**Town of Westborough Recreation Department**

**Recreation Commission**

**Meeting Minutes – February 25th, 2021**

Members Present: Recreation Commission Chair Earl Storey, Recreation Director Jenn Kirkland, , Colleen Dowd, Bill Clausen, Beth Travis

The Recreation Commission Meeting opened with Recreation Director Jenn Kirkland reading the Governor Baker statement suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law.

**Approve December Minutes**

Colleen Dowd made a motion to approve the minutes from the December Commission meeting, Earl Storey seconded the motion. The roll-call vote passed 3-0.

**New non-voting member Sean O’Dea**

Sean O’Dea who is a new non-voting member of the commission was introduced. His joining was approved between now and the past meeting. He moved to Westborough in October, and while he hasn’t served on a committee before his father had in East Hartford. It was noted that he’s free to weigh in on the topics discussed, but cannot participate in votes.

**Program Update**

Spring and summer registration opened on Monday (2/22), and while there wasn’t the same rush as previous years, registrations have been steady. The bus trips to Wachusett are now finished after a few cancelations due to weather. Parents seemed happy with the program and it went well with the restrictions the mountain had in place.

For summer registrations, smaller deposits are being taken for the playground program to help ease some concerns about the possible need for cancellations. In a similar light of trying to plan for possible cancelations, the summer concert series is being planned, but there’s nothing concrete yet. It was noted that going into this summer with more knowledge of the guidelines and being in compliance with state regulations, there is much more optimism to have a strong summer. Parents might also be more prepared to send their children to programs as well.

One difficulty has been the lack of indoor space for programming with the schools being unavailable during the school year. There has been more dependence on vendors with their own space, as well as offering virtual programs for those who do not.

The Girls’ 4-6 grade basketball clinic is the program with the fastest registrations so far.

**Golf Course Update**

After the search for a new golf course manager was unsuccessful, the old pro Jack Negosian is going to stay for one year as a town employee. The other changes planned, such as the manager position becoming a town employee and reporting to Jenn, a switch to electric carts, and the revenue flowing through the town will still be happening.

The Country Club Operating Committee will be disbanding on March 2nd, and 2 of them may join the commission as golf liaisons. There is some confusion around the process of this, as well as who the members joining will be.

Tournaments are still happening, however there will be a need to be more specific with the tee times that are going to be used.

Some questions were asked about the golf manager search. One of the bigger problems was something that cannot be changed, as a 9-hole municipal course is far from the 18-hole private course some may be aspiring to work at. Other than that, there was an issue regarding not having the opportunity to make additional money on top of the salary as an instructor. This is something that will be discussed further before the position is posted again.

In terms of the golf carts, the town will be leasing electric golf carts. Jack was the person in charge of the carts before as he owned some and leased others. The revenue from the carts will now go to the town. There is also the possibility of a grant for using electric carts to be looked into moving forward.

**Facilities Update – Mayberry Drive Playground**

The fields are still closed, with Dept Admin Stephen Croft being handed off the duties.

The discussion around a possible Mayberry Drive playground that residents had requested. The town would need to put up some money for the playground, with an estimate around $400,000-$500,000 as the full cost of the project. There was talk about the proximity of Baystate to the Mayberry Drive property, as well as playground at Rodgers being accessible via sidewalks. There was also talk about how there is a lack of playgrounds on the East side of town, and how the Day Pray property could be a good location for it. The commission said that they will support a decision made by the selectmen if one is made for the Mayberry property.

**Town Meeting Articles – Lake Chauncy discussion**

Town meeting was pushed back to May, but there are things from the Recreation Department on the warrant. The Algae treatment done last year is on the warrant. There’s some uncertainty whether or treatment worked last year with the beach being closed. There were no complaints of algae to either the Board of Health or the Rec Dept. There is also a study of the lake on the warrant to help determine what is causing the problem.

**New Business**

Jenn and Beth are now parts of the land prioritization committee. There was a discussion around Hockomocka Pond, and the water quality which should be OK now. Earl Storey mentioned that he doesn’t think the area will be used for anything other than walking trails.

There have been no applications for the open Waterfront Director Position, and lifeguard applications are open to anybody 16 years old or older.

Colleen mentioned the committee to form for an outdoor ice rink. This will be done in April or May in order to give enough time to plan for the winter of 2021-2022. There was discussion about something that’s more permanent and could be used as a rink for skating in the winter, and as dek-hockey in the warmer months.

A follow-up on the disc golf course in Westborough was given. Jen wasn’t aware of the size and amount of space needed for a course. The proposed area around the Chauncy Fields was not viable, and there was another follow up with regards to having one on conservation land. There isn’t a good place available at the moment for it to be placed, but it is a thought for future land that’s acquired.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for 3/9, and while that’s just two weeks away there are things to discuss at it. The meeting adjourned at 6:19pm.