

RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES: 9/9/07

Present: Commissioner, Sandy Dewing; Chair, Brenda Worrell; Secretary, Sharon Hart; Rec Director, Diane Wheeler; Commissioner, Larry Murphy; Commissioner, Susan Beattie; Commissioner, Guil Spenser

SUMMER REC:

Going forward, Diane expressed the need to make several program changes based on experiences throughout the summer and over the course of several summers:

- There will be no more 100% covered scholarships awarded to camp programs: the pool of money will be split among more families based on need
- Eliminate the position of CIT (Counselor in Training). Often these youngsters do not have the maturity or understanding of what's required to deal with the responsibilities of aiding the older counselors and end up becoming more of a burden in management to the senior staff. The goal is to hire UNH summer interns for coverage (or older counselors)
- This year's cutbacks in State Park funding, which eliminated lifeguards, forced the Director to seek alternative programming. One positive trip that came from that change: Coco Keys. Also, the trips to Six Flags and Harold Parker have been cancelled for the future. Diane will offer reduced rate Water Country passes at the Rec Office for families in town, however, the former offer of families joining the campers on the trip will no longer be an option. There was much confusion over supervision of children with families. The trip will now leave via bus from the school. Diane anticipates offering more beach day trips, weather permitting.

1. **Part-time:** 122 campers attended part-time summer rec camp this year. Diane relayed many concerns about negative encounters with parents regarding abuse of camp rules including: drop-off and pick-up times; (one) camp cancellation due to weather; field trip sign-ups. Parents were confrontational and abusive to counselors and directors. Diane also shared that she received many staff complaints about managing the part-time camp : scheduling/planning counselor ratios to cover those campers not attending field trips and managing the fluid attendance. She also conveyed the complications that tracking payments presents when field trips are elective. Diane suggested some alternatives to the current part-time camp dilemmas to include:

- Separate staffs for all three camps: Part-time, Full-time and Little Nippers
- A (5) day part-time camp schedule to include: (3) ½-days and (2) field trips. On field trip days, there would be NO on-site camp alternatives offered. Parents would be required to commit to two-week increments—with a pre-paid, non-refundable, set fee to cover all field trips and camp days. Campers whose tuition

- for the two weeks was not paid, would not be able to continue in successive weeks
- Commission voted to hold (2) mandatory Camp Pre-registration meetings for parents to hear camp rules and sign the regulations agreement. Parents who did not attend one of the meetings would not be entitled to have their child participate in any of the camps. Diane discussed many infractions that occurred over the course of the summer and the Commission supported the need to address parental behavior and treatment of staff with a course of action:
 - Commission voted to establish an on-line formal complaint process: parents will be able to complete a form on-line, email it to the Commission. The Commission would have to review the complaint and turn around a decision within 48 hours of receipt. This would deflect much of the evaluative burden from Diane and her staff
 - Commission voted to establish a policy to contact the police if a child is not picked up by a certain time-frame or if a child is dropped off to participate in a field trip that they had not properly pre-registered for
 - Rec Commission suggested implementing a steep late pick-up violation fee, to dissuade tardy pick-ups. Also, any unpaid, accrued tardy payments, would disqualify campers from continuing in a successive 2-week timeframe. In addition, Diane would make it mandatory that all before and after care fees be pre-paid
 - Commission adopted a no tolerance stance for rules abuses
2. **Full-time:** 36 campers attended summer camp this summer. Diane shared that the camp experience was much easier to run and manage on the part of staff. The one-time fee set-up left little room for confusion about whether campers would be in attendance or not. Tuition for this camp produces almost half of the revenue collected to maintain the program. This camp was a positive experience for all and it was considered an important daycare initiative in keeping with the changing demands and needs of the community and the working parent. Consistency was the biggest plus for this camp. Diane expressed a need to hire 1-2 more counselors next year for adequate coverage.
3. **Little Nippers:** 22 campers attended Session 1 and 21 attended Session 2, summer camp this year. Overall, the experience was a success and popularity for the program continues to grow. Diane is suggesting making the camp 5 days/week

BUDGET OVERVIEW:

Diane reviewed the budget and announced Summer Rec's first year finish in the black.

Diane expected a **15%** health insurance cost this year. Future Summer Rec staff budgets will utilize monies taken from the Revolving Account. Some of the initiatives Diane would like to see Revolving account money applied to include:

- The need was expressed and unanimously supported by the Commission, for Diane to seek a part-time recreation assistant (15-20 hours weekly) mostly for

attendance coverage and programming venues. The cost for this extra staff person could come from the Revolving fund

- Adding a landscaper to manage and maintain Dearborn grounds (to include weeding, watering, etc: \$3600).
- Transportation van, to cover program trips/activities for smaller parties. In the past, trips of this type (ex: to shows in Portland, Boston) have had to be cancelled because the minimum participation to warrant bus rental fees was not met. Cost: \$10,000-15,000.00.
- Resurfacing the tennis courts at Dearborn. Also, new court screens: Diane will write a warrant article for this initiative

OTHER PROGRAMMING

- The Commission was impressed by the production quality and professional look of the most recent program brochure
- Larry Murphy suggested teaming up with a new chain sporting retailer moving into the area to offer an all-day Learn to Fish program for the whole family. The goal would be to offer themed workshops on elements of fishing experience: casting; rod, lure, bait selection; Fish & Game rules and licensing; identifying fish, etc.