

TOWN OF DEERFIELD
Parks & Recreation Commission
December 6, 2017

Call to Order

6:00 pm: Chairman Shute called the meeting to order

Present: Jeff Shute, Chairman; Dwight Barnes, Nate Brown, Julie DeCosta, Bryan Giard, Amy Harrington, and Melissa Robertson Members

Also Present: Nick Lawrence, Director

Minutes - November 2017

_____ **Motion:** M. Robertson moves the minutes as written

_____ **Second:** J. DeCosta

_____ **Vote:** Yea 7, Nay 0, Abstained 0 - Motion Carries

Citizens Comments

Jeff D'Agostino, Reservation Rd, introduced himself. He noted that the Commission planned to discuss Travel Soccer at the meeting and suggested that a Focus Group be formed to first assess the Town's wants and needs and to identify the various needs and costs associated with a Travel Program before jumping into forming any Programs.

Commission Members agreed to reorder the planned agenda in order to discuss Travel Soccer first with Mr. D'Agostino's input.

Travel Soccer

Chairman Shute opened by saying that Parks and Recreation has historically focused on recreational sports. Regarding a Travel Soccer program, he was unsure whether Deerfield has the numbers to field and fully support a competitive Travel Team and wants to be sensitive to any drain a Travel Team would have on the Recreational Program. J. DeCosta agreed with Mr. D'Agostino's point that parent support and buy in will be the most critical element in any success or failure.

Mr. D'Agostino spoke that he has been following the local interest in Travel Soccer for about a year and, as with all leagues, parent buy in, support, and full commitment is needed. He added that having an independent Committee to lead the Program, as opposed to it being run by Parks and Recreation, would be important. He stressed the importance of thoughtfully forming the *foundation* for the Program before any talk about being competitive. Members discussed the need to establish feeder programs whereby local young athletes could serve as coaches and referees for Recreational programs. Mr. D'Agostino noted that step one is to talk to your customer (the Community) and clearly identify what it is they really want. He noted several bigger issues that will need to be addressed, i.e. fields, before launching a Program, and suggested forming a Focus group to return to the Commission with a Needs Analysis and Gap Assessment. He stressed that anyone expecting a one year "flip the switch and go" is only setting the kids up for failure.

D. Barnes thanked Mr. D'Agostino for his common sense approach to the topic. He described his familie's personal experience with the Candia Travel Program and echoed the concern as to whether Deerfield is big enough to support its own Travel Program. It was noted that several neighboring Towns, including Candia, Auburn and Nottingham, pull athletes from Deerfield to fill its rosters. N. Brown discussed the potential for a collaboration with the Candia whereby Candia might send Recreation players at the younger levels to Deerfield in exchange for Deerfield athletes competing with its Travel Program. Mr. D'Agostino noted that sometimes out of Town travel relationships can impact the Middle School teams negatively if athletes are leaving one practice to head to another.

It was agreed that Mr. D'Agostino will spearhead a Community Focus Group and look to generate a Community Survey to be distributed in late January. The Commission will review and agree on the right questions to be posed at its January meeting. Everyone thanked Mr. D'Agostino for coming in to discuss the topic.

Coffee House Recap

J. DeCosta reported that the Coffee House raised \$1,250 for the Scholarship Fund with 106 people attending. The event was a big success.

Holiday Lighting Contest

Nick confirmed that the Holiday Lighting Contest will be held again. Judging will occur on December 17th. Last year John Dubianski took the After School Clubhouse kids around to judge, but with a Sunday judging that will not work this year. Members were in favor of arranging for Seniors to be taken around Town to judge. Nick will approach Jodi's Senior Fitness class to see if there is an interest. The competition categories will be 1) Most Spectacular; 2) Simply Elegant; and 3) Most Creative. The Commission will look to solicit gift cards from local businesses, The Lion, Blue Bowl, Country Munch, etc.

Document Storage & Event Calendar

J. DeCosta suggested that Parks and Recreation should identify an agreed upon means of storing information on past events including flyers, team rosters, etc. It seems that historical items fall off of the Town Website. Nick confirmed there is a shared drive that is used and will look at creating an archive, of materials. There are a limited number of slots available for posting on the website and so historically information is replaced when posting new pieces, he will discuss with IT how to deepen the archive or alternatives for keeping historical pages accessible. A. Harrington also asked that the Department look to create some sort of shared calendar and link it to the Facebook page if possible in order to communicate upcoming events to the Community in one central location. Nick will work with IT to identify a solution.

Hartford Brook Update

M. Robertson suggested putting a communication/promotional piece out to the Community with an update on the project and accounting of where the Warrant Article monies have been spent, thanking everyone who has been involved thus far. The dugouts are complete, a big thank you to Jack Hutchinson! Fencing and backstop work is in progress and a quick turnaround is expected. The fencing work will exhaust the remainder of the Warrant Article and the next items will begin to utilize the Grant monies. Nick is arranging a site visit/inspection with Bill Geigas from the State of New Hampshire to determine next steps.

In other field updates, Nick has been in touch with Butch Brown in order to winterize the buildings at Bicentennial and Hartford Brook. The irrigation winterization has been complete. E. Roberts is also looking into the security light settings at Bicentennial.

Celtics/Red Sox Trips

Nick has contacts with each Organization, in the past selling all tickets has presented a challenge. Group rates come with a minimum purchase of 50 tickets. The Red Sox trips are well received, but it was suggested a survey be put out to gauge interest in the Celtics. It was agreed the trips sell better when transportation is provided. Nick will work on securing tickets and transport for a Red Sox trip. D. Barnes suggested looking at UNH Athletics as an alternative venue. His son works with the University arranging group sales, he will forward contact information to Nick.

Winter Carnival

M. Robertson recalled that the 2017 Winter Carnival was difficult as many people were away for February break and the warm weather was problematic. She suggested moving the date forward a week in February. The wagon rides were a hit, the ice rink was difficult to hold together. It was suggested that perhaps the School be looked at as a venue for 2018, allowing for skating on Freese Pond and using the Cross Country Trail for snowshoeing and/or skiing. The Commission will plan to make final event decisions in January and February meetings based on the

season's weather.

Other Winter/Spring Events

J. DeCosta suggested that the Commission look to do a Spring fundraiser with an adult dance and band at the Legion. Chairman Shute suggested that it could be coordinated alongside the Winter Carnival. J. DeCosta will check with the Legion and a band or DJ. M. Robertson suggested that Commission members should each solicit a sponsor to cover the cost of the hall and entertainment.

Recreation Commission Officers

Chairman Shute suggested that in addition to a Chairman the Commission should also have a Vice Chairman.

Motion: M. Robertson moves to nominate Dwight Barnes as Vice Chairman

Second: J. DeCosta

Vote: Yea 6, Nay 0, Abstained 1 - Motion Carries

Chairman Shute asked that Members continue to consider serving in the role of Chairman, he will look to pass the torch next year.

Other

M. Robertson noted that the last 5 year plan was compiled in 2013 and suggested it would be timely to take stock and reassess the Department's direction for the coming five years. Chairman Shute asked Members to pull together ideas for the five year plan and bring them to the January meeting to formalize.

B. Giard asked how Basketball Registration has gone, Nick confirmed that registrations were strong with over 60 kids. There were many athletes who came in very late or past the deadline which made scheduling and team coordination extremely difficult. Because some of the team rosters were large, with 15 or 16 players, the League has approved extending game times to allow for more playing time.

The Hoops Classic is taking shape, there were 43 teams at the Tournament in 2017 and the goal for 2018 is to secure 50. The 8th Grade has agreed to take on concessions for the tournament. N. Brown spoke that the success of the tournament rooted firmly in the overall experience. The lighting, music, announcing and t-shirt toss that Joe had previously orchestrated made for amazing event and is the reason so many teams register each year. Tim Griffin has volunteered to assist with his sound and light system.

J. DeCosta asked whether Parks & Recreation continues to offer scholarships for families who are unable to afford program registration costs. N. Lawrence responded that he has never been approached with that sort of ask, but would certainly be open to discussing if/when the need presents.

B. Giard asked about the Holiday Lights at the gazebo, M. Robertson responded that historically those have been handled by Mark Tibbetts.

N. Brown congratulated Member Giard for officially qualifying for the 2019 Boston Marathon.

Adjournment

Motion: N. Brown moves to adjourn the December 2017 meeting

Second: M. Robertson

Vote: Yea 7, Nay 0, Abstained 0 - Motion Carries

Next Meeting Wednesday, January 3rd @ 6:00pm

The Minutes were Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katherine A. Libby, Recording Secretary.

Pending Approval by the Parks & Recreation Commission