

Amherst Recreation Commission
Minutes of December 6, 2021

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

Absent: Victor Nunez Ortiz

Others in attendance: Nikki Abelli (staff, Special Events)

The meeting, conducted remotely by Zoom, was called to order by Rey Harp at 6:03 p.m.

- Rey asked for volunteers to Chair and take minutes. Matt volunteered to take minutes, Rey to continue acting as Chair
- Review and Approve November Minutes
- No one present for public comment
- Sarah gave an update on CPAC discussions. CPAC has been meeting weekly but no votes yet; expect votes this week. CPAC is also concerned about high school track orientation, Doug Slaughter investigating re-orienting track. CPAC generally agreed with Rec Commission priorities for Rec proposals but not sure about Rec balance vs Affordable housing etc. Lights at Hickory Ridge might not be appropriate since the park is currently closed at dark.

Remainder of discussion was Rey presenting a report on all programs

- Department hiring is now complete
- Nikki Abelli gave a report on special events:
 - Merry Maple
 - Build Your Own Gingerbread kits
 - Winter Solstice story time w/ Library @ Kendrick Park (first of series)
 - WinterFest w/ BID: Luminaria, Sled building, Polar Bear Splash at Middle School, Grand Finale (Schedule to be finalized end of December)
 - Ice Sculpture Festival.
 - Sanjay commented that Amherst Nordic will organize something for the WinterFest Grand Finale if there's snow on the ground.
 - Youssef: Perhaps the Ice Sculpture Festival should be wrapped into WinterFest.
- Sanjay asked whether Amherst Nordic can have access to Cherry Hill clubhouse for storage. Also interested in helping finance a porta-potty and heating the clubhouse through the winter if feasible.
- Rey commented that there has been interest in town for an ice skating rink (and skate park). Sanjay suggests Kendrick Park since it is central, close to refreshments and the playground has been so successful. The challenge might be maintaining the rink rather

than building it but there could be volunteers to maintain it as volunteers regularly clear parts of Puffer's Pond

- The Suburban Basketball League has started. A little short on the Girls side. New sports director Jose will be investigating ways to increase girls' involvement
- Cherry Hill closed 11/14 for the season. Rey is investigating possible of use for other programming
- Aquatics underway
- PrimeTime at Crocker Farm has had smaller enrollment than pre-pandemic. Gradually increasing.
- Community Theater not putting on a show this winter
- Rey is still getting his head around the budget situation although there doesn't seem to be significant problems.
- Rey is starting to review the strategic plan and all the ideas within. Will especially be looking at software as three registration systems are currently used; Rey would like to consolidate payment, registration, scheduling. Also will review the fee levels and structure to ensure affordability while also charging market rates .
- Rey just found out about \$500k + \$200k ARPA funding for a youth center, to be planned by end 2024, spent by end 2026. It will be a good idea to talk to the Boy's & Girl's Club to look for ways to work together, also the Community Safety Working Group as they were involved in recommending this funding.
- Rey is looking to fill the last open Rec Commission spot
- Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 6:00pm Jan 10th.
- Meeting adjourned by Ray Harp at 7:20pm

Submitted by Matthew Cain