on April 3rd. Approximately 80% of the program spots are reserved for on-line registration. The remaining 20% of spots are available for in-line registration which began this morning at 7:30 a.m. A summary of program offerings and current status of enrollment was provided for each board member noting a significant number of program sessions already full to capacity. Registration will continue until programs fill or by the cut off date determined for staffing, transportation, and/or other program specific reservations. It was also noted that during the on-line registration, the Active net site was overloaded and caused issues with customer's computer screens freezing and complications to complete their registration. Upon knowledge of this glitch, Kim Scott our Dept's liaison with Active net, immediately called the company to resolve the issue. Kim has requested that transaction fees be waived and Active net consider next summer's on-line registration transaction fees also be waived.

This problem presented more in-line customers than in year's past. Kim has received confirmation from our Active net representative that our site will be on a larger network capacity to avoid future overloads. Active net has also committed to make up for the issue and has waived the normal fees from today's registration.

Board member Wayne Cook asked if other towns registering with Active net during the same period as our on-line registration would be a contributing factor to the problems experienced. Assistant Director Abruzzi stated that other communities would have no bearing on our registration as the software we use is a web-based system that is independent of other communities. Our site is designed with its own server and not used by any other town.

Assistant Director Abruzzi provided the Board with updates on the Babe Ruth Baseball League, Connie Mack Baseball League and Veterans Rink operations. A handout was distributed to the Board submitted by the Babe Ruth League Board of Directors. Assistant Director Abruzzi explained how the league has been restructured this year with a new Board of Directors and new plans to help make the league more successful. Highlights included additional sponsorships procured, new format of the league, a schedule that is more conducive to the players, establishment of an independent rules committee, and new travel team format. He commended the new Board of Directors on their commitment and organization in developing a schedule for the league that focuses just on weeknights allowing kids to have weekends for other baseball teams. Recreation Board Member Gary Vallerand expressed his satisfaction with the new direction of the league and reported new uniforms were close to delivery for the start of the 2014 season.

Assistant Director Abruzzi informed the Board that the Connie Mack League was not as successful in reorganizing and would not be offering a league this summer due to low enrollment with roughly 50% of registered players being non-residents. The league's direction would shift towards offering (1) or (2) travel teams. Those that had registered were informed of the possibility of a travel team scenario and most seemed interested. An update will be provided as the travel team option continues to develop.

Assistant Director Abruzzi explained the Veterans Memorial Skating Rink had just recently closed for the 2013/2014 season, the ninth year of operations by the City. The ice has been removed, the building is being cleaned and painted in preparation for next season. He explained how well the season went this year, although a very long season the facility has truly become part of the fabric of the community, noting specifically how popular public skate programs have become and the consistency in private groups returning year after year. A skate sharpening machine was purchased this season with all staff members having been trained on using the machine. It has been a great addition and nice service to provide patrons while at the rink vs. leaving Waltham and traveling to another community to have skates sharpened. He also reported that despite the rink season going well, it may be wise to close the rink in the future at the end of March rather than a week into April. Our experience shows less demand after March, especially when warm weather conditions allow for outdoor spring sports and the increased cost of electricity in maintaining the ice surface.

Board member, Gary Vallerand asked what the building would be used for in the off season. Asst. Director Abruzzi explained that each year the building is used for rainy days of our Summer Fun Program as well as the site to accommodate the Police Athletic

League Hockey Program on weeknights. He also informed the Board that a new program offering was being developed in conjunction with HS hockey coach, John Maguire. A hockey skills program will be offered during the summer months running (3) times per/week for three separate age groups. Depending upon enrollment numbers and hopefully success of this program we hope to offer an outdoor program in the months that the skating rink is in operation. Wayne Cook asked about ice rental fees charged at the rink and plans for implementing any increase. Asst. Director Abruzzi explained that the fees have remained the same and will continue for the 2014/2015 season, stating that our rate structure is comparable with similar rinks in the area. Wayne suggested we consider an increase for the 2015/2016 season.

Director Tomasello reviewed the status of all current park improvement projects at Nipper Maher Park, Pond End Tot Lot, Drake, and Cedarwood Playgrounds announcing the April and May dates of upcoming community input meetings for both Graverson and Elsie Turner Parks.

During Other Business, Board Member Wayne Cook asked if there was any update on the status of a crosswalk and/or light for crossing Trapelo Road at the entrance to Falzone Park. Director Tomasello thought the matter was being pursued by the Ward Councilor, George Darcy with the Traffic Commission which would be the city department with the authority to consider the request and include in their capital improvement budget.

Board Member Jerry Walker asked Director Tomasello if she knew the date of her budget hearing with the finance committee. Director Tomasello reported that her budget hearing with Mayor McCarthy was held today. She anticipates budget hearings with the City Council Finance Committee to be held in May.

Chairman Dick Scanlon reported requests from parents to offer a Pop Warner division for 5 and 6 year olds. They feel that is much too young to be in full uniform and participate in football: however they are considering a flag football program for this age group. They have posted it on their web site and are looking for feedback and comments from parents regarding the possibility of offering it next football season. He will report back to the board regarding the issue. Asst. Director Nick Abruzzi also stated that the Director of the Skyhawks organization that we partner with for various summer sport programs have expressed an interest in offering flag football in the fall as well.

With no further business a motion to adjourn was made by Wayne Cook, seconded by Gary Vallerand and voted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Tomasello