

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District
Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
Recreation Advisory Committee
December 11, 2017
7:00pm**

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District met in a special meeting on December 11, 2017 at the Field House Sports, Fitness & Aquatics Center, 800 Baldwin Ave, Waukegan, Illinois

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Errick Beverly, Superintendent of Recreation who directed a call of the roll and made introductions.

II. Roll Call

Present: Jay Lerner, Executive Director; Errick Beverly, Superintendent of Recreation; Kaitlin Fischer, Recreation Manager; Quincy Bejster, Recreation Manager; Jen Dumas, Recreation Supervisor; Shelby McDonald, Recreation Supervisor; Peggi Braden; Yolanda Brown; Nadine Burlison; Brian Cowart; Eric Lyons; Motley, David; Mercedes Rivera; Elizabeth Fallon, Department Support Aide

Absent: Caryn Clothier; Sara Griffin; Jerry Holisky; Sharon Hoyle-Yap; Dulce Ortiz; Martha Padilla-Ramos; Doris Richter; Della Steele; Marc Jones, Commissioner

Due to lack of a quorum, no official board business was conducted.

III. Review, Discuss, Decide

A. Belvidere Park Updates – Jay Lerner

- The current renovation plan includes: a new family aquatic center with a new pool, diving well, and splash features; a renovation to the existing bath house; an additional 100 parking spots; a main picnic pavilion and smaller picnic shelters; a new playground with splash pad and fitness component; removing the Rose Administration building and removing one baseball diamond.
- Construction begins summer 2018 and will take 9-11 months to complete depending on the weather.
- The administrative offices are being moved to the newly purchased property on Golf Rd (former Waukegan Savings Bank). This building is twice the size of the current administrative office building and will cost about half of the initially proposed addition to Belvidere Rec Center.
- Committee member comments:
 - Concern was expressed over current parking situation and park atmosphere at Belvidere Park on busy weekends. Jay Lerner requested all to report any incidents to police and expressed that the new park plan with additional parking and features will enhance and encourage family activity in the park.
 - Question asked if security cameras will be installed. Jay Lerner responded that there are no plans to install security cameras and the current park patrol has

worked well. If needed in the future there can be an increase in police presence in the park but at this time it is not needed.

- Question asked if there are any plans to update the Belvidere Rec Center. Jay Lerner responded that this project is still on the radar and the board is looking at the available finances for this project.

B. GO Waukegan Updates – Shelby McDonald

- GO Waukegan is part of a larger initiative through the Lake County Health Department to promote walking 30 minutes per day and increase activity for the residents of Lake County. The initiative began with GO Gurnee and then GO Waukegan joined the effort and now many more communities have joined the initiative.
- There have been monthly GO Waukegan events with the latest event on December 2 in partnership with Main Street called Winter Wonder Walk. GO Waukegan has also partnered with the City of Waukegan for GO Waukegan at ArtWauk. The next large GO Waukegan event will be at Roosevelt Park in April.
- Pavement circles have been installed downtown Waukegan with benefits of walking and mileage printed on the circles. More pavement circles will be installed on walking paths in the parks.
- The park district will be partnering with the school district with the help of Mary Olsen bringing GO Waukegan events to the middle schools.
- GO Waukegan won a Partnership Award, along with the Gurnee Park District, through the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD).
- Committee member comments:
 - Question asked if GO Waukegan will only have events in middle schools. Shelby McDonald responded that the plan is to start in the middle schools and expand to all schools. Nadine Bureson let the group know that Cooke school has a new walking path and walking club with incentives for the students who participate. Dawn Wallis, the school nurse, is leading this effort at Cooke school.
 - Comment made that all these events creates an opportunity to gain membership and participation in other programs.

C. 2nd Grade Field Trip updates – Quincy Bejster

- The Waukegan Parks Foundation has made a commitment to provide the funds for all 2nd graders in Waukegan to come to the Field House for a field trip day with the main purpose of providing a swim lesson experience to each 2nd grader. Each school, including private and home school groups, has a planned day for their field trip. The day consists of an opening rally, three activity stations of swimming, sports skills, and fitness, which the students rotate to throughout the day, the students bring and eat their lunch at the Field House and end their day with a closing rally including a group photo.
- Kiefer has donated boys and girls swim suits for students who do not bring their own so all students can participate in the swimming lesson.

- Students leave with a SwimSmart bag, a Field House mini basketball, and a free family pass to visit the Field House again with their family.
- Committee member comments:
 - Nadine Burleson reported that Cooke PTO facebook page has received great feedback from parents on Cooke's field trip.
 - Peggi Braden complimented the program and suggested that a note should be added to field trip permission slip to inform the school nurse to assure that identified students have the nursing support available on the day of the field trip. Quincy Bejster responded that he will provide future field trip schedule to Peggi.

D. Field House Family Nights – Kaitlin Fischer/Shelby McDonald/Quincy Bejster

- Kaitlin Fischer reported to the group that she has been working with Mary Olsen and the school district setting up Family Fitness Nights with each school. More schools are being added to the program this year and we are giving support to the schools that need help coordinating a wellness committee.
- Shelby McDonald reported that Parent's Night Out at the Field House has grown to a once per month program. Parents can drop off their children from 5:30-9:00pm for an evening of supervised, safe, and fun activities. This program is free for members and \$10/child for non-members.
- Quincy Bejster introduced Jordan Pavlovich, the new Aquatics Specialist, who will be running the Family Swim Nights. Each family swim night has a theme and is a low cost program to encourage families to utilize the pool. The cost is \$2 per family or \$4 per nonresident family.

E. Free For All Update – Quincy Bejster

- This year's flyer was distributed and explanation of the dates and times.
- We were able to utilize feedback from this committee to make changes to the program by having an earlier start and end time, 10am-6pm, and more planned activities.
- There will be a planned police presence starting at 12pm and this is an all hands on deck event with staff scheduled throughout the holidays to provide the safest environment for our participants.
- Committee member comments:
 - Question asked about how Field House staff will connect with patrons interested in using the facility beyond the free times. Quincy Bejster responded that all four workstations will be utilized with one station set up for membership inquiry and tours.

F. Nature Programming and Bowen Greenhouse – Jen Dumas

- An overview of the current nature programs and Children’s Garden activities was provided.
- A grant through the Grainger Foundation was awarded for \$22,950 for the renovation of the Bowen Greenhouse. Construction is scheduled to begin in January 2018 with the project completion in April and a grand opening event in May. Additional funding of \$8,000-\$10,000 will be needed for the educational components. A handout was provided detailing this information.
- The proposed use of the facility is to provide a year-round growing space that will allow the park district to have agriculture and environmental education programs throughout the year and include outreach programs to the school. One program that will be ideal for this space is Hydroponic Growing systems. A handout and hydroponic microgreen plants were provided for the group for further explanation.

G. 2018 Special Events – Errick Beverly

- The 2018 proposed special events will have some changes including eliminating the American Independence Festival and concentrating all resources to the parade and possibly eliminating the Turkey Trot. Both events have had steadily declining attendance for the past few years.
- Committee member comments:
 - Question was asked if the Turkey Trot is an expensive event to provide. Errick Beverly responded that the Turkey Trot is not an expensive event to run but with declining attendance we don’t seem to be providing an event the community is interested in anymore.
 - Suggestion was made to relocate the Turkey Trot to another park such as Bevier to try to rejuvenate the event and attract a different participant base.
 - Question was asked if there were identified reasons for decline in attendance at the Festival. Errick Beverly responded that Great Lakes Navy Base started back up their July 4th family carnival a few years ago which has been on a competing day with our Festival. We also find many people who attend the Parade go to family parties after the Parade rather than the Festival. If you aren’t already at Bowen Park to watch the Parade then getting to the park to attend the Festival is difficult due to road closures and parking limitations.
 - Comment was made that it would be nice to have a bigger and better Parade like in previous years and to put the resources used for the Festival into the Parade. Errick Beverly responded that will be the plan and will give us more money to be competitive with other parades in paying special units.

- Comment was made that the Vintage Baseball Game at last year's Festival was a lot of fun and it would be nice to have that as special event in the future.
- Comment was made that it would be good to re-evaluate the activities offered at the Festival and what other activities might appeal to the community more.

H. New Program and Event Ideas – Errick Beverly

Committee suggestions & comments:

- Suggestion was made to have a season pass at Greenshire Golf Course which is a more family friendly course.
- Suggestion was made to offer floor hockey for adults and or families. That there are a growing number of older hockey players that are moving to floor hockey so they can still enjoy the sport but avoid possible injury.
- Comment made that it is nice to see a hockey only night offered at outdoor rinks for this upcoming season.
- Suggestion made to provide alternate programming for under-utilized tennis courts such as futsal or pickle ball.
- Kaitlin Fischer reported that new Field Hockey and Lacrosse skills and drills programs are being offered in the spring.
- Jay Lerner reported that the spring brochure will provide all information in both English and Spanish.

I. Recreation Department Restructure – Errick Beverly

- The Cultural Arts and Recreation departments are combining into one department which will all be supervised by the Superintendent of Recreation. There are two new positions, titled Deputy Superintendent, that will report to the Superintendent of Recreation and oversee specific areas. Internal candidate interviews will begin in the next couple of weeks to fill those positions.

J. What Can We Do Better? – Errick Beverly

Committee suggestions & comments:

- Suggestion was made to replace treadmills since there are so many problems with several out of service at the same time. Quincy Bejster responded that treadmills are on the capital improvement project list and most will be replaced in March.

- Nadine Burleson expressed appreciation to Jen Dumas for working to get a new martial arts program offered. The program did not end up running but she was still appreciative of the collaborative effort.
- Eric Lyons expressed his appreciation for the great staff who are very receptive to any suggestions and issues.
- Mercedes complimented the wonderful special event last weekend, Christmas with the Clauses, and looks forward to it again next year.

Closed Session

There was no closed session

IV. Adjournment

Errick thanked the committee members for their time and invited them to provide feedback at any time. The 2018 meetings will be scheduled at 6pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm

2018 Meeting Schedule: May 14, 2018 & December 10, 2018 at 6:00pm