

ONEONTA, NEW YORK - JUNE 4, 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.

PETITIONERS

Chair Catella recognized petitioner Mike Menafra.

Mr. Mike Menafra stated he was employed at Total Tennis in Saugerties. He said he was looking to get use of a tennis court for a fee to give lessons. He said in the winter he would be taking his students indoors at Paul van der Sommen's tennis courts. He said he did not expect much for the first season and would be surprised if he used 3 to 5 hours on one court per week. He said he had one or 2 people on hold until he got permission from the commission. He said he was hoping to build it up to 5 to 10 hours per week on a court next year but he did not know what the tennis population was here. He said he could provide references from his former or present employer.

Chair Catella stated to summarize what he heard was that Mr. Menafra was looking to give professional tennis lessons for a fee on a city court.

Mr. Menafra responded yes.

Chair Catella stated the tennis courts had no fee structure. He asked if the commission has ever had someone ask to use park facilities for a profit before.

Commissioner Davis responded yes, it was a former Oneonta high school student who wanted to run a soccer goal keeping clinic and charge a fee. He said it was allowed with stipulations and insurance coverage had to be provided. He said he believed this was at least 10 years ago and he thought what happened was the person did not want to get involved with an insurance policy.

Mr. Menafra stated he had a \$6 million liability insurance policy that came from his teaching association offered through professional tennis registry.

Chair Catella stated this was something new to the commission. He said the commission appreciated Mr. Menafra coming before the commission. He said his recommendation would be for Mr. Menafra to submit within the next couple days to Recreation Director Andrews a more specific proposal. He said the city would need a template to work with.

Mr. Menafra stated he could provide a schedule for use when he knows who contacts him for lessons. He said he would let someone know if there were cancellations so the courts could be used by others. He said he would say that it would be Wednesday, Thursday and Friday because he was employed at the tennis camp on the other days.

Chair Catella stated when the specific information was submitted it would be forwarded to the City Attorney for review and to advise what would be required.

Council Member Rissberger stated he could talk to the City Attorney prior to receipt of specifics about it and see if there was any policy.

Recreation Director Andrews questioned if this was really a facility request or was it like someone who would vend in the park. He said the city did not currently offer adult tennis lessons in the park.

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(Petitioners) continued

He said the city did offer tennis lessons to kids. He said he would just want to be cognizant of where Mr. Menafra was having those lessons and not creating a competition.

Mr. Menafra stated he has not had any calls for juniors for lessons although he assumed there may be some.

Commissioner Davis questioned if Mr. Menafra was incorporated.

Mr. Menafra responded no and officially he was not even an employee of Total Tennis but was a subcontractor. He said there were very few tennis clubs left in the northeast that actually had employees.

Commissioner Pindar stated recalling several meetings ago the two boys Council Member Malone spoke about to the commission who wanted to operate the snack shop in Wilber Park he said he did not know the final result but the last time he talked to Council Member Malone the boys had run into problems because they were not an entity and they were going to try to operate under someone else who was.

Mr. Chris Moore, Dog Park subcommittee, stated there was a dog park subcommittee meeting scheduled for June 26th and he wished to iron out some issues before then that he had received in communications from the Mayor regarding the dog park fundraiser. He said the subcommittee felt the city should be contributing a little bit more financially in terms of matching funds. He said he thought the reason was basically that the city needed to invest in this dog park. He said if the subcommittee could raise \$10,000 toward the dog park he questioned if the city could come up with matching funds.

Chair Catella stated the proposal was discussed in the Community Improvement Committee and he asked where it would be forwarded to next.

Council Member Rissberger stated that it would be going to the Finance/Administration Committee next.

Mr. Moore stated that he knew the subcommittee was short of funds and that the dog park was not a high priority item but they all felt that city should be doing more toward helping out the subcommittee. He said he thought having that would give the subcommittee more advertising clout when they solicit funds. He said the subcommittee still needed information from the city on the cost of the maintenance procedures indicated on pages 7 and 8 of the proposal.

Recreation Director Andrews stated he had talked to one of the subcommittee members and gave a little information about those costs.

Mr. Moore stated he thought that needed to be formalized so the Finance/Administration Committee could look at it. He spoke briefly about some other items that needed to be formalized and some discretionary items that needed to be looked into.

Chair Catella asked Mr. Moore to send him those items in an e-mail.

Commissioner Davis stated in the Mayor's response he suggested using Parks and Recreation Commission letterhead when soliciting for funds. He questioned if that letterhead was available and if the subcommittee wanted to use it.

Recreation Director Andrews stated his department had letterhead.

City Clerk Koury stated he could create letterhead saying Parks and Recreation Commission for them.

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(Petitioners) continued

Mr. Moore stated they would use the letterhead suggested by the Mayor.

Chair Catella stated that he gave Commissioner Davis information about a continuing education course coming up on municipal dog parks to see if the subcommittee was interested. He suggested that Mr. Moore e-mail him his response on that.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION, made by Chair Catella and seconded by Commissioner McCarthy, that the commission approves the minutes of the regular meeting held on May 7, 2012, as written.

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

MOTION CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Catella asked Recreation Director Andrews if there was any correspondence that the commission needed to be concerned with at this point.

Recreation Director Andrews replied not at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

- Playground equipment update
- Survey update
- Program and Parks update
- Community Youth and Rec update
- Neahwa Pool update

Chair Catella asked Recreation Director Andrews to report on the items of old business.

Recreation Director Andrews gave the following Parks Commission Updates June 4, 2012:

“Playgrounds equipment update - The crews were on site this morning and began the installation. Concrete delivery is scheduled for Wednesday afternoon and barring any major set-backs installation will be concluded this week. The final safety inspection will be scheduled for early next week and the grand opening to follow.

Survey update - The survey went out this past Friday to just under 1,500 email addresses in our database. You can find the survey on-line at our home page www.oneonta.ny.us/recreation and you can click the link. The survey takes approximately 12-15 minutes and so far all the feedback has been positive, except one person who would have liked to see more “no opinion” options, but aside from that we are moving forward. Thanks to Dave and Cassandra for getting the data entry completed during a very busy time for us and to Tim for helping with the printed copies which will be available at the Huntington Library, City Hall and City Park Recreation Office. Our target end date is Friday, July 13. I will distribute results at the August meeting.

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(Old Business) continued

Program and Parks update - see attached youth registration flyer. Adult programs (city and non-city sponsored) have started and are moving along with no major issues. 17 of the 24 community gardens plots have been rented and we had our "kick-off" meeting on Saturday, May 26. There are 7 plots remaining. Pitch, Hit, and Run Sectional at Damaschke Field on May 20 - see press release and note the sectional winners have not been announced. Parks and pavilions are open, facilities and open spaces are looking very good and the parks are very busy. With the mayor's direction and assistance from the Garden Club and Al Cleinman Curtis Park has new plantings and improvements. Bathrooms at Neahwa Pool and F-4 concession stand are currently not open we're awaiting contractor's quotes. Wilber Pool is scheduled to be open Saturday, June 16 and the Oneonta Outlaws season begins this Friday.

Update from Community and Youth Recreation Program - No meeting held in May. There is no meeting scheduled for June. The group is planning to schedule a meeting for July.

Neahwa Pool update - Currently the pool is not scheduled to open this season. The city's flood insurance will not cover anything. The city has received FEMA documents approving some pump/electrical work. We anticipate approval of the cleaning as well, but have not received final documents. I would like the commission's input regarding the future use(s) of the pool."

Chair Catella asked about who would do the final inspection of the playground equipment and installation.

Recreation Director Andrews replied that was part of Parkitects agreement and they were qualified to do that.

Recreation Director Andrews stated he would follow-up with a PSA to the newspaper and radio about the survey and where it was available.

Commissioner Pindar asked if the rumor was true that he heard about a theft in the Wilber Bathhouse.

Recreation Director Andrews replied yes, someone stole approximately 30' of copper from the men's bathroom. He said for a grand total of \$10 it was going to cost the city \$1500.

Chair Catella stated if any use, continued or changing use was going to be considered he questioned if the City Attorney or somebody should research the specifics of that gift that was made to the city of the Briggs pool.

City Clerk Koury stated that former Chair Grastorf had brought that matter up but he did not think it had been pursued.

Commissioner Davis questioned if it was FEMA money that the city was waiting for repairing Neahwa Pool.

Recreation Director Andrews responded yes.

Commissioner Davis questioned if that money would be forfeited if the pool was not going to be reopened.

Recreation Director Andrews responded he did not know but it was a possibility. He said after discussing it with Director of Finance Hungerford that an option was that the city could apply to have special use of that money if it did not want to restore it to its original condition. He said he did not know if the city decided to not open the pool if the city would forfeit that money. He said that would be a question for Director of Finance Hungerford and City Attorney Merzig.

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(Old Business) continued

Chair Catella stated he would follow-up on both of those issues.

Commissioner Davis stated if the city wanted to convert Neahwa Pool to a spray park he wondered if the FEMA money could be used to convert that since it would still be a water recreational facility.

Recreation Director Andrews stated his understanding was that the city could apply to use the monies from FEMA for an alternative use for an existing facility.

Chair Catella stated he would ask that question too.

The commission held a brief discussion on the request heard earlier for use of a tennis court for lessons for profit.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the slide was in at Wilber Park yet.

Recreation Director Andrews relied no he was waiting for Director of Finance Hungerford to authorize the recall paperwork and then he would get it to Parkitects. He said Parkitects would then order it and when it comes in he would install it.

Commissioner McCarthy stated at the commission's May meeting the commission was advised of a hazardous embankment in Wilber Park that needed to be sectioned off to warn people.

Chair Catella stated his understanding was that it was being discussed in consultation with the City Attorney.

Council Member Rissberger stated this was discussed by Council and he recalled that City Attorney Merzig had said a fence could not be installed. He said presently nothing was being done but he did not think it was a dead issue yet.

The commission held a brief discussion on the matter.

Chair Catella stated the commission was charged with pool usage and there were two glaring issues. He said he would be e-mailing the commission a report he had prepared for consideration that was a compilation of Recreation Director Andrews' narrative and other research information on the matter. He said one way or another by the end of the summer the commission had to make a recommendation. He suggested that the commission spend the better part of the July meeting discussing this.

There being no further business to come before the commission, Chair Catella adjourned the regular meeting at approximately 8:00 p.m.

JAMES R. KOURY, City Clerk

JRK/pab