

WESTWOOD RECREATION DEPARTMENT
RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of March 10, 2014

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 8:05 P.M.

Present: Councilmember Robert Bicocchi, Chair John Toale, Vice Chair Angelo Pira, Board Members Heidi Catalano, Kevin Corcoran, Jodi Murphy, Ruth Nass and Recreation Director Gary Buchheister

Absent: Admin Asst Margaret McDonough

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of February 10, 2014: Vice Chair Pira corrected Item 6. a. stating that he had not accepted the Committee Assignment for Sponsorship. Vice Chair Pira made a Motion to Accept the Minutes as corrected; Member Catalano seconded the Motion; All in favor, the Motion passed.

3. OPEN PUBLIC FORUM: Resident Gary Conkling questioned why the Recreation Department budget had been so dramatically reduced from the budgets of previous years. Director Buchheister responded by explaining the use of Recreation Trust Accounts. The Trust Fund had been established in Westwood a number of years before Mr. Buchheister was named as the Recreation Director and it is now being implemented more fully so the Recreation Department programs and maintenance expenses are almost completely self-sustaining.

4. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT: Council Member Robert Bicocchi, Alternate Liaison to the Recreation Department, did not present a report.

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

a. Winter Program Update: Director Buchheister reported that the Winter Programs have been very successful. The Winter Program schedule will conclude by mid-April, excepting the youth Dance Programs and Adult Volleyball Programs which will continue until late May.

The Spring Program Flyer will be posted on the website and distributed through the schools this coming week. The Spring Season commences in April, the summary was presented to the Board for review. New programs include Chemical Creations for ages 6-12 years; Yoga for Adults and Toddlers, Yoga for Adults and Kids, Yoga for Adults; Fitness in the Park for Adults.

Pre-School registration for the 2014-2015 year will begin on April 29. The Summer Playground Program registration will begin May 1st. Information requests and registration for both of these programs has increased dramatically in the last few years.

The Team Tennis Coordinator has requested permission to expand the program after last year's success in winning the District Championship to include one fourteen year-and-under team and two ten year-and-under teams. The program is conducted on the Westwood High School tennis courts when the courts are not in use by the school teams.

b. Basketball Program Update: A report of the various recreation and travel leagues was presented to the Board. All of the games and play-offs will conclude by March 15. Approximately half of the travel teams made the League Playoffs. Director Buchheister reported that an incident occurred during a play-off game in the 5th / 6th Grade Boys Recreation team regarding player substitution for equal playing time.

The game was protested by the opposing Coach. Although Director Buchheister believes the regulation violation was an oversight, the offending team had to forfeit the game. After Director Buchheister sent an email to every family registered in that league explaining the situation, the controversy ended.

The Department's annual, season-end meeting of all Basketball Coordinators is scheduled for this coming week. Any corrections / improvements to the entire program including the play-off situation will, as always, be implemented next year.

c. Community Center façade repair (Jefferson Ave): The repair work on the façade should begin in the next few weeks, weather permitting.

d. Banner Program: A new business in Westwood will be sponsoring a banner in the Community Center Gym. There are currently a total of twelve banners displayed in the gym.

e. Senior Fitness: Director Buchheister has proposed a new program for the 'Forever Young' fitness programs for residents over 55 years of age which would be held on Fridays at 1:00 PM, to complement the two existing programs; Forever Young Fitness on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and the Toning & Strengthening on Tuesday morning. Director Buchheister presented the current issue of 'My Westwood' to the Board which highlighted the Fitness and Cooking programs. Various programs will be highlighted each month in 'My Westwood'.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Committee Assignments: Current Assignments are: Member Ruth Nass for Over 55 Programs, Members Heidi Catalano and Kevin Corcoran for Teen Center, Member Jodi Murphy for Youth / Pre-School Programs, Chair John Toale and Vice Chair Angelo Pira for Facility Improvement (Parks / Community Center), Sponsorship has not been assigned.

Director Buchheister requested that each Board Member review and attend their assignment areas so that he can meet with them individually to review possible improvements and expansions for the various programs and facilities.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

The Teen Center currently has three paid Staff. Two are paid by Westwood and one paid by the Township of Washington reflecting the participation enrollment. The staff person paid by the Township is out on disability which requires a substitute to be hired. After a very, delayed response from the Township, Westwood Administrator Robert Hoffmann succeeded in reaching an agreement with Township Mayor Sobkowicz regarding the shared expenses of the program. The average weekly attendance is 45-50 teens and attendance at special events is approximately 75 teens.

Extensive discussion followed on the shared recreation and facility services provided to Township residents.

Egg Hunt: The annual Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, April 12 at 10:30 A.M. in Veterans Park. All Board Members are requested to arrive at the park at 9:00 A.M. to assist in coordinating the event.

Goals for 2014: Director Buchheister reported that proposed facility improvements include renovation of the McKinley Park tennis courts; renovation of the Community Center gym floor and lighting; Initiation of an e-newsletter distributed through the Department's database with a potential launch date of September; a Department logo and slogan to be used throughout the Department's programs created through a competition of Department participants and residents.

8. ADJOURNMENT: Motion to Adjourn was made at 8:58 P.M. by Vice Chair Pira, seconded by Member Nass. The next meeting will be April 14, 2014 at 8:00 PM. in the Community Center.