

The Waltham Recreation Board held their February meeting on February 26, 2014 at the Waltham Community and Cultural Center, 510 Moody Street, Waltham, MA.

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

Also present were Director; Sandra Tomasello and Asst. Director; Nick Abruzzi.

Chairperson, Richard Scanlon welcomed John Graceffa, newly appointed Recreation Board Member as representative of the Waltham School Committee.

Chairman 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 January meeting was made by Jerry Walker, seconded by Stacey Tully and voted unanimously.

The monthly bills were circulated and signed by all board members.

In reviewing the Statement of Accounts, Director Tomasello noted not much change since last month, with all accounts healthy expecting spending to increase as the spring season arrives and purchases are made for summer programming. The only change in capital fund accounts is the expenditure for contracted design services for Elsie Turner, Graverson and Woburn Street projects.

The next item on the agenda was the adoption of a proposed Stewardship Program in partnership with the Waltham Land Trust (WLT), for Prospect Hill Park being presented for consideration by Ward 1 City Councilor; Dan Romard, Sonja Wadman of WLT, and Chris Leary.

A draft of the Stewardship Program was provided to Board members prior to the meeting for their review. A Trail Stewardship Handbook was also distributed at the meeting, also for consideration this evening. Councilor Romard addressed the Board regarding the details of the Stewardship program for the Park highlighting the materials within the proposal as it related to the City's 1997 Master Plan for PHP, as well as changes experienced within the park in recent years. Councilor Romard discussed how the stewards would act as ambassadors of the park, keeping an eye on trails, maintenance issues, irregularities that may need attention, and /or inappropriate activities. Field reports would be completed by the stewards and provided to the Supervisor of the stewards. The City Department Head responsible for issue needing attention referred to in the report would be notified. The report also calls for the establishment of a Steward Council which would consist of various City Department Heads, members of the WLT, Prospect Hill Advocacy Group, Mayor and City Council. Councilor Romard hopes that information gathered from the stewards, reports and discussions within the Council could then be discussed with the Recreation Board on a quarterly schedule to support continued

funding both operational and capital, provide support of personnel needs, increased events and organized activities within PHP which would develop more awareness and accountability for needs, documented by the steward reports and PHP Steward Council business. The proposal also included an annual funding request of \$2,500, identifying expenses as; initial start-up costs, ID's, training visibility, small tools, and first aid kit.

Both Sonja Wadman and Chris Leary spoke in favor of the stewardship proposal and the importance of its role for better trails and awareness of what PHP has to offer Waltham residents. Also provided was documentation of an existing Park Ambassador Program found on the internet for the Town of Allen, Texas.

In response to board members questions about the selection of stewards, Ms. Wadman reported that she has begun recruiting after a recent article in the local News-Tribune about PHP, amongst WLT members, and others who have expressed interest in the park. She also reported having received a number of inquiries after they read the article and has officially received (3) completed applications from people hoping to become stewards for PHP.

In response to questions regarding liability, Ms. Wadman stated that the WLT has liability coverage for its volunteers, so with the adoption of this program, if stewards were also WLT members they could fall under that policy. If not a member, it is an issue that would have to be looked into. Councilor Romard said he would do that with the City's Law Dept.

Present at the meeting was Propsect Hill Park Advocacy Founder, Gloria Champion and Frank Fitzgerald; PHPAG member. Chairman Scanlon invited Gloria to speak with regards to the proposal encouraging continued support for the Park and acknowledging the group's efforts since it was first established so many years ago. The PHPAG was instrumental in acquiring the funding, support, and need for the Master Plan written in 1997.

Activities of the PHPAG have been very limited in recent years due to Gloria's health and not as active as in the past. Gloria highlighted the group's efforts, accomplishments, and pride in never asking the City for funds. All activities were done on a volunteer basis. The PHPAG was supportive of assisting the City's Planning Department in documentation for submission of PARC Grant Applications. The group has worked with Boy Scout groups, Girl Scout groups, school science and biology classroom teachers and students and commercial neighbors along the borders of the Park property. Gloria also was involved with certifications of vernal pools, and discussions with city officials and Polaroid past owners and current new land owner regarding the Berry Farm parcel.

In conclusion, Gloria stated that PHP is a great place to visit, but feels the City's Recreation Department and CPW Dept. should make all decisions urging the Recreation Board to take their time deciding upon the proposal and to be very cautious. Mr. Fitzgerald spoke about people visiting PHP for solitude, not increased events and activities. Gloria than stated that she is not in favor of any tree cutting.

After Gloria's statements Chris Leary asked to address the board. Chris highlighted portions of the stewardship report pertaining to the problem statement and proposed solution.

With no further questions from board members, Jerry Walker made a motion to approve the Draft plan.

Director Tomasello asked if she could comment on the proposal as it related to the uncertainty of many details such as; selected stewards, steward supervisor(s), role of city officials, liability, the reporting of reports and process of resolution, and financial support. She did not want any of her comments to be taken as negative for improving PHP, having been a Waltham resident living on Prospect Hill Road while growing up, and then working for some (30) years at Prospect Hill until the main office was moved here to 510 Moody Street in 2010, she considers PHP to be a very special place. She also stated that she was supportive of the proposal and welcomes the efforts to help the City with maintenance of the Park and future improvements for the Park as long as the City continued with the control and care of the Park. She also felt she did not have ample time to review the submitted handbook and felt that the CPW Director should have the opportunity to review this just submitted handbook and make recommendations.

Chairman Scanlon asked if he could add to the motion that representatives present meet with Director Tomasello and CPW Director to fine tune details of the draft and provide time to review the trail stewardship handbook. Board member Tricia Curtin also expressed concern for allowing volunteers as young as 16 years of age to be stewards.

On the motion to approve the stewardship proposal, Jerry Walker amended the motion to include meeting with the Director and CPW Director to finalize the proposal and handbook. The motion as seconded by John Graceffa and voted unanimously. Councilor Romard thanked the board for their support and said he would schedule a meeting with the Directors and also contact the Law Dept. re; liability.

With the presence of Ward 2 City Councilor; Bill Fowler present at the Board Meeting in support of the WLT stewardship proposal, a motion to take the matter of an appointment of a Recreation Board Member to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) off the table was made by Jerry Walker. The motion was seconded by Thomas Creonte and voted unanimously.

Councilor Bill Fowler discussed the details of the Rec. Board member's role and time commitment on the CPC. He found the meetings interesting and important in the City. He also reminded board members that more projects could be considered for parks since the changes in regulations for the use of CPA funds for park projects.

Many board members have schedule conflicts at the time CPC meetings are held. It was also noted that there remains one vacancy on the board, and maybe that appointee would be willing to also serve as the Recreation Board representative.

After a brief discussion, board member Thomas Creonte volunteered to become the CPC representative on an interim basis, until the vacancy is filled.

A motion to approve Thomas Creonte as the temporary member of the CPC was made by John Graceffa, seconded by Stacey Tully and voted unanimously.

Next on the agenda was a request from Jeff Baker on behalf of the Bay State Games to host games at the Veterans Memorial Athletic Complex the week of July 14th this summer. Director Tomasello reported that last year's event was very positive and there were no problems. Asst. Director Nick Abruzzi will coordinate with Jeff all necessary conditions of granting permits for the fields. Insurance coverage will also be required.

Without further discussion, a motion to grant permission to Bay State Games was made by Gary Vallerand, seconded by Jerry Walker and voted unanimously.

Next for consideration was the construction of a third "Clivus" comfort station for Prospect Hill Park proposed for an area of the park in close proximity to the Totten Pond Rd Entrance Gate. The project would be funded with CDBG funds for the Park and if needed PHP capital funds. After a brief discussion, a motion to approve the request for the construction of a "Clivus" unit for PHP was made by Jerry Walker, seconded by Thomas Creonte and voted unanimously.

Director Tomasello then reviewed the 2014 accomplishments and goals document proposed to be submitted to the Mayor in response to the Mayor's memo requesting the information from each Department Head. The document highlighted the Department's programs, projects, and areas of concentration for the period which began July 1, 2013. The document will be provided to the Mayor as presented with no board member objections.

Next on the agenda was the annual election of Board Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. A motion was made by Jerry Walker to have Chairman Richard Scanlon continue as Chairperson. The motion was seconded by Thomas Creonte and voted unanimously.

A motion was made by Thomas Creonte to have Jerry Walker continue as Vice Chairman of the Recreation Board, seconded by Stacey Tully and voted unanimously.

Both candidates were thanked by board members for their continued service as Chair and Vice-Chair.

During the Director's Report, Director Tomasello reviewed the status of capital projects, community input meetings and spring program brochure. A handout distributed at the recent Graverson Playground Community Input meeting prepared by Ward 3 City Councilor; George Darcy was provided to the board. Director Tomasello also announced the dates for summer employment applications, and summer program season stating that

with school still in session on June 23rd, our summer season would kick-off on Tuesday, June 24th and continue for (8) weeks.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen O'Brien, Clerk