

Park and Recreation Commission Meeting
Held July 21, 2003

Present: Melody Thornton Christine Phaneuf Joe Sporko Dale Long
 Don McPherson Steve Porto Rev. Arnold Byrd Chris Banks

Meeting called to order 7:05

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Christine called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 2 meeting. Motion made by Joe, seconded by Dale. All in favor.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Melody reported that summer camp is going very well. Things are running smoothly and there have been few problems. We've received positive feedback about the changes that were made, including rearranging the age groups and giving the oldest group the option to stay on site. Registration revenue is up due to the increase in fees and the addition of the bus charge.

Don asked what the bus charge was.

Melody responded \$25. That generated over \$6,000 and covered about half of the total bus cost. She added even with the fee, about 83% of campers still utilized the buses.

Field trip revenue is down, in part because the oldest group now has the choice to stay on site. Field trip expenses are also down because more kids choose to stay on site.

We also have a basketball camp going on, with two one-week sessions. A town resident is running a baseball clinic Saturday mornings for the next few weeks. The soccer camp run by the group from England is returning this year as well after a one-year layoff.

Steve asked how we get feedback.

Melody responded that we get many comments from parents, and last year at the end of camp we did a survey.

Steve asked the results of last year's survey.

Melody responded that they were very favorable. As for fall programming, we will once again have our after school program. Last year we had 22 kids enrolled and have had many inquiries already about when registration will begin. We will also be doing Gorilla Ball, and have had many inquiries about that as well. We will be expanding our Jr. NBA program to include older kids and another division. We also might have a program for girls if there are enough sign ups to do so. New this year will be an AAU basketball program for girls. We plan to start with 11 and 12 year old teams, and continue to add age groups each year as kids move up in divisions. We will also be doing Over 30 Basketball, and we will try to do adult soccer, but there was a lack of interest last year. We'll have open gym Friday nights and we'll try teen dances again after taking a year off.

Steve asked what attendance was like at the dances.

Melody responded it was poor. That was why we didn't have them last year. The schools, the Knights of Columbus, and the Salvation Army all have dances monthly, so we did open gym last year so we weren't unnecessarily duplicating a service.

She stated we had numerous inquiries about gym rental for the upcoming school year. Also included in the director's report were graphs comparing camp attendance to last year's.

Don asked compared to registration, is attendance normal compared to other years.

Melody responded that attendance is up 4.5% on a daily basis compared to last year.

Steve asked why the attendance numbers varied so widely sometimes.

Melody responded family vacations and weather as the two main factors.

Steve asked if supervision changed much off site.

Melody said no because we have to maintain staff to camper ratios as required by the Health Department, including a camper to lifeguard ratio.

Steve asked if that included guards at the sites we visit.

Melody explained in addition to the guards at the site, we must have on our own staff at least one lifeguard for every 75 campers in the water.

Joe asked why field trip revenue was down so much.

Melody responded that in 2002, field trip revenue included ski trips, which we did not have this year. Also, the oldest age group for camp had the choice to stay on site this year, whereas last year they had to register for the field trip package.

Christine pointed out that there should also be a corresponding drop in field trip expenses.

Melody responded there would be.

Steve asked if we do revenue comparisons week by week.

Melody said no, we do them year-to-year.

Steve asked if we look at expenses compared to revenue.

Melody said we do.

Steve asked what we do to cover costs if expenses unexpectedly go up.

Melody responded we ask the town board to increase our budget. The goal of summer camp is to break even, and we are getting close to it being a self sustaining program.

Steve asked if we looked at attendance over a five-year period, would it be increasing.

Christine said attendance is dipping slightly, but revenue is going up.

Melody added that people use us as daycare, and not as many parents seem to need the program anymore. Some kids go to sports camps and some have someone to stay home with them.

Don asked if other departments locally were seeing similar changes.

Melody responded yes, they were.

WALKING PATH

Melody said the quotes for the walking path were in, and the commission needed to decide who to go with so we could get approval from the Town Board.

Steve asked if this had been approved in the budget.

Melody said yes.

Steve asked how we decide what capital projects we want to pursue.

Melody said community feedback, surveys. We try to do the most we can for the community without duplicating services.

Steve asked how long the track was going to be.

Joe said it will be about 300 meters. We wanted to do 400 meters near the playground so it could be expanded into the woods later but had to move the location due to some concerns with the original plans.

Steve asked what uses it would have.

Joe said it would be for walkers, joggers, and possibly bicycles, but we would have to evaluate things like traffic first.

Dale asked if roller bladers would be allowed.

Joe said no, the surface is not conducive for that activity. He added that it would be best to take a look at it after the developer stakes it out before construction begins to be sure the configuration is how we want it.

Steve asked if we needed to keep some money as a buffer in case unforeseeable problems arose.

Joe said we might want to have a buffer.

Don mentioned the possibility of the irrigation system possibly being in the way.

Melody agreed, saying we might have to relocate a few sprinkler heads.

Motion to use Morning Star made by Don, seconded by Steve, all in favor.

LITTLE LEAGUE UPDATE

Dale said it took a while to get a response from Saratoga Little League. They had some concerns with partnering with us. He continued even if they decide they don't want to partner with us, there are other options we could explore. The first would be to possibly join the Cal Ripken division of Babe Ruth baseball. East Side LL is affiliated with Williamsport, so we may have difficulties getting an accredited LL through Williamsport. Greenfield and Moreau both have Cal Ripken divisions. The main drawback of not being affiliated with Williamsport is that there is no World Series for All Stars, but Cal Ripken does have postseason tournaments.

Melody said that seems like a viable solution. It sounds very similar to Wreckball, which was softball but used a similar format.

Dale asked what attendance was at the baseball clinic.

Don said about 16 kids filled the 20 available spaces the first week.

Dale said that Cal Ripken starts at T-Ball for 5 year olds and goes up to age 12. He asked what Wilton's population was.

Melody responded around 12,000.

Steve asked if we had a population enough to support it.

Dale said we would have to do some research to find out. He added he coached a team this year in Saratoga. He had 13 players, and 6 were from Wilton.

Don added his son's team had 5 or so kids from Wilton.

Steve asked what would happen to Saratoga LL if we did this.

Dale said we weren't sure. We're trying to partner with them, giving them more field time, increasing the number of games played, etc.

Steve suggested we reach out to Saratoga, exhausting all possible remedies before we start our own because of the negative impact it could have on them.

Don said it would be worth our while to get our two fields built.

Melody said we're making progress. When we seed and fertilize the other fields, we use anything leftover we have on those fields.

Dale asked if we should notify the Town Board about where we are with the project.

Melody said she spoke to Art Johnson, and the money to complete the fields will be approved in next year's budget. Steve asked if they would be completed next spring. Melody said yes. She added the real expense for them will be the baselines, the infield mix, and things like that.

Don said we could also look into fencing.

Dale agreed, if only for safety issues. He added that South Glens Falls has a primitive field with a chain link fence covered by a tarp for a dugout, but it gets the job done.

Joe asked if we would pursue sponsors. He said Saratoga Springs paid for a large chunk of the ice rink with donations.

Melody said that is something we could try to do. She added we could do fall baseball with our one field.

Dale said Saratoga is ironing out details for fall ball. The field they use for majors will be unplayable due to re-sodding, so he'll suggest they use Gavin.

Melody said that would be a good way to show them we're trying to cooperate for the good of everyone. She added we might get a prison crew to help do some of the work this fall.

Don asked if those fields were part of the maintenance schedule.

Melody said yes, that any extras seed, fertilizer, etc. are put down on those fields.

Don asked if approved, when would we get the money.

Melody responded the money would be approved in January.

Don asked if the grass would be too young to use next spring.

Melody said we hope to get good grass down this fall. The money budgeted would be for finishing the fields, such as baselines, fencing, etc.

POSSIBLE LAND ACQUISITION

Melody explained that some people on Jones Rd. have expressed interest in selling us the back portion of their land. The land is adjacent to park land.

Steve asked if it was landlocked.

Melody said yes, it is landlocked by the park. The owners can't really do anything with it.

Joe commented he feels we should welcome any opportunity to expand the park.

Steve asked if they approached us.

Melody said yes, they approached us. They are interested in selling, but they want to make sure that what they sell will always be park land.

Joe commented we would have to review any stipulations the owners may have before we purchase the land.

All commission members thought it would be good to acquire the land if feasible.

Melody said we would continue to pursue it.

PLAYGROUND INFORMATION

Melody informed the commission that one of the large pieces of playground equipment is antiquated and should be replaced.

Joe asked how old that section of the playground is.

Melody said it was built in 1986 or 1987.

Steve asked if it is a well used area.

Melody said yes. It gets a lot of activity especially during camp, in the mornings during fall and spring, and during soccer seasons.

Christine asked if the surfacing for the playground had been approved in last year's budget.

Melody said it was approved, but the work had not been done yet. Now we need to decide if we want to wait to put down the surfacing until after the playground is replaced.

Steve asked if we will have the funds to replace the playground.

Melody said she wants to budget money for it.

Christine asked how much it would cost to replace.

Melody said the last piece we bought cost around \$12,000.

Steve commented that a park without a playground seems kind of silly.

Joe agreed, saying we should look at replacing the equipment and resurfacing the area.

Rev. Byrd asked if the town board would have cost concerns relating to the project.

Melody said we could use the capital improvement fund.

Christine commented that if we can show a need, the town will usually give us the funds.

Steve commented that we have gotten good use out of the current structure, and the town probably wouldn't have a problem replacing a piece of equipment that was over 17 years old.

Joe asked if we wanted to not only replace the structure, but expand it.

Christine said if we wanted to do that but couldn't get the funds approved, we could add a smaller piece each year for a few years.

Don commented he felt it would not make sense to resurface the area before replacing the equipment.

Steve asked on what scale the new playground would be. He was curious if we would do something basic, or purchase equipment that makes a statement. He and Joe spoke of a playground in Greenfield that was very large and popular with kids. Would we be looking to do that kind of project?

Melody said as long as the equipment would be well used, it would be worthwhile.

Steve suggested we contact several companies to do a presentation at a commission meeting to decide on design.

Don suggested we give them a general idea of what we were looking for so the presentations could be specific.

Melody said if we want to get it in this year's budget, we would have to see the presentations at the next meeting. She would contact companies that we are familiar with.

ENTRANCE GATE

Melody discussed purchasing a new gate for the Lewis Drive entrance. We would like to get one similar to the one at the Beverly St. entrance. The purpose would be for aesthetics and ease of handling.

Joe asked when the gates are opened and closed.

Melody responded that the gates are opened by the maintenance person in the morning before 7 am and are closed by the maintenance person at 11 pm.

Melody said we had already received bids from AFSCO and Bruce Fence. She said we have the money in this year's budget.

Steve asked if the other gate needed any repairs, because we could include that in the bid.

Melody said the Beverly St. gate is in good condition.

Joe asked if we would be taking money necessary for other things.

Melody said no, the money is budgeted for repairs and maintenance.

Don asked if the gate was in disrepair.

Melody explained it was made out of left over fence and materials. It is difficult to handle.

Dale said he is familiar with a company called Anvil Fence.

Melody asked if we could get a bid from them.

Dale said he would call them about the project to see if they wanted to submit a bid.

A motion was made by Don to approve AFSCO's bid unless Anvil submits a lower bid.

Seconded by Rev. Byrd. All in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Christine asked if there was any old business. There was none.

The commission decided next meeting will be Monday, September 8 at 7 pm.

Motion to adjourn made by Don, seconded by Rev. Byrd. All in favor.