

Amherst Recreation Commission

Minutes of January 10, 2022

Present: Youssef Fadel, Sanjay Arwade, Matt Cain, Carolyn Mailler, Sarah Marshall, Rey Harp (Director)

Absent: Victor Nunez Ortiz

Others in attendance: None

The meeting, conducted remotely by Zoom, was called to order by Rey Harp at 6:02 p.m.

- Rey discussed the role of commission chair: put together meeting agenda, run meeting, liaison between town and commission
- Matt Cain will take minutes for this meeting
- No public comment
- December minutes approved

Rey will send out his monthly report on all programs. Currently in the budgeting process

- Cherry Hill did well in 2021
- General program activity down because of pandemic restrictions; numbers are down in many programs and some programs were canceled
- Pool numbers are down because of COVID capacity restrictions. Pools need capital improvements. Mill River pool relining work was funded but has not been done yet.
- Have been level funded for a while, will need to increase funding to cover rising costs
- Goal is to find ways to increase revenue wherever possible and increase program value also
- Carolyn: Consider increasing pool revenue by raising fees for out-of-town swimmers. This could have the added benefit of alleviating the overcrowding that we've experienced during adult lap swimming for the past two summers
- There is currently a waitlist for swimming lessons due to other towns closing their pools; perhaps Amherst residents should have priority, e.g. allow reservations earlier
- Sanjay: previously there was a ~\$10k budget request to study Cherry Hill winter revenue potential. Would like a cost estimate on keeping Cherry Hill club house heated to 45F through the winter and / or access to storage space

COVID Omicron effects:

- Some staff out for COVID
- Had to delay the start of swim lessons 4 weeks of an 8 week season because kids can't be social distanced in swim lessons. Also staffing is very tight.

- WinterFest being cancelled / changed: Ice sculpture drive-by, cardboard classic canceled, luminaria canceled. Commissioners pushed back against canceling:
 - Let Amherst Health Department make the decision - consistent town policy
 - Amherst has high vaccination rates
 - Outside activities should be encouraged

Winter sessions started:

- Basketball
- Lap swim
- Enrichment
- After-school
- Vacation program registration open (50% capacity)

Youth Center feasibility study starting

- Visit Springfield South Side center. Determine stakeholders.
- Determine who will drive the feasibility study

Regarding skating rink

- Sarah: Town Common might be appropriate
- Carolyn: Groff Park?
- Sanjay: Confident that donations of equipment and labor would be forthcoming

CPA Committee:

- Recommendations submitted to council
- Rec priorities much as expected. High school track decision deferred, awaiting revised cost estimates. Crocker Playground funded for a lower amount. Plumbrook less because water cannon outside CPA mandate

Rey will send Invitation to Age and Dementia Committee

Next meeting tentatively scheduled for 6pm Monday Feb 28

Meeting adjourned by Ray Harp at 7:44pm

Submitted by Matthew Cain