

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District  
Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners  
Special Recreation Program Advisory Committee  
March 4, 2013**

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District met in a Special Meeting of the Special Recreation Program Advisory Committee on March 4, 2013 at the Douglas House, 732 North Genesee Street, Waukegan, Illinois.

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm by Melissa Juarez-Ehlers who directed a call of the roll.

**II. Roll Call**

Present: Commissioner: N/A.

Also Present: Julie Schneider, Manager of Special Recreation, Alicia Mentell, Superintendent of Recreation, Kari Robinson, Supervisor of Special Recreation, Maria Owens, Specialist of Special Recreation, Melissa Juarez-Ehlers, Janalle Roth, and Tina Yurik.

Absent: Dave Cruz, Deanna Guidry, Susan Johnson, Sharon Lambert, Christopher Pace, Mercedes Rivera, Christian Torres, and Maria Owens.

**III. Review, Discuss, Decide**

**A. Healthy Minds- Healthy Bodies Veterans Initiative**

- Schneider reported that there are currently thirteen active members, with three whose memberships will expire within the week. She received three new inquiries about participation within the past week. The program has been evaluated by Schneider and two Park District fitness staff. Revised guidelines to participate have been established as the program moves into its second year. Veteran members will now need to show a commitment to fitness by utilizing their membership a minimum of three times in their first month before a Personal Training session will be scheduled. Schneider explained that the AllenForce foundation has now been established and is seeking funding to support the program state and nationwide. Participation in the HMHB program now requires quarterly reporting and tracking of goal achievement and active participation in the fitness membership. A two-day training hosted by North Eastern DuPage Special Recreation Association is set for April. Schneider is looking to have additional Personal Trainers and possibly Maria Owens attend. As guidelines are established and brought to Schneider's attention, changes to the district's implementation will be adjusted accordingly.

## **B. Final Results of Reporting Abuse and Neglect –OIG**

- Schneider announced that the procedure to report abuse and neglect has not reached the final stage. Tanya Brady, Risk Manager for the Waukegan Park District, attended the SRSNLC Quarterly Board Meeting in December to explain the position the Waukegan Park District was taking for Reporting Abuse and Neglect. Her presentation raised a number of good questions from the SRSNLC Board. The topic was tabled to the next SRSNLC Board Meeting, set for March 13. Board Members are to contact their respective police departments for input on how reports of abuse and neglect for individuals with a disability are handled. In addition, Brady will conduct additional follow-up with the Park District Risk Management Association (PDRMA) and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) legal counsel. Concern was raised that we are not mandated to report to OIG and that reports are not Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) protected. Also noted was concern that staff may be placed in a position of allegations of having made malicious accusations from the individual the report was filed on. For the present time, staff of the Cooperative Districts was directed to call 911 and file a police report. Schneider and the Waukegan Park District Risk Manager will continue working with OIG and PDRMA legal counsel to clarify answers to the many questions raised. Results will be shared with the SRSNLC Board of Directors prior to the March 13, 2013 Board Meeting.

## **C. Fundraising Effort- Polar Bear Plunge:**

- Schneider and Robinson presented the results of the 2013 Polar Bear Plunge. Proceeds are estimated to be \$2700 which is down from \$6000 in 2012. This was a result of several factors. The four returning taverns participated but the monetary level of sponsorships was down. There was less pledger participation and those who did secure pledges were less successful in obtaining the same monetary support as in the prior year. One new sponsor was brought in by Committee Member Tina Yurik. Many thanks were given for her determination and success in securing a new sponsor. There is concern over raising the 2014 registration price when the economy is down, even though there has not been a price increase in the fourteen years the event has run.

Committee members delved into brainstorming some promotional techniques that Special Recreation staff will look into trying for the 2014 event. Building new relationships with the following were suggested: local attorneys, involving the Scouts as an Eagle project, connecting with local churches for support, and contacting the Latino Coalition for input and support. The Polar Bear Plunge website has been utilizing daily posting more than a month before the event hoping to create awareness of fundraising needs. It has been suggested to provide testimonials as well as feature those who benefit from the proceeds in the weekly or daily postings on the Polar Bear Plunge Facebook page.

It is felt that because the holiday was on and will again be in the middle of the week in 2014, registration may remain low for another year. The attraction and novelty of participation in this event is the fact it is held on January 1. There will be no change to the date the event is offered.

More effort may need to go into educating sponsors, pledgers, and plungers on the fact this event is the main fundraising event for Special Recreation. Returning plungers come for the t-shirt. There is thought to offer a sweatshirt to those that raise pledges of \$50+ and pre-register. All other plungers will receive a t-shirt. This may raise awareness and “envy” the first year and lead to improving pledging interest and support in future events.

#### **D. New Programs**

- Schneider reported that Robinson researched three agencies that offer weekday programs to obtain information to create a budget and activity schedules. Upon review of the information a FY13/14 budget was created for the Home, Education, Art, Recreation, Training (HEART) full day program. Robinson announced that the two day a week program may be ready to be offered in the fall, but most likely will be offered in the 2014 Winter/Spring season. The program will start with a one staff to six participant ratio and will not offer any transportation options. Juarez-Ehlers offered to send The Center for Enriched Living day program participant application to Schneider. Juarez-Ehlers also asked if Waukegan was looking to partnership with Zion to offer the program. Robinson reported that at this time, the program will be a Waukegan initiative. Residents of Lindenhurst, Round Lake, or Zion are eligible for resident rates per the cooperative agreement.

#### **E. Strategic Plan Goals related to Special Recreation**

- Schneider stated that the Waukegan Park District staff attended a workshop on results of the Census and interpretation of those results as they relate to Waukegan demographics. When looking at the participation in summer camps and the afterschool program that Special Recreation offers, participation does match the demographics of Waukegan. When compared to participation by adults in programs, it does not match the demographics. This could largely be due to the fact a majority of participants come from the Kiley Developmental Center which is a State run facility.

Robinson questioned Committee Members, Yurik and Janalle Roth, if they are aware whether or not the Census numbers have a direct correlation to those with disabilities. Yurik will consult staff of Clearbrook. Roth suggested that Schneider or Robinson contact Renee Lambert of the Waukegan School District transition program for a possible answer to this question. Yurik suggested speaking with the United Way of Lake County

and Alicia Mentell suggested speaking with Roycealee Woods, Lake County Regional Superintendent of Schools.

- A second goal presented for input regarded potential family programming options of interest. Mentell suggested a family “Game Day” with a variety of table and small group activities such as X-box, Wii or Bingo. Roth presented the idea of an indoor movie night with popcorn and snacks for sale as concessions. Schneider presented the possibility of securing a speaker/educator on nutrition and cooking. All ideas were viewed as good ideas to pursue in more detail.

#### **F. Priorities for Next Meeting**

- **Date: May 20, 2013**. Juarez-Ehlers reported that the next two proposed meeting dates would not allow for her to attend due to a scheduling conflict. The May 13 and August 5 dates have been removed. Members present at the meeting set new meeting dates for both the May and August meetings. The next two meeting dates are now scheduled for **May 20**, and for **August 19**. The final meeting date of 2013 has remained on November 11, at this point in time.
- **Priorities:** Summary of the Healthy Minds/Healthy Bodies program, review of procedures of reporting to OIG, New Program updates, Strategic Plan goals related to Special Recreation- reporting on program statistics to confirm program participation closely mirror the demographics of the community and the offering of family oriented programming and communication.

#### **IV. Closed Session**

There was no closed session

#### **V. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:03pm

**Respectfully submitted,**

Julie Schneider  
Manager of Special Recreation