



Walpole Recreation Committee

Meeting Held on Wednesday, November 18th, 2020
via Zoom conference call - 6:00 p.m.

Recreation Committee Present

Regular Members

Present

- Richard McCarthy, *Chairperson*
- Joe Grant Buckley, *Vice-Chairperson*
- Annelise Fair
- Michael McGrath

Not Present

William Buckley

Associate Members

Present

- Brad Hickey
- Jeffrey Hutnick
- Douglas Shea

Not Present

Lorraine Dundon

Staff Present

- Brendan Croak, *Recreation Director*
- Arielle Carney, *Assistant Recreation Director*

Public Present

- Jim Cooney - Walpole Youth Football, *President*
- Scott Spack - Walpole Youth Lacrosse League, *President*
- Dan Naughton - Walpole Youth Girls Lacrosse, *President*
- Tim Needham, Walpole Youth Lacrosse League, *Scheduling/Fields*

Call to Order

Chairperson Grant called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Old Business

Field Permit Fees

- Director Croak presented the Committee with an overview of the revised Field Permit Application Fees that will take effect in Spring 2021.

Director Croak explained to the Committee and the members of the public who were present that the current fee structure is difficult to accurately track, as it stands. Proposed distribution of fees received would go toward maintenance costs (including, but not limited to, irrigation, and lighting), capital improvements related to the athletic fields, annual turf replacement costs, and direct expenses that the Recreation Department incurs related to the permitting process. Director Croak noted that as more data is compiled, he fully anticipates that the Committee will review these hourly fees on an annual-basis, and adjust as needed.

Mr. Hickey commented that perhaps the Department should look at the proposed structure using a sliding scale. For example, a group that wants 100 hours of field time should pay less than a group that wants 10 hours of field time. Director Croak noted that as the Department continues to compile data, they will explore all avenues and adjust as needed. However, he notes that fees are already a bit confusing with the introduction of the tiered system and their associated fees. To incorporate a sliding scale and “add another layer to the onion” might be overwhelming to manage. The goal is to make this process as straight-forward and easy to understand for general users and private groups looking to rent an athletic field.

Vice Chairperson Grant wanted to remind the Committee that they need to remember that when all of the groups were paying \$25 per rostered player, 80% of that cost was going towards field maintenance costs, while the remaining 20% was put aside for turf replacement. Baseball and softball users were previously paying to replace a synthetic turf field that their sports did not utilize for gameplay. Under this new structure, this will no longer be the case.

With regard to usage and billing of lights, Director Croak noted that each group will be required to pay an hourly fee to utilize lights at all athletic fields.

- On a motion made by Chairperson McCarthy, seconded by Mr. McGrath, the Committee voted 3-0-1* to approve the changes to the field permit application fee structure.

* Vice Chairperson Grant abstained, due to his involvement on the Walpole Youth Football board.

Director's Report

Department Update

- FY2022 Budget

There was no discussion from the Committee with regard to the FY2022 Budget request submission.

- Saturday Soccer

Director Croak gave a summary of the five-week Saturday soccer program that wrapped up earlier this month. The program was an adapted version that heavily relied on parent coaches.

Early feedback from the public seems to be overwhelmingly positive. While Director Croak hopes to return to a “normal” program structure next year, some of the changes will continue to be utilized moving forward as they have enhanced the structure and quality of the program.

- Recreation Programming

Director Croak gave an update on the latest Recreation Department programs that are currently being offered. A large focus has been made on virtual offerings, given the current state of the pandemic. Virtual programming has been very well-received and are actually filling up quite nicely.

- New Website

The department is currently wrapping up virtual staff trainings for their new website platform. Director Croak hopes to have the site up and running in the next few weeks.

- Shoebox Parade

The Recreation Department had their very first “Shoebox Parade”. Participants decorated shoeboxes and submitted their creations to the Recreation Department, which displayed the video online for families to view on Thanksgiving Day, in lieu of the traditional Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Around 40 floats were submitted and the video, which was posted on Facebook, received several thousand views.

- Saturday Basketball

A scaled-back version of our Winter Saturday Basketball program is set to start up on January 9th. This program will be held at Bird Middle School and will allow for eight children, and two volunteer parent coaches per 30-minute time slot. The program will run from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. each week. If successful, the department will explore offering a second session later on.

New Business

- N/A

Minutes

- On a motion made by Vice Chairperson Grant, seconded by Mr. McGrath, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the meeting minutes from the October 14th, 2020 meeting.

Public Comment

- N/A

Adjournment

- On a motion made by Mr. McGrath, seconded by Vice Chairperson Grant, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to adjourn at 6:50 p.m.