

ONEONTA, NEW YORK - DECEMBER 3, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION PG. 1

PRESENT: Chair Tim Catella
Commissioner Cynthia McCarthy
Commissioner Geoff Davis
Commissioner Stephen Pindar
Council Member David Rissberger

ABSENT: Commissioner Gary Dilello

Chair Catella called the regular meeting to order and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Chair Catella stated that Commissioner Dilello was excused due to having activities at the Boys and Girls Club.

PETITIONERS

Chair Catella stated there were no petitioners.

Recreation Director Andrews introduced intern Christina Crowell and said she had finished her project to help promote the living memorials in the park. He said she did a great job.

Ms. Crowell stated from the project the Living Memorials binder was created and she would present that for the commission's review. She said the binder was for anyone to look at who wanted to purchase a tree and read the information they needed to know about the project.

The commission held a brief discussion on the matter and viewed the binder.

Chair Catella thanked Ms. Crowell and he said the binder was very professionally done.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION, made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner McCarthy, that the commission approves the minutes of the regular meeting held on November 5, 2012

Voting Ayes: Chair Catella
Commissioner McCarthy
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Pindar

Noes: None

Absent: Commissioner Dilello

MOTION CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE

City Clerk Koury reported on the following correspondence that has been entered as received:

•The following letter was received from Brendan Fallon, Campaign Manager, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Upstate New York Chapter, 457 State Street, Binghamton, NY 13901, dated November 16, 2012:

“Parks and Recreation Commission

Dear Commission Members:

On behalf of the NMSS Upstate NY Chapter, I would like to request the use of the skate house, roadways, and restrooms in Neahwa Park for the 2013 Walk MS scheduled for Sunday, May 5, 2013. We would need access to these facilities from approximately 7 a.m. until 2 p.m.

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(Correspondence) continued

Last year was our most successful event in Oneonta. We attracted nearly 350 people and raised \$26,000 for programs and research. We look forward to replicating that success in Neahwa Park this year.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Very sincerely,"

Recreation Director Andrews stated the commission usually approved this request in the past because it was outside of the pavilion reservation schedule. He said this was just an informational item and did not need any action by the commission. He said he had scheduled MS to do their walk in the park.

OLD BUSINESS

- Update on investigation of summer program fees/recommendations

Chair Catella stated the commission did receive a fee schedule with some increases for other parks related facilities and activities. He said as far as the summer youth program, Recreation Director Andrews requested and was granted a little more time before making his recommendations. He said Recreation Director Andrews would like to give some more consideration to the matter. He said along with City Manager Long's assistance Recreation Director Andrews did a fees and charges schedule that was distributed. He said that needed to be discussed by the commission and either make or not make a recommendation on it. He said confronted with the situation that the city was in this was one of the departments that had the opportunity to generate some revenue rather than cut. He said this may alleviate some operational cuts for Recreation Director Andrews if he could increase some revenues.

City Manager Long stated as the Chair knows the City Council was considering the budget for 2013 and the city still had about a half-million dollar deficit the way the budget was presently structured. He said he was sure the commission heard talk about the 'fiscal cliff' on the federal budget. He said there was also a fiscal cliff in the City of Oneonta and it appeared that in about 1.5 years the city would run out of its fund balance, which was what had been used to fund the shortfall for the last several years. He said one of the items the Mayor has challenged him with was to try to come up with what the Mayor calls a structural deficit reduction plan, which was trying to rebalance some of the things here. He said it may not be a lot of dollars and cents but he thought it started to send the message and was a start to look at some trends and opportunities. He said the city invested a lot of money into its parks and recreation programs, had a lot of people using them, it seemed to be a very well structured and organized department and the city wanted to keep it going. He said he thought the idea here was to try to take a look at some of the small changes that could happen now and then over the next couple years looking to additional changes that could hopefully make some more additional revenues.

Recreation Director Andrews stated as City Manager Long said the city was facing a lot of challenges. He said he thought the opportunity they had now was to look at everything that they do and how they do it and analyze what was working, may not be working and where changes could be made. He said he thought there was an opportunity to take a holistic look at parks and recreation and look to move it forward. He asked if there were any questions on the fees and charges for the Recreation Department.

The commission held a brief discussion on the schedule of fees and charges that was distributed.

Chair Catella asked about where the proposed schedule goes after the commission.

(Old Business) continued

City Manager Long replied the schedule would go to the Finance/Administration Committee next. He said Director of Finance Hungerford had also been involved with the schedule when they met with Recreation Director Andrews. He said there was basically a list of all the fees throughout the entire city and this would be included in that package.

City Manager Long stated he has had a preliminary meeting with the Oneonta Town Supervisor and they talked about trying to get this aligned when it was first proposed and the idea was that the city would charge people who did not live in the city and there were some negotiations. He said the idea was to try to work between the city and town residents as one combined group would not have big increases. He said the city was trying to target the people who live outside of the city and town. He said it was something the city wanted to be a little more thoughtful about. He said hopefully it would be in place for this spring.

MOTION, made by Chair Catella and seconded by Commissioner Davis, that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends approval to the Finance/Administration Committee of the fees and charges schedule proposed for 2013.

Voting Ayes: Chair Catella
Commissioner McCarthy
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Pindar
Noes: None
Absent: Commissioner Dilello

MOTION CARRIED

- Update on master plan

City Manager Long stated one of the issues that came up was the proposal to update the comprehensive parks master plan. He said the Finance/Administration Committee authorized it and the Common Council approved doing both the update of the Master Plan and also do the redesign of the entrance into the park area itself by the L A Group. He said those two projects will move forward at this time. He said as part of this comprehensive master plan they will take a look at the whole operation of the parks as well. He explained the process for doing the update.

Chair Catella stated he understood that in that master plan one of the components was the evaluation of the dog park.

City Manager Long stated they were going to be looking at operations and come back with a master plan with some ideas of conceptual areas of where it should be and possibly some budget numbers. He said the next step would then be to take a look at a specific project.

Chair Catella stated part of what the dog park sub-committee did was put together locations and a report on what they thought it would cost. He said his understanding from the Mayor was that the LA Group's first initial look at it was the costs looked like they were pretty much in the area where they should be and it came down to more of how to place it and work with other fields.

City Manager Long stated they would consider it as one of the components of the overall plan.

Commissioner Davis asked if the commissioners could get copies of the existing master plan.

City Clerk Koury stated he would see if he could get some extra copies.

(Old Business) continued

Recreation Director Andrews stated the Engineering Department should have the original.

- Update on the Cornell Cooperative Extension invasive species awareness training

Recreation Director Andrews stated he attended the training with David Cox from the Cornell Cooperative Extension and they also spent some time out in the parks tagging about 15 trees identifying them as Ash trees that could be destroyed by the Emerald Ash Borer. He said it was a good session and there was good participation with about 8 people in attendance. He said Mr. Cox said he would work on some more identification tagging perhaps in the spring.

Chair Catella stated another item was the Pit Run setup and road closure. He said that event's committee's next meeting would be December 11th and those items would be on that agenda. He said he would follow-up with the commissioners at the January meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Catella stated before hearing the Recreation Director Andrews' report he said he did mention in an email recently that one topic that came up when City Manager Long, Recreation Director Andrews and he met that there were still two groups, the Men's Summer Basketball League and the Adult Soccer League, that currently use park facilities and do not provide certificates of insurance meeting the city limits. They provide waivers. He said that was a concern and it was decided to see how the commissioners felt about that.

The commission held a brief discussion on the matter and the use of waivers.

Chair Catella stated there was time before either of these programs start and he questioned if it was worth their investigating and finding out more about what organizations were behind them and talk to them about it.

City Manager Long stated as the city's manager he would probably say that no one should use city fields unless they had adequate protection. He said that was why the ordinances and requirements were there. He said in today's society it was easy enough to get insurance and get sued. He said he thought this was a good opportunity for the city to try to make it even on everyone's part.

Chair Catella suggested that the organizational structures of the programs be checked and ask them what the groups thought about the matter. He said the commission could make a recommendation at the January meeting and he thought that would be that the city would require insurance from them.

- Recreation Director's Report

Recreation Director Andrews gave the following report:

Parks Commission Updates December 3, 2012

Program and parks update

- *Preparations for winter programs have begun. Adult volleyball team registration has opened and I'm confident we will be at capacity again this year. We will continue to offer public ice skating this winter (weather permitting), however there are several changes being proposed.*
- *Parks staff is into the winter work schedule and have begun various projects and seasonal work including holiday decorations.*
- *Wilber Pool Bathhouse- no update on status of application from state.*

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(Recreation Director Andrews' Report) continued

Volunteering/internships

- *The two fall interns from SUNY Oneonta have both completed their respective projects; Christina Crowell is here tonight to show us her final project including the Living Memorials binder. Thanks again to both of them for all their efforts.*
- *I have interviewed and selected Sean Blau for a spring internship. He's a SUNY Oneonta Business/Economics major and will be working on designing excel spreadsheets for 2013 projects and assisting with coordinating the 6th annual MLB Pitch, Hit, and Run.*
- *This spring we will have 3 SUNY Oneonta students working on various parks and recreation department projects through a federal work study grant."*

There being no further business to come before the commission, Chair Catella adjourned the regular meeting at approximately 7:45 p.m.

JAMES R. KOURY, City Clerk

JRK/pab