

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District
Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
Recreation Program Advisory Committee
April 17, 2013**

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District met in a special meeting on April 17 at the Belvidere Recreation Center, 412 South Lewis Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Greg Petry, Executive Director, who directed a call of the roll.

II. Roll Call

Present: None. Absent: President Bill Sarocka, Commissioners Terry Duffy, Pat Foley, Janet Kilkelly, and Wayne Motley. Newly elected Commissioner George Bridges was in attendance. Petry noted that since there was not a quorum this was not an official meeting.

Also present were Peggy Braden, Sara Griffin, Karen Harris, Sharon Hoyle-Yap, Desiree Martinez, Dulce Ortiz, Martha Padilla-Ramos, Odie Pahl, Miguel Quiroz, and Mercedes Rivera. Staff present included Greg Petry, Alicia A. Mentell, Mike Mayfield, Dayna Wick, and David Holzrichter.

III. Review, Discuss, Decide

A. Special Events

1. Fitness Expo

Dayna Wick, Recreation Supervisor for The Field House Sports & Fitness, reported that the First Annual Fitness Expo was held on Saturday, March 23, from 10am-1pm at the Field House Sports and Fitness Center. A total of 165 participants attended. The event was free and all participants received a long sleeve Fitness Expo t-shirt. Various activities were held including fitness oriented vendors placed in the Fitness Center, Group Fitness demonstrations, open Climbing Wall, Fitness Challenges with prizes, Vista Health Seminars, and a Lifting Contest. Participants and staff were very happy with the event and look forward to expanding activities next year.

2. Live Green Family Festival

Dave Holzrichter, Intern with Adult and Family Programs and Services, reported that the Live Green Family Festival will be held in Bowen Park on Sunday, April 28, 1:00 to – 4:00 pm. Activities include Outdoor Exploration Activities such a nature walk focusing on Bowen Parks History and a Family nature scavenger hunt; craft activities such as Honeycomb candle making, bird house making, Live Green coloring books and book marks, flower pot decorating and build your own compass;

Children's Garden Activities with storybook reading in both English and Spanish with volunteers from the library and Larsen's Florist leading a potting plant activity. Exhibits and demonstrations include a reptile exhibit from the Lake County Forest Preserve, science experiments from High Touch High Tech, a frog expo along with nature walks by the Waukegan Harbor Citizen Advisory Group, small item recycle drop off by SWALCO, camp site and cooking demonstrations by recreation staff, scavenger hunt directed by recreation staff, and cigarette park cleanup led by recreation staff.

3. American Independence Festivities

American Independence Parade

Wick, Parade Coordinator, reported that the American Independence Parade will be held on the Sunday, June 30, with step off at 1pm. The parade staging area takes place on Sheridan Road between Washington and Franklin, which is where the route begins. The parade runs north on Sheridan Road from Franklin and Sheridan, and ends at the Reviewing Stand at Bowen Park. Units are judged according to various categories including: Best Overall Entry, Best Musical Marching Unit, Best Decorated Float, Best Walking Entry, Best Vehicle Entry, Best Dramatic/Humorous, and Best Theme Presentation. Each year the Board of Commissioners with help of the Parade Committee selects a theme. This year the theme "Home Sweet Home Waukegan" has been selected. To reduce spending, all paid special units with the exception of three local units has been eliminated. The units include Waukegan High School Alumni Band, Waukegan Jazz Steppers, and the Nuclear Reaction Drum Line. With the elimination of out of town paid special units, the parade will return to a simpler format of being a hometown parade that focuses on community groups, local organizations, and Waukegan pride.

American Independence Festival

Mike Mayfield, Festival Coordinator, gave a brief overview of the American Independence Festival. The event takes place on Sunday, June 30, after the parade and runs from 2:30-5pm in Bowen Park. Event features food vendors, skate park expo, pony rides, petting zoo, inflatables, in-house games, crafts and the Waukegan Band performing Americana music.

Alicia Mentell distributed copies of the results of a survey that was taken regarding the American Independence Festivities. The results show an overwhelming preference for the parade over the festival. Respondents also indicated that units should not be charged a fee for entering the parade. Preferences were identified for what were the most important elements of the parade and festival as well as the favorite special units. Having a review stand with judges and awards was not considered important. Respondents were also able to make comments at the end of the survey should they choose.

B. Aquatics

1. New Facility Update

Greg Petry stated that there was no new movement on the proposed aquatic facility. There are three concepts encompassing small, medium and large venues. The project was put aside until after the election. Commissioner Bill Sarocka was reelected and George Bridges was newly elected. There will be a new initiative in the new fiscal year where the different choices will be narrowed down at a cost of \$15,000. Once planning gets underway this committee will be involved. The park district is also waiting for the state government to announce available park grants. The construction of the facility would be financed through bonds leveraged with grants. Interest rates are being monitored. The EAV will need to level off before new bonds can be issued.

2. Management of Pool Operations

Dayna Wick, Recreation Supervisor for the Field House Sports and Fitness Center, provided a report on Ganster Pool operations for the coming season. She stated that since Michael Wirsing, the former Recreation Supervisor for Fitness and Aquatics, resigned in August 2012, there has not been any management staff with the required credentials for managing pool operations. Current staff are undergoing training that will provide them the needed certifications for pool operations. However, these trainings will not be completed in time for this summer season

In order to provide a safe environment for participants, the park district entered into a management contract with Jeff Ellis Management to handle pool operations during open swim and supervise lifeguards during swim lessons. The park district will still be responsible for the SwimSmart program hiring swim instructors as well as cashiers. Wick will serve as the park district liaison with Jeff Ellis Management and, therefore, the designated Project Manager.

C. Community Assessment Survey

Mike Mayfield, Recreation Supervisor for Youth Programs and Services, circulated a copy of the mail-in results of the Community Assessment Survey. This survey was distributed this past summer to 5,000 Waukegan Park District residents. A total of 175 people completed the survey.

Mayfield also presented a power point presentation comparing the results from both the mail-in and email surveys. A total of 385 people completed one or both surveys.

Respondents were asked where they go for recreation programs and services. Given the choices of other governmental agencies, non-profits and private businesses, the Waukegan Park District was selected as the preferred provider.

Respondents from both surveys agreed on the type of recreational programs or activities they participated in and which ones they felt were most important for the park district to provide. The top three responses were programs for youth and teens that are safe and fun, programs that encourage people to be healthy and stay in shape, and programs that are accessible and affordable for people with limited recreational opportunities.

Reasons why respondents have not used a Waukegan Park District in the past 12 months were similar in both surveys. The top three reasons were programs not offered at times in which they could participate, program fees are too high, and being too busy to participate.

When asked about the proposed new aquatics facility, responders from both surveys were in favor of both an indoor and outdoor facility. In addition, both surveys indicated Belvidere Park and Hinkston Park as the top two locations for the facility.

When asked about finding information on Waukegan Park District Programs responders from both surveys had similar responses. Majority of responders found it either very easy or easy to find out information on programs and services. Seasonal program activity guide/brochure, park district website, direct home mail and word of mouth were the top means of doing so.

Overall respondents from both surveys felt the park district does a good job. Respondents rated the park district excellent in providing quality programs, services and facilities.

IV. Closed Session

There was no closed session.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia A. Mentell
Superintendent of Recreation