

Recreation Commission Meeting

10/15/19

Beech Street Center

2019 NOV 14 PM 2:03

Commission Attendees: Anthony Ferrante, Marsha Semuels, Anne Helgen, Cortney Eldridge, Mary Bradley, Kim Haley-Jackson

Town Attendees: Jon Marshall, June Howell, Chris Costello

Guests: Kirk Varjian, Aleksandra Gosz, Christine Burke, Tomi Olson

Summer Programs (2019 recap)

Kirk and Aleks presented successes for 2019 kids' summer programs and improvement areas for 2020.

- Safety, happiness, fun are the top priorities
- Weekly enrollment of about 80 children
- There was a waiting list each week for camp
- Counselors were excellent and engaged over the summer
- Children managed their own whereabouts with dry erase boards and communication with staff
- Created buddy groups to promote camper and counselor responsibility
- Areas available to campers/staff at Wellington: Green playground, blue playground, arts & crafts, cafeteria, gym
- In 2020: more clearly define the activities and "stations" on more of a schedule, purchase new games (e.g., life-sized checkers, spike ball)
- In 2020: start field trips earlier
- In 2020: continue with and improve Monday morning staff meeting with counselors
- In 2020: continue to develop "older kids" activities for kids 8+

Stats

- 7 weeks in the summer
- Use school buildings (Wellington) and the pool (Underwood)
- 34 total staff, 26 each week
- Children are 4-12 years old

Underwood Pool (2019 recap)

Christine presented recap of 2019 summer pool use programs.

- Belmont Rec camp comes daily – once in the morning for kids who've signed up for lessons and once in the afternoon for free swim
- BASEC comes daily in the afternoon for free swim
- Staff of 43 lifeguards
- 3 head lifeguards (new position for 2019)
- BATS team used pool over the summer (and created maintenance impact for cleaning)
- Torpedoes swim team also practice at the pool in the summer
- Conducted staff performance evaluations at the end of the summer and provided feedback (positive and critical) to staff, which was well-received

Adult Program Update (2019 fall programs)

Jon provided update for 2019 fall adult programs.

- Starts 10/21 and runs through April: 20 weeks
- Costs to Rec Dept/Town are \$16,500 for 20 weeks
- Our expected income is \$13k, at this time
- We will not recover 100% of the costs this year and will unlikely recover all costs next year, as our expenses are higher with reduced facilities available during HS project

2019-2020 Rink Update

Jon & June provided 2019 rink pricing and schedule.

- Rink opening 11/1
- RFP will be delayed until December
- Will continue to pursue public/private partnership
- Punch passes (no "season passes") for rink:
 - \$10 drop in rate
 - 3 punch pass for \$15
 - 6 punch pass for \$25
 - 12 punch pass for \$40
 - Passes can be shared among family members (e.g., family of 4 can punch one card 4 times for one visit)

Discussion: Payson Park Bandstand

Guest: Tomi Olson

Follow up from September meeting: public meeting to present options for the BandStand.

- Payson Park music festival is in its 29th year
- 11 concerts held from June to August on Wednesdays (plus 4 kids concerts)
- All funds are privately raised (banks, daycares, other businesses in Belmont, Cultural Society, etc.)
- Concerts provide music for families, children, elderly
- Awarded \$5k for architect from CPC
 - Town Meeting said it looked like "a Farmstand" (CPC funding was not approved at Town Meeting in April 2019)
 - Concern neighbors had not been informed
 - Tomi held a meeting and only 2 neighbors attended
- Gazebo proposal
 - Must do site preparation
 - Low lights around bottom banister and in the back
- Three police reports were filed in 2019: 8/30/19 at 2am; 8/11/19 at 11pm, 5/4/19

Q/Comment: Agree with all that Tomi said in how great this is for the town, but do not support bandstand. Created petition opposing structure and was able to achieve 31 signatures in 23 homes. The need does not justify the cost; this is needed during only "rainy days"; if this is needed all 11 concert days, the bandstand sits empty and unused 350 other days in the year; we currently have beer cans, cigarette butts in our gardens and this will only get worse with a private covered space; we think a

reasonable alternative is a summer tent that is erected either for each concert, only when it rains, or at the beginning of the summer and is taken down at the end of the summer.

Q/Comment: I am an abutter and was not notified of the structure. Everybody loves the concerts, we just don't want the structure. It will not enhance the concerts.

Q/Comment: I have had eggs thrown at my house.

Q/Comment: I love the concerts, and have been doing 25 years of small acts of maintenance in the park, like trimming bushes and mending fences. I am opposed to the structure. Folks hang out in the park on Saturday nights. They're quiet and don't disturb folks. I think the funds spent on Payson Park should be spent on maintenance and improving the park, not a bandstand.

Q/Comment: I am not opposed to the structure, but confused why structure would cover the band and not patrons. Will they stay out in the rain? What's the cost of structure and maintenance?

Anthony: What is the cost of the structure?

Tomi: \$90k -- \$40k site work and \$50k for the structure, lighting to enhance visibility

Q/Comment: Park needs maintenance; funds are better spent on maintaining quality of the park

Q/Comment: We have a Hatch Shell (downtown) and people sit out in the rain. There's a gazebo in Lexington and people sit out in the rain. Can we consider a simpler, temporary [seasonal] structure instead?

Q/Comment: We should support this.

Tomi note: The Reminisants have been rescheduled to the Beech St Center on 12/27 from 3-5pm

Q/Comment: There are safety concerns everywhere [in the park]. We'd love to spend the money elsewhere [to improve safety].

Q: Does this proposed structure fit the platform that's already there?

A: Yes

Q/Comment: What would a temporary (summer-long) structure cost?

Anthony (to neighbors): It may be worthwhile to take a broad look at the park, understand the use case(s), and potentially propose a CPC project that improve the concerns you have about the park.

Anthony: No motion/further discussion tonight on Payson Park/Bandstand. Meeting adjourned.