

**Town of Westborough Recreation Department
Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes –October 6, 2020**

Members Present: Recreation Commission Chair Earl Storey, Beth Travis, Colleen Dowd, Brian Kane and Recreation Director Jenn Kirkland

Opening Statement

The Recreation Director opened the meeting at 6:06pm by reading the Governor Baker's statement about open meeting law.

Approve Minutes

With the new provision regarding meeting in person, older meeting minutes needed to be approved for meetings in both April and May. Beth Travis motioned to approve those minutes, Colleen Dowd seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Program Update

Outdoor and virtual programming is the plan moving forward, with current sports offerings including Kiddie Kickers, Tennis in the Parks, and Outdoor basketball skills clinics. There was a winter meeting with Amber related with possible gym space for the basketball program. They want us to be able to use the gyms for the program, however there is still uncertainty around this possibility. The start would be after New Year's Day due to 2 week quarantines after both Thanksgiving and the winter vacation. With the current guidelines, there would also be alterations to the program, with it being geared towards cohort training without competitive games.

The Ski & Snowboard trips to Wachusett are also being planned with alterations due to restrictions. Cutting the number of children on the busses, as well as changing the equipment drop off are planned. The mountain being run differently is also something that will be considered.

Community based programs are also currently being run. There is a virtual Halloween 5k to be completed any time in October. A scarecrow contest is in progress, with citizens making scarecrows and placing them at set businesses around towns. The department will collect votes for these scarecrows, and this encourages people to visit the businesses to see the scarecrows and then vote. There will also be smaller Halloween events put out and advertised via Facebook and email blasts. The Holiday Stroll is in question, but there is a meeting scheduled to start planning alternatives to how it has been run in the past.

Facilities

There was discussion about the potential of renting out facilities that have not been rented out before, including basketball courts and tennis/pickleball courts. There is uncertainty about the amount of time

this would be viable given the lack of light on the courts, and the temperature continuing to drop. There were questions about how it would be handled if the court was in use when a team came to use it, and a possible solution of only renting out one of the two courts to help alleviate this issue. Compared to other sports and field rentals, the expected price would be \$40 per night. Beth Travis made a motion to vote, Brian Kane seconded it. The vote passed 4-0.

With the popularity about the Lyman Street pickleball courts, there was also a discussion regarding reserving time, and charging for it. This would allow the department to recoup some costs, as well as allow people to have set time on the courts. There is not much consistent maintenance, but once there is repair needed it is very expensive. Nelson Ball's group wants 'special use' to allow them use when they want. Other groups would like to privately rent them, but similar to how it's worked for fields, those would be one-off visits to the recreation commission.

There is a current proposal of a Halloween pickleball event where extra funds would be donated to the Rec Department's fund that was set up after Nelson's generous donation. This event would be all Westborough residents. It was said that due to their contribution both to the courts themselves and the sport's growth in Westborough, they should be accommodated.

New Accounting System Update

As a result of the staffing study for the Town of Westborough, the accounting practices will be changed moving forward. There will still be one main revolving account, however deposits, bills, and payrolls will be separated out into different categories of Basketball, Sports Clinics, Vendor Programs, Community Programs, Beach, and some expenses left in the main revolving account.

Next Meeting

Beth Travis brought up a pieces of land bought on both Eli Whitney and Belknap street. The trend of purchases that are immediately designated for passive recreation is something that she would like to be discussed at a future meeting, and mentioned a need for the Recreation to start advocating for ourselves in terms of getting space for a possible Rec Center. This will be a formal topic in a future meeting.