



RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 16, 2023 MEETING 5:30 PM
MINUTES

RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION –

In attendance: Jeanette Blackwell, Kristen Jensen, Harold Panciera, Sowgol Zakarian, Andrea Dallas, Lincoln Everest, Rogers Pylant, Dan Deconti, Matt Fraulino, Mahrang Danish

Absent: Philip Pessina

Staff: Cathy Lechowicz, Director

AGENDA:

Call Meeting to Order:

Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm

Modify Agenda:

Motion to amend the agenda so that the introduction of the new commissioners is at the beginning Councilwoman Blackwell and seconded by Kristen Jensen

Welcome of new commissioners:

Andrea Dallas, parent of MPS students and daughter of Senior Center member.

Harold Panciera, former teacher in MPS, former volunteer director of Prof Gallito basketball program.

Public Hearing:

No members of public in attendance

Approval of the Minutes:

Motion to approve December Meeting Minutes by Sowgol Zakarian and seconded by Mahrang Danish and Lincoln Everest. Approved unanimously.

Department Reports:

Senior programming has been quieter because of winter months. The center is ramping up for spring. March 1 will be busy for April signups. There are challenges in the building, as things are starting to break after 8 years. Planning to ask for additional money to address that in the new budget season. Challenges include: backflow issue in sprinkler, clog and compressor in one heatpump, boiler issue, alarm system. These have all been addressed except for the heatpump compressor, which is in process.

Two additional custodial positions have been added to support the Rec Center. There is currently one dedicated building super, who covers both Rec Center and Senior Center. He is primary custodian at Rec Center right now. One new position is program aide/custodian, 10am-6:30pm, grade 5. Evening position will also have pool certification for cleaning and chemical levels, grade 6. HR is moving on these as quickly as possible. Those should be posted within the next two weeks. Director Lechowicz to share job descriptions with the commission.

OLD BUSINESS:

Recreation Center update – Official open house will be March 10 at 5:00. Andrea Dallas has offered to assist with the open house. Soft opening in January has been going very well. Currently in winter season, session two is starting. On February 27, Spring, session one registration will start. Middletown residents will get one week preference over non-residents, based on feedback from service users. The pool will also be open in Spring session. Director Lechowicz shared live views of the programs currently running. Pool

will be cleaned next week and then aquatics staff training can begin. Mercy and Xavier have expressed interest in renting the pool, which would be revenue for Recreation.

ARPA funding – First official event with the money is an Art Excursion Trip on February 22, a family event bus trip to Wadsworth Atheneum. A mural will be painted on the Rec Center by Artolusion. A two-week intensive after-school program will include up to 30 students from Beman. Pop-up programs will happen throughout the community with the ARPA money, trying to reconnect people into the community. There are also funds to enhance what is already done, like having programming in the evening for our seniors. Everything needs to be accounted for by December 2024, but has to be spent by December 2025.

Budget Planning – Directive of no more than 5% increase over previous year's budget. Director Lechowicz will likely have to ask for more than that on the Senior Division. This is the first full year of programming post-pandemic and now in February, money is very tight. If the Senior Division wants to continue to provide programming as it is, the budget must be increased. This cannot be at the expense of our fixed-income seniors. Councilwoman Blackwell asked for more backstory so that she and Councilman Pessina can bring this to the Council.

Veterans' Pool – Director Lechowicz shared photos of the new Veterans' Pool. The original building has been kept. A glass vestibule is being added. Splash pad is being added. The splash pad will be free entry to all. One area is a zero degree entry, by the 18-inch children's area. There is a resistance walking area, a bench inside the pool to relax. Six-lane lap-swimming area. Also traditional stairs going into the pool.

Pool Fee Recommendations – Different fee structure for residents and non-residents. Fees have not changed since 1991. Surrounding town prices were consulted. Prices will have to increase. A pool pass will be available to check out at the library. Director Lechowicz shared a proposal of fee structure. Andrea Dallas asked about the capacity of the pool with residents and non-residents. In the past, the pool rarely met capacity. The City keeps capacity based on staffing, not area. The splash pad will be right there, if the pool is full. Rogers Pylant asked about concessions. The Division staffs and programs the pool, but it is up to Public Works to allow concessions. There will be follow-up in the March meeting. Family is up to 6 people living in a household. Mahrang Danish asked if there is a assistance to families who use state assistance. There are opportunities for people to get the pool pass from library, or there is a possibility that campers can get passes. Discussion ensued. Pricing will be reviewed at the end of each summer season. Motion to bring the pay scale to March council meeting made by Kristen Jensen with exploratory options for low-income families, Andrea Dallas seconded. The non-resident fee schedule is comparable for non-residents to neighboring towns. Non-resident adults should be twice as much as old fee. Approved by 8 commissioners. Harold Panciera did not vote/abstained.

NEW BUSINESS:

Sports Grants Process – Process to be tabled until March meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Next meeting is 3/16.

ADJOURNMENT

Andrea Dallas made a motion, Mahrang Danish seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:58pm.