



**Walpole Recreation Committee
Meeting Held on Wednesday, March 9th, 2022
via Zoom conference call - 6:00 p.m.**

Recreation Committee Present

Regular Members

Present

- Joseph Grant, *Chair*
- Richard McCarthy, *Vice-Chair**
- Jeff Hutnick

Not Present

Annelise Fair
Michael McGrath

Associate Members

- Lorraine Dundon
- Brad Hickey
- Jeff Hutnick
- Marie Jeanlouis
- Doug Shea

*left the meeting at 6:52pm.

Per Article VI, §B of the Recreation Committee Policies & Procedures - due to the absence of a quorum, Ms. Dundon was assigned voting power by Chair Grant.

Staff Present

- Brendan Croak, *Recreation Director*

Call to Order

Chairperson Grant called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

Minutes

- On a motion made by Vice-Chair McCarthy, seconded by Mr. Hutnick, the Committee voted 3-0-0 to approve the January 12th, 2022 meeting minutes.

Director's Report

- ***Saturday Basketball*** Director Croak stated that the Department is at the halfway point of the Saturday Basketball program. No issues to report.
- ***Saturday T-Ball*** Director Croak stated that registration opened up for Saturday T-ball yesterday at 10am. No registration issues and there is currently space available in numerous hours and age groups. Director Croak stated that he does anticipate that this program will fill up. Recreation Coordinator Rich Lamoury is forming the curriculum in a similar way that he has done in the past with our Saturday basketball and Saturday soccer programs whereas he provides the weekly lesson plans to the volunteer parent coaches and they implement and take action. Seasonal staff is there to support and assist, as needed. Director Croak stated that he anticipates a staffing shortage on the week of Walpole High School Prom.

Director Croak stated that Walpole Little League is offering a Saturday program for seven year olds, that is very similar to the structure of the Department's Saturday T-ball program, but utilizes High School Baseball coaches and players. It's unclear at this moment what the effect on the Recreation Department will be, if any. Director Croak stated that there is some concern that other youth sports organizations in town will follow suit and or continue to expand their reach into younger ages which will affect the Department considerably.

- ***Staffing*** The Department is currently accepting job applications for all summer positions, including those at the pools. To date, the Department has received a handful and Director Croak believes that more will continue to trickle in. Director Croak does have concerns with staffing levels right now, specifically with regard to experience and quality staff members that may limit what the Department is able to offer (Community Events, Summer Programming, etc.). Chair Grant stated that he does have some safety concerns with the potential for a lack of experienced staff. Mr. Hickey questioned if the department has pushed hard enough to recruit new applicants. Director Croak addressed the numerous steps that have taken place, but will stated the efforts will continue.

Director Croak stated that Arielle Carney left the Department after about 5 years or so to take a position for the City of Watertown. Her expertise and presence is going to be sorely missed. Director Croak stated that he has the utmost confidence that the team will be able to handle things as they come up.

- **Recreation Feasibility Study** The Select Board recently awarded the contract to Weston & Sampson last Tuesday for the Recreation feasibility study to take place. The kickoff meeting is next Tuesday, where Director Croak, along with other pertinent Department Heads, will visit various Recreation locations with Weston & Sampson, in order for their specialists to get a better feel with how to guide the Department.

- **Community Events** Director Croak stated that all of the Community Event requests were recently approved by the Select Board. These requests include the following:
 - Walpole Day - Saturday, June 11th
 - Concerts on the Common - Tuesday nights in July and August
 - National Night Out - Tuesday, August 2nd

- **Pools** All chlorinators are due for installation in two weeks, which will complete the overhaul of the Department's chemical management system at the pools, which began last year with the chemical regulation boxes. The opening date is still to be determined, but the pools typically open on the Saturday after school gets out, which is June 18th this year. More info to be released in late-May/early-June.

Summer Programming Director Croak stated that the Department is still finalizing details for most of its summer sports clinics and camps. This would include Field Hockey Clinic, Tennis Lessons, Baseball Camp, Girls Lacrosse Clinic, and Soccer Camp. He stated that the department is also working to offer a week of STEM programming at the conclusion of school and two additional weeks at the end of the summer before school starts back up. The plan is for all programs to be live and ready for registration on the Department's website by April 1st. Once everything is finalized, marketing will take place on social media, as well as email blasts to the Department's database.

The Department is still finalized plans for its summer program. Director Croak stated that given current staffing concerns, there are large gaps that pose some considerable hurdles that may prohibit the department from moving forward with the *Walpole Woods* program at Jarvis Farm. Director Croak stated that the *Summer on Stone* program allows the department to stay centralized in one location, where more hands-on oversight from the office staff can occur. Jarvis Farm has not been utilized by the Recreation Department since fall of 2019, so there is quite a considerable amount of work that needs to be completed in order for the property to be prepared for use. Director Croak stated that not only is that a large financial undertaking, he reminded the Committee that the department is short-staffed at the moment. Director Croak recommends that the department move forward with the *Summer on Stone* program this year, but he requests further discussion from the Committee.

New Business

Athletic Fields - Dogs Vice-Chair McCarthy noted some concern about the increase in presence of dogs on Walpole's athletic fields. Some discussion took place about proper signage and what can be done for enforcement. Director Croak stated that he would confer with the Parks Department to verify existing signage and address, as needed.

Update - Athletic Fields Director Croak gave a brief update on the status of Spring Field Permit Applications, Carolyn Woodward Playground replacement, and numerous amenities at the South Walpole Community Athletic Complex (concession stand/bathrooms, basketball court, playground).

Update - 300th Anniversary Committee Director Croak stated that there is not much to update the Committee on at this time.

Update - Master Steering Committee With Mr. McGrath's absence at this meeting, there is nothing new to report.

Old Business

- N/A

Public Comment

- N/A

Adjournment

- On a motion made by Ms. Dundon, seconded by Mr. Hutnick, the Committee voted 3-0-0 to adjourn at 7:08pm.