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Parks and Recreation Minutes 12/09/2003

Park and Recreation Commission Minutes

Tuesday, December 9, 2003 - 7:00 p.m.

Approved - Meeting Minutes

The meeting came to order at 7:00 PM.

Commissioners Present: Joseph Carabello (arrived at 8:00 pm), Thomas Caccavaro, Nancy Campbell, Leslie Mayer, and Donald Vitters.

Staff Present: Jonathan Jalbert, Recreation Superintendent
Patsy Kraemer, Director of Human Services

Recording Secretary: Laura Munsey

Others Present: Mr. Jack Johnson (Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee)

Ms. Elisabeth Carr-Jones (Walking in Arlington, TAC)

Ms. Carla Dorato, Ms. Kelly Greelish, Ms. Kathryn Vozzella (Relay for Life Committee – American Cancer Society)

1. Welcome

Mr. Vitters welcomed the Commissioners and guests, and Chaired the meeting until the arrival of Mr. Carabello.

2. Minutes

Administrative changes were presented to the Recording Secretary, and the Minutes of the November 17th meeting were approved. (Unanimous Vote: 4-0)

3. Bicycle Advisory Committee

Mr. Jack Johnson of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and representatives from Walking in Arlington, and the Transportation Advisory Committee request a special permit be issued to hold an Alternative Transportation Fair to be held at the location of the Arlington Veteran's Memorial Sports Center at 422 Summer Street on Sunday May 16th in the morning and early afternoon. This event has been held at Hurd Field in the past, but this year they would like to hold a larger event that focuses on alternative methods of transportation. They may also be looking for additional sponsors such as the MBTA. They plan to have a bike rodeo for 4-10 year olds, and will be offering 8 mile bike tours of Arlington. They would also like to have information booths available.

They anticipate 100 people present at any given time throughout the day. They will need a paved surface of 50-100 feet for the bike rodeo, parking for 50-75 cars, would like indoor space in case of rain, and access to bathroom facilities, and possible snack bar.

Mr. Jalbert shared with the Commissioners that several athletic user groups use the fields on Sundays, which include Babe Ruth at Summer Street, Little League at Buck, and Soccer Club at Hills Hill. The Recreation Division will need to work with those user groups to cancel the use of the requested site until after 3:00 pm. Mr. Jalbert also informed the Commission that to open and use the inside of the facility, as well as to provide staff members, would require an additional fee. He will get the amount necessary and inform the Bicycle Advisory Committee. If a Police Detail is necessary that would also be the responsibility of those sponsoring the Event, and lastly volunteers would be requested to assist in the clean-up.

It was requested that the booths be set up inside irregardless of rain, and also that the bike rodeo be held inside at the designated rink area, whereas various areas of the parking lot are uneven with storm drains present, and other areas of the lot will be open to traffic. Ramps are available to get the bikes indoors. Both doors can be opened up inside the rink to provide fresh air circulation.

Mr. Caccavaro would like to be assured that issues relating to Police Details and Rescheduling of athletic user groups are worked out, and recommends no games be held until after 3:00 pm on the day of the event.

MOTION (made by Leslie Mayer, 2nd by Donald Vitters)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION APPROVES THE REQUEST THAT A SPECIAL PERMIT BE ISSUED TO THE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO HOLD AN ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION FAIR AT 422 SUMMER STREET ON SUNDAY, MAY 16TH, FROM 8:00 AM UNTIL 3:00 PM. THIS PERMIT IS APPROVED SUBJECT TO A MEETING WITH THE REQUESTING COMMITTEE OR REPRESENTATIVE, AND MR. JONATHAN JALBERT, RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT, TO WORK OUT THE FINAL DETAILS.

UNANIMOUS VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION (4-0)

4. Relay for Life

Ms. Carla Dorato, and representatives of the Relay for Life Committee request that a special permit be issued for the use of Pierce Field on June 18th and 19th to hold the annual Relay for Life Cancer Walk. Mr. Jalbert informed the Commissioners that due to the recent snow date, Mrs. Donovan, Superintendent of Schools has now approved the date for the Relay for Life. Construction of Pierce Field will not begin until the following Monday. Mr. Jalbert has not yet received this notification in writing from Ms. Donovan, however he has verbal authorization from her office. It is further requested that the Relay for Life Committee meet with Mr. Jalbert to finalize the details, and that any special requirements be provided in writing at least 30 days prior to the event (i.e. sand for luminaries, special requests of Public Works Department, etc.) and locations where tents will be temporarily installed, which should only be around the perimeter of the field, not to interfere with any existing irrigation. The Relay for Life committee was also informed that if they require the use of lights that will need to be scheduled, and there will be a fee for electrical services. Further they were informed that there are town by-laws regarding the times that lights and music can be played. These details will need to be approved by the Board of Selectmen, and it is recommended that the Relay for Life Committee contact Ms. Marie Krepelka at the Board of Selectmen's Office. It was further discussed that it may be appropriate to notify abutters about the event in advance.

MOTION (made by Thomas Caccavaro, 2nd by Leslie Mayer)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION APPROVES THE REQUEST THAT A SPECIAL PERMIT BE ISSUED TO THE RELAY FOR LIFE COMMITTEE TO HOLD A FUNDRAISER FOR THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY TO BE HELD AT PIERCE FIELD AND TRACK ON JUNE 18, 2004 @ 6:00 PM THROUGH JUNE 19, 2004, 12:00 PM. THIS PERMIT IS APPROVED SUBJECT TO A MEETING WITH THE RELAY FOR LIFE COMMITTEE AND MR. JONATHAN JALBERT, RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT, TO WORK OUT THE FINAL DETAILS, AS WELL AS WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FROM MS. DONOVAN, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, THAT THIS DATE IS APPROVED.

UNANIMOUS VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION (4-0)

5. Administrative Costs vs. Program Fees

Ms. Patsy Kraemer, Human Services Director, Town of Arlington, informed the Commissioners of the major undertaking that is taking place regarding an extensive review of all administrative costs/administrative time, vs. program costs/program time necessary to operate the Recreation Division, as an Enterprise Fund. This project was submitted to Mr. Jalbert from the Finance Committee, Town Managers Office, and Human Services Director. Both the Recreation Division and Veteran's Memorial Skating Rink Division must be totally self-sustaining. All administrative costs including, full time and seasonal employees, employment benefits such as vacation, paid leave, sick days, longevity, and health insurance, as well as all operating costs such as building supplies, electricity, postage, etc. are now the financial responsibility of each individual department. Currently some programs are not meeting costs and are operating at a loss, and fees will need to be increased to make these programs self-sustaining.

Recommendations will be presented to the Commissioners at the January meeting and drafts of this report will be submitted to the Commissioners by the end of December for review. Mr. Jalbert will be available to any Commissioner who has questions regarding this report and encourages them to contact him to discuss this report in further detail. Ms. Mayer had questions regarding capital spending and inquired if enterprise funds are responsible for capital expenditures. Ms. Kraemer explained that these Departments need to be totally self-sustaining and it is her understanding that capital expenditures need to come out of the

enterprise budgets not the town budget or tax base. Mr. Caccavaro inquired if it may be possible to extend the operation of the Rink through April instead of closing in March to help raise additional revenue. Mr. Jalbert suggested it may be possible, and that extending the rink at the end of the season is easier than opening it earlier, due to existing ice conditions. Mr. Jalbert also said he would need to consult with RECCO who contracts the maintenance of the refrigeration system, to see what they would recommend, and what difficulties might arise. Furthermore, he would check with current user groups, as well as others, (i.e. try-outs, clinics, tournaments, etc.) to find out if there would be sufficient interest, and he will report back to the Commission with his findings.

Ms. Kraemer would like to vote on the increased fee recommendations for Recreation Programs by February, so that the new fees will be applied to the Summer Session Fees and would be reflected in the July 1st (FY-05) Budget. Once Recreation fees have been approved, the Rink Enterprise Fund program costs/fees will be presented to the Commission down the road, as well as Field Permitting Fees and Costs.

Mr. Caccavaro inquired if adding additional programs may help to meet expenses rather than increasing the fees of existing programs. Mr. Jalbert responded that a review of program hours is underway and additional programs may be a possibility, however in this review it was determined that some programs, including full day summer camp programs, participants are only being charged \$2-3 per hour which is well below the general market rates for similar programs, and below the operational costs to run such programs.

Mr. Jalbert further indicated that many additional avenues for raising revenues have been explored and an aggressive Marketing Campaign is underway, including both signage in the rink and sponsorship in recreation brochures. Vending Machines have been added not only internally but externally for the spring/summer/fall programs, which can be used to build up an emergency reserve for unexpected costs (for instance if a compressor goes and the cooling tower needs major repairs/replacement it could cost upwards of \$50,000). The Town will not pay these costs and it cannot come from the tax base.

Mr. Caccavaro informed the Commission that he was concerned in hearing that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts might put up many MDC rinks for grabs and they may be sold to Management Companies. He has seen news stories regarding this and had follow-up discussions with Selectman Diane Mahon regarding this issue.

Ms. Kraemer informed the Commission that Ms. Galkowski has been negotiating a new lease with the Commonwealth, and indicated that several correspondence have been forwarded regarding the lease issue at the Veteran's Memorial Skating Rink. Mr. Jalbert will follow up on these reports, with Ms. Galkowski.

6. Committee Updates

Field Policy Committee: Mr. Joseph Carabello reported the Field Policy Committee will meet in January.

Sports Center Improvement Committee: Mr. Thomas Caccavaro reported the Committee has not met this month. Mr. Carabello reported that the SCIC is a sub-committee of the Park and Recreation Commission, and that the Commissioners have the final say in all recommendations presented by the SCIC.

Open Space Committee: Ms. Leslie Mayer reported that the Open Space Committee meets the 1st Wednesday of every month. At the December meeting, AHS students who are planning a history/social studies group project dealing with Town Open Space and Environmental Concerns. Connection to Reservoir Project or Reservoir Trail Maintenance may be possible, and perhaps the Reservoir Committee could work with this group and present their ideas and recommendations. The Open Space Committee is also working on management plans for open space in Arlington, and will be looking at site history, recommended changes, upkeep, and improved landscape.

Friends Groups.

Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park. The park bench that was vandalized has been replaced and installed.

Spy Pond. Annual Dinner cancelled due to snow. The Conservation Committee does not want to make a commitment regarding flood elevation levels. The Town has the ability for a limited time (1 year) to waive the wet land requirement if necessary. The Commission needs to decide whether the cul de sac should get relocated. Practicality and costs need to be evaluated. The Fire Department would like to build an emergency boat ramp at a location chosen by the Fire Department. Friends of Spy Pond would like to see more green space, which would mean fewer legal parking spaces. Hamilton Way is deeded and a private way.

7. Capital Project Review.

Mr. Vitters reported that proposals for the Architectural Design for the Renovation of Buzzell Field, Waldo Park, Locke Playground, and Crosby Tennis Court projects are due in Mr. Jalbert's Office by 12:00 noon on December 19, 2003. Copies will be delivered to Mr. Vitters and a summary sheet will be prepared for all the Commissioners.

8. Parks Department Update

A discussion took place at the November 13th meeting regarding the condition of the Pierce Field AHS Girls Varsity Softball Field. Ms. Campbell, and Mr. Caccavaro feel the condition of this field is a safety hazard, and feel that a higher priority should be placed on the maintenance of this field. Mr. Carabello informed the Commission that maintenance of fields is a Public Works Responsibility and setting priorities for field maintenance does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission. He will however, talk with Mr. Sanchez of the Public Works Department, and share the concerns of the Commission regarding this field.

9. Recreation and Rink Update

Mr. Jonathan Jalbert, Recreation Superintendent, reported the Winter Brochure went out and Registration began. There will be no on-line registration for this season due to the transition of the Webmaster Position. Mr. Kevin Strange has been hired as the new Webmaster. The Winter Basketball program is underway, and the Snowboard/Ski program is scheduled to begin the first week in January. Improvements to the Rink are underway. Safety Strips have been applied to stairs, netting is on order and will go around the perimeter of the skating rink for added protection. The Scoreboard up and the electrical work is underway. Smoke Detector System being reviewed, and contractor being selected. Smoke detector system will come from the Rink Capital Account, not the Grant. A Plumber is evaluating the hot water problem in the bathrooms and showers. Some of the problems are due to vandalism over the years, and other problems are due to the age of the system. Release valves have been added. The concession stand has been changed around to better serve the needs of the employees and customers. A popcorn machine and slush machine has been added, and more workspace has been made. The radiant heat is in and will need some tweaking and adjustments. Ms. Mayer inquired if the radiant heat can be turned on and questioned whether it should be used without the smoke detectors in place. Mr. Jalbert informed her that everything has been inspected, and he has not been told the radiant heat cannot be used. Mr. Jalbert informed the Commission that several adult user groups are upset that their 9:00 pm slot has been bumped to 10:00 pm. Mr. Jalbert explained that this was done to accommodate the youth of Arlington, as he was directed. Youth hockey and figure skating, and both high schools in Arlington, (which includes both girls hockey teams) will receive priority booking for the 3:00 pm to 9:00 pm slots.

10. Other Business

The Town Manager is negotiating the lease for the Veteran's Memorial Skating Rink. Currently there is no legally binding document.

The Commission adjourned at 9:50 pm