



Walpole Recreation Committee
Meeting Held on Wednesday, September 14th, 2022
via Zoom conference call - 6:00 p.m.

Recreation Committee Present

Regular Members

Present

- Rich McCarthy, *Chair*
- Joe Grant, *Vice-Chair*
- Doug Shea

Not Present

Jeff Hutnick
Michael McGrath

Associate Members

Present

- Brad Hickey
- Marie Jeanlouis

Not Present

Lorraine Dundon

Staff Present

- Brendan Croak, *Recreation Director*

Call to Order

Chairperson McCarthy called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Minutes

- On a motion made by Vice-Chair Grant, seconded by Mr. Shea, the Committee voted 3-0-0 to approve the May 11th, 2022 meeting minutes.

Director's Report

- ***Harvest Fest*** Harvest Fest is taking place this year on Saturday, October 1st. Director Croak mentioned that the Department is leaning away from having as many vendors as they've had in the past, and are instead including a Touch-A-Truck element this year with the Walpole Fire Department, Walpole Police Department, and various local businesses. At this time, the department is still waiting on confirmation from a few food trucks and food establishments.

 - ***Halloween on Main*** The Department is proud to bring back its annual Halloween on Main event, which consists of a short parade down Main Street of young kids dressed in their Halloween costumes. This event has not taken place in quite some time due to the pandemic and poor weather conditions.

 - ***Summer Programs*** Director Croak stated that the department had a relatively successful summer. The Department made a cognizant decision to include more staff than needed at numerous programs, as many staff members were newly hired. The negative effect from this decision is that the payroll was extremely high. Director Croak doesn't anticipate a need to overstaff next summer, but noted that every so often it's a necessity to ensure that our staff is qualified and adequately prepared. This decision will allow for greater success for the department in the future.
- Overall, the department had a relatively quiet and successful pool season, despite some mechanical and maintenance issues.
- ***Saturday Soccer*** Saturday Soccer started last weekend, with beautiful weather and no issues. Recreation Coordinator, Rich Lamoury, continues to prepare a weekly curriculum for the volunteer coaches to follow throughout the season.

 - ***Capital Budget*** The Recreation Department has submitted numerous requests to be considered at Fall Town Meeting next month on October 17th.

	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>
Downtown Recreation Elements	\$10,000	\$10,000
Blackburn Hall Improvements	\$540,000	\$420,000
Pool Design Services	\$1,245,000	\$250,000

New Business

- ***Recreation Programming and Facilities Study*** Director Croak gave an update and overview on the recently-completed Recreation Programming and Facilities Study. It was noted that all Committee members received a printed copy of this report for review. This study will serve as the template and roadmap for the Department for years to come. Future Capital Budget requests will be submitted using this study and the information contained within.
- ***Concerts on the Common - Committee Assistance*** The Department is looking to revamp the summer Concerts on the Common series. Director Croak noted that he would be looking for assistance from Committee members in the future for an onsite presence. Some ideas would be to potentially sell water to the public. Maybe have a table promoting upcoming events, etc. Director Croak noted that with only eight concerts over the course of the summer, it wouldn't be too much of a commitment to map out a volunteer schedule. Some initial concerns that would be solved with a Committee Member presence - inclement weather, power issues, band issues, commentary throughout, etc.

Old Business

- ***Update - Athletic Fields*** Fall Season kicked off on September 1. Fields are heavily being used, and Director Croak noted that he did his best to accommodate all groups. The loss of Bird Middle has had a minor effect on HS sports, which has forced games to take place at the 1A complex on Tuesdays and Thursdays, thus limiting youth group use further. Director Croak anticipates this to take place this upcoming spring and next fall, as well. Mr. Hickey noted that parking lot congestion continues to be an issue on heavily scheduled days.

This is the first year of using the grass portion of the complex, and so far, there have been no major complaints.

The concession stand and restroom support building will hopefully be completed in the next month or so. Director Croak is looking for ideas and feedback as to how to operate (in-house vs. user group). The Department has had internal discussions as to what will happen. Director Croak stated that as the staff talks through the various options, there are various hurdles and benefits to operating the building in-house vs. user group volunteers.

Director Croak stated that it is his intention to begin concession use in the spring season.

- ***Update - 300th Anniversary Committee*** The 300th Anniversary Committee meets next Tuesday to continue discussions. A rough calendar has been planned, and the Committee is in phases to secure a venue for a gala and to start assigning tasks for the major events that will take place throughout the year.

Public Comment

- Mr. Shea stated that minor bylaw changes for the Recreation Committee will be voted on at Fall Town Meeting. The minor changes will revise the current bylaws to better align with current practices.

Adjournment

- On a motion made by Vice-Chair Grant, seconded by Mr. Shea, the Committee voted 3-0-0 to adjourn at 7:09pm.