

**Town of Westborough Recreation Department
Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes – November 10th, 2020**

Members Present: Recreation Director Jenn Kirkland, Recreation Commission Chair Earl Storey, Colleen Dowd, Brian Kane, and Bill Clausen. Andrew Bradley who is the Commission's liaison to Fin Com was present as well.

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

Approve Minutes

Earl made a motion to approve minutes from June, August, and October meetings. Bill Clausen seconded the motion, the voted passed unanimously.

Program Update

The department is still trying to run as many outdoor programs as possible. Basketball is still in a holding pattern while waiting for MIAA to release guidelines for the indoor sports; this information should be coming within the next week. 16 gift cards have been donated to run a town-wide turkey scavenger hunt. If more than 16 groups complete it, there will be a lottery for who gets the gift cards.

The yearly Holiday stroll is informally not planning on doing anything this year. The members of the Spirit Committee believe it is too risky to try to do something, even if it was a stationary one. The Rotary Club is still trying to do the tree lighting, but lining up for Santa which has happened in the past is not going to be done.

Adam LaPointe has gotten approval from both the Gibbons principal and Amber Boch to run a ski club program for the trips to Wachusett. The capacity on the bus will be significantly limited from previous years, and there are restrictions at the mountain about the use of the lodge. He also ran a successful Tennis in the Parks program, and has added additional tennis clinics before the weather turns too much.

Fin and Feather, a vendor that ran programs over the summer months is working to create outdoor, winter related activities to run. Knocking-on-wood, Jenn noted that nobody has gotten COVID from any of our programs to this point, which is a testament to the restrictions we've used as well as the adherence to mask and distancing policies of the participants. These are good signs for programs in the future

Facilities Update

A group willing to pay for fields pace is looking to find a spot to play outdoor soccer. They have rented space (not from the Rec Dept) before, and know things about group insurance, and the residency policy that we have. They want to have access to lights, and discussed using the outfield of the lit softball field that men's softball uses. The expected cost would be \$500, which is about \$35-50 per hour. There would be some out of towners and they did not know their full ratio, but it is believed to be a majority of Westborough Residents. Earl Storey does not like the

idea of giving the group a key for the lights. Brian Kane mentioned trying to get a timer to regulate when different groups are able to play. This is not an option for the current question, but something to note with a new electrician being hired. Jenn mentioned trying to push them to use the field on Tuesdays where Rec Staff would be available in order to turn the lights on and off.

Jenn also mentioned expense comparisons from other towns that was done for field's fees. Some towns split the electric bill for the lights between the groups that use it. Something to note for future seasons.

Golf Course/Manager Update

The Westborough Golf Course is falling into the Recreation portfolio. Five people were interviewed, and two candidates are being brought back for final interviews. Jenn is confident in the prospect of making an offer to one of them. Neither live in Westborough, but the commute would not be a problem. The town is going to own the shop, and the proceeds will go to the town. The shop contents will be scaled back to mostly golf balls, tees, and basic things like that. Bill Clausen noted that he wants to be a part of that conversation.

The possibility of the Golf Committee merging with the Rec Commission was also mentioned in order to discuss all aspects given the course falling under the Rec Department.

The Civic Restaurant was also mentioned. There is some question about their lease renewal in either 2022 or 2023 given their lack of participation with the patrons of the golf course. There is possibility for cross promotion that is not currently being utilized.

Data utilization increasing is a goal of both Jenn's and the Golf Committee's. This would include things such as the course's income, tee time utilization, inventory management, etc. There were also discussions around running things such as lunchtime 3-hole options to get more people in there at an underused time. Some of the restrictions a municipal course has compared to a private club were also mentioned.

Open Space and Recreation Master Plan Update

With Commission member Beth Travis spearheading this topic being absent, the commission decided to wait until she was there to discuss the topic.

Staffing Study Work

The staffing study as related to the Rec Department has more procedural input than actual staffing input. One of the main goals would be a 12 month calendar being planned out with what is needed for each program run. This would include both supplies needed and staff needed. Much of the department's functioning has been based on "institutional knowledge" with long-term employees running things based on memory. This 12 month calendar would also be something Earl would contribute to.

Monetary goals for each program were also mentioned as a part of the study's cost-recovery aspect. This would note the differences between programs used to make a profit, vs recovering a certain % of expenses for others.

A turf field with lights was one of the most requested items from the different sports organizations. The High School Turf field can be difficult to get access to for outside groups, so this sort of turf field would be heavily utilized. Bill Clausen mentioned trying to run things on the new walking paths, but these paths are actually maintained by the community land trust.

Next Meeting – Topic Recommendation

The next meeting will be held on December 8th, and Jenn was soliciting ideas for possible discussion points. The commission asked what people had been interested in or enjoyed. The popularity of the virtual 5k for the month of October has the department possibly planning a similar thing sometime in the winter. Adam has also been sending out surveys after each program to try to get a sense of the popularity or places they could be improved. The meeting adjourned at 6:48pm.