

**Town Of Bedford
Recreation Commission
January 17, 2017 7:00PM
12 Mudge Way, EVENT ROOM**

Members Present:

Ron Richter, Tom Mulligan, Robin Steele, Mike O'Shaughnessy and Virendar Kaushik.
Selectmen Liaison: Caroline Fedele.
Quorum: Yes

Others Present:

Recreation Director: Amy Hamilton, Adult Program Coordinator: Raeann Gembis, Youth Program Coordinator: Nikki Taylor. SBP Operations Manager: Christopher Wesinger. Finance Director: Victor Garofalo. Finance Committee: Tom Busa and, Steve Steele. Selectwoman: Margot Fleischman. Residents: Erin Campbell, Leslie Savoy, Rachel Mark, Chloe Wheaton, Nicholas Howard, Mia Howard, Elenor Howard, Amanda Dascoli, Bree Oates, Amy Tom, Greg Kordelski, Shelia Mehta-Green, Susan Ackerman, Rebecca Grossman, Julie Halloran, Erin Hartwell, Rich Courtemanche, Deb Piccluto, and Suzanne Koller.

Proceedings:

Meeting called to order at 7:00PM by Ron Richter, Commission Chairman.

Spring Brook Park

Meeting Initiation

Commission Chairman, Richter opens the meeting. As a member of the Commission for 15 years, Richter expresses that the Commission seeks to work with the town to deliver as much as possible. He reminds the residents that the decision is about more than just SBP and will impact all of Recreation's programs. Richter expresses hope that the impending presentation will demonstrate that all current programming can successfully continue in conjunction with a full park offering.

Director Input and Advisement

Recreation Director, Amy Hamilton introduces herself. Her personal experience with the Recreation Department dates back to the 80's. She informs the audience that two key issues face SBP; financials and staffing. "We can't jeopardize the Recreation Department by draining the revolving fund and we can't jeopardize the safety of our residents by operating with less staff than is necessary." Amy presents a model, which she believes

offers a compromise between the desires of residents and the financial needs of the Department.

Suggested model is as follows:

- Park will be open Tues-Sat.
- Summer Adventures program would be able to swim on a regular basis.
- No swim lessons are offered however, all amenities will function.

Amy warns that she doubts the ability to safely staff the park for swim lessons. “This is not something we say often, we work with many challenges.” She stresses that safety measures outweigh any benefit; monetary or otherwise that may be derived from alternate plans with swim lessons.

In regard to financial standing, the model will lose a rough estimate of \$75,000 - \$80,000. This loss is significantly less than that of other options. She concludes by stating that the model is not a cure all. It is not sustainable in the long term.

The model would buy a year. The year would provide the time to follow proper channels in seeking town assistance. She addresses the audience stating, “It will take your support to get help from the town.”

Revolving Fund Analysis: Prepared and Presented by Robin Steele

Steele addresses misinformation by informing that the Recreation Commission consists of volunteers, who donate their time and efforts, receiving no compensation whatsoever.

Main Concerns involving the model included:

- Non-SBP investments are not included in the cost total and are meant to take place at a “later time.”
- Model threatens to financially restrict the Department’s most lucrative and sought after programs.
- The model includes swim lessons, which raises staffing requirements. The number of employees required to run the model may be unreachable.
- The model offers little to no room for financial error. Increased memberships that may result in offering swim lessons are unlikely to offset the estimated loss of over \$100,000.

Commission Deliberations and Motions

Richter is protective of the revolving fund, stating concern for the salaries Recreation is responsible for paying out each month. He mirrors Amy’s concern; worrying that nothing will be invested beyond the operation of SBP. Richter reminds that the Finance Director has informed the Commission that the consequence of an underbalanced revolving fund is a state investigation.

Kaushik states that the Commission should have the ability to strategize financial resources. He advises against reserving an arbitrary amount of funds as an alternative to planning. Steele stresses that the Commission should monitor and act as fiduciaries over the fund. She recommends that the Commission meet twice a month in order to devote one full meeting to the revolving fund.

There are many unforeseeable changes that arise within the revolving fund. For example, a competitor may come in, dropping a particular program registration to half. These types of occurrences are not foreseeable. Failing to reserve funds to sustain events such as this is short sighted.

Selectman Liaison Fedele cautions that model changes due to staffing need to be addressed. She comments that ability to staff is of huge concern, "I have very little confidence that you will be able to staff (Steele's) presented model." She advises the Commission to devise a plan for member upset due to future model changes.

The Commission agrees to review and evaluate the hours of operation for the first two weeks of the traditional opening in June. Backup options and checkpoints will need to be outlined. These will be drawn upon in the case that staffing is deficient. Richter suggests a sub-committee, that will work outside of the Commission, to develop a plan for sustainability as well as outline the future of Bedford swimming.

Motion: Kaushik motions to operate SBP with the following model:

SA open swim, with public swim lessons, which will run in correspondence to last year's model in respect to membership. Swim lessons require membership. The weekly schedule will run Tuesday through Saturday. The Recreation Commission will have a checkpoint every two weeks to monitor staffing. The Commission will vote on fee structures, walk-in fees and, swim lesson rates.

Motion Passed

4:1:0

Lifeguard license costs and reimbursements are discussed.

Motion: Tom Mulligan motions to offer partial reimbursements to interviewed and hired lifeguards. Reimbursement will occur at the end of employment and will cover half the cost of certification, provided the employee retains employment through the end of the summer.

Motion Passed

5:0:0

The Recreation Department is currently seeking three contingency items. The contingencies will be brought before the selectmen. If voted onto the agenda, the items

will be voted at the annual town meeting. A decision will be known at the end of March and will apply July 1st.

- Steele reminds residents to attend the upcoming Annual Town Meeting to support the Recreation Department.
- The next Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 6th, 2017.

*Adjournment at 10:00PM governed by Ron Richter, Committee Chairman.
Minutes submitted by Michelle Racette, Recording Secretary.*