

Amherst Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes
Zoom Public Meeting
January 20, 2021

Present Becky Demling, Youssef Fadel, Stephanie Jackson, Carolyn Mailler, Sarah Marshall, and Meg Rosa (Chair)

Absent Victor Nunez-Ortiz

Staff Barb Bilz, Recreation Director
Marion Jordan, Marketing and Registration Coordinator

Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

Minutes

- The minutes of the Commission meetings from December 16, 2020 were approved as amended by a unanimous vote.

Public Comment: None

Logo Submissions

- Barb Bilz and Marion Jordan presented the logos and the votes they each received from staff and the Commission. The community will now have an opportunity to vote for their favorite submission from this group. Voting will take place between January 25 – February 8.
- Questions and comments from the Commission:
 - How will it be advertised?
 - Social media, website, email and through the schools (as suggested by Becky Demling).
 - There was a suggestion that the Amherst, MA be included in whatever logo is selected.
 - Some of the logos can be modified by the artist to include actual activities that we are doing.

Website and Rec Trac Update

- Marion Jordan reported that on the status of updates to the Amherst Recreation website and to RecTrac. She stated that we will be now have a mobile friendly registration site. She asked the Commission to inform her of any “LSSE” references as they scroll through the new sites.

Cherry Hill

- The *draft* Charge was sent to the Town Manager for his review. He will present the charge and ask the public to apply to be members of the committee at the next Town Council meeting on January 25th.

Winter Aquatics Programming

- The winter aquatics program is on hold due to repairs/replacements that are needed on the filter system at Middle School Pool. Barb Bilz stated she is hopeful that Amherst Recreation will be able to start an aquatics program in March.
- Carolyn Mailler suggested that the Department might consider opening the outdoor pools earlier this year especially if we are unable to run an indoor pool season. Barb said she would consider this but staffing could be an issue. She suggested it could possibly be done at one of the pools on weekday afternoons and weekends in June.

Child Care/Remote Learning Assistance Program and Other Outreach Programming

- We continue to work with the EEC to open another site at the Middle School. This site will serve an additional 18-20 children. We had a successful site inspection on January 6, 2021 and we anticipate opening in the near future.

WinterFest Presents: Ice Sculptures on the Common – A Drive Through Experience

- This socially distanced event will take place on February 5-6, from 5-6 p.m. There will be 11 life size ice carvings set on pedestals on the Town Common. Traffic will be routed around Boltwood Ave and cars will circle around to the Common to view the ice carvings. The public is also welcome to view the carvings at their leisure at any time.
- Mascots from various businesses and colleges will be present to greet participants.
- Publicity and fundraising are currently underway for this event.
- Becky Demling asked that at least one of the ice carvings be placed by the bus stop by Spring Street.
- It was also suggested that we encourage the public to patronize drive-by food pick up at local restaurants during the event. Barb stated that this was an excellent idea and that she would pass that suggestion on to the Executive Director of the BID.

Director's Report

Sports

- The start date for the Skills Development Basketball Program at Pelham Elementary School, was moved to January 12.

Parks Engagement Program

- Winter Walks with Amherst Recreation is a new program that activates Mill River Recreation Area and Groff Park with multiple winter friendly activities for families. (see attachment)

Aquatics

- I continue to work with APRS provide lap and possibly open swim at the Middle School at some later this winter or in the spring. There are some maintenance issues at the pool that must be addressed before we can use the facility. I have begun the process of recruiting staff for this program.

Golf Course

- A draft charge for the Cherry Hill Advisory Committee has been sent to the Town Manager for review/approval. This committee will examine operations, facilities, and management at Cherry Hill.

Primetime Child Care Program

- Our State's EEC inspection for the expansion of our childcare program (second location) took place on January 6. All licensing documentation requirements for expansion have been submitted to EEC.
- The new site is scheduled to open the third week of January.

Adult and Youth Education

- Winter Adult/Youth Education Classes include:
 - Fit to the Core – Exercise program for teens and adults - via Zoom
 - Los Amigos and Fun Club - Adult special needs programming via Zoom
 - ART – Ventures for Kids – Ages K-5

Special Events – WinterFest

- We are working with the BID and Chamber to host *Ice Sculptures on the Common – A Drive Through Event*. This event will consist of 11+ animal ice sculptures and appearances by Flakey and other local mascots. Marketing and fundraising are underway.

Strategic Planning

Name Change

- We received a number of logo submissions from local artists. The top five will be part of a community wide contest to select the new logo. The purpose of the contest is to engage the community around the name change.
- Multiple communications via social media related to our history, reasons for the change, and expectations continue to go out to educate the public.

Website Upgrade

- IT and my staff have completed the upgrades to the website the last week of December. Website address is amherstmarec.org
- IT and my staff also started the process of launching Rectrac 3.1 which will greatly improve the registration process for the community.

Current LSSE Staff Duties

- Grace Marczuk – Child Care Program Coordinator
- Nikki Abelli – Child Care Program Coordinator of the second program; Outreach; Special Events
- Donna Woods – Minute taking for essential meetings of other department committees (as assigned); Child Care Program; TOA Accounting Department, Amherst Rec Finances
- Marion Jordan – IT Department, COVID-19 website and other assistance as needed; Zoom Meeting Coordinator; Child Care Program
- Nick Walas –Sports Programs; Child Care Program

Next Meeting

- The next scheduled meeting of Amherst Recreation Commission will be on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 6:00. This will be a Zoom public meeting.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.