

Salem Park & Recreation Commission

Draft Minutes

Date and Time: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 at 6:45pm

Meeting Location: 5 Broad Street

Members Present: Chair Amy Everitt , Chris Burke, Bob Callahan, James Shea, Leslie Tuttle

Members Absent:

Others Present:

Recorder: Stacy Kilb

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting is called to order at

Approval of October Minutes

None available

Visitors

Michael Dello Iacono - Would like to get approval to revitalize the gardens on the Mack Park property

Not present; this item is not heard.

David Smith – Sail Salem Requesting permission to use Winter Island for 2016 and discuss past years resident/non resident ratios and fees

This item is heard first. Mr. Smith addresses the questions raised at the last meeting.

High School Sailing Program: Sail Salem will raise all funds, with no cost at all to the City for the first three years with regard to coaching and boats.

He describes the various types of programs and boats. Other programs use some of their boats and pay for them. He also describes other items needed, such as wetsuits. He describes the races and the number of participants.

They did not have the YMCA or Adventure Sailing this year. 289 of 300 slots were filled this year; 35% were Salem residents, but that does not include children or grandchildren who live in Salem but whose grandparents or other caregivers who registered them reside elsewhere.

187 children sailed for free; of the remaining participants, 50% had some sort of scholarship.

36 adults were anticipated but 42 were hosted, and 52% were Salem residents. Over the past 8 years, 3000 children have participated, but this includes some repeats. Thus, 3000 slots have been filled.

Total income for Sail Salem is \$42,000 through their fiscal year, which runs through the end of this month. This includes a total of \$20,000 in non cash donations.

Total expenses through November are roughly \$58,000 – Some is made up this month so they are in the black by January.

The Programs will start June 12 this year. (13) Optimis, (6) 420 s, (4) keel and (4) chase boats are stored on Winter Island.

MassBay Sailing Olympics: Check in would be July 31, with racing Aug. 1, 2 and 3. This is a Monday, Tuesday and Wed. They had 200 children last year but numbers continue to decline. Some boats host more than one so this works out to about 170 kids. He describes the event in comparison to the Opti New England; this is on par in quality but a smaller scale. He is seeking approval for the event if they do decide to do it.

Sunfish: This was approved at the last meeting; more information will be provided prior to the event. David Gilbert is taking reservations; the progress is discussed. Burke asks about compensation for use of the ramps and Mr. Smith states that last time the ramp fees were waived and there will be another contract this time. Burke is asking if the City will be compensated, but he does not specify an amount.

Cost and scholarships: Burke also asks about the discounts moving from the first week to the second week. Mr. Smith states that the adult lessons are \$300 for the series; kids are \$200 and half of those participants got some sort of scholarship. Mr. Smith dispenses scholarships on a case by case basis; he asks what participants can pay and takes them at their word, and gives them a scholarship for the remainder.

Information about scholarships is usually widely available. Normally, a flyer has been sent home to every child in the school system, in English and Spanish, however last year that did not happen since they lost their program director. Information on the scholarships is also available on the website, and there is additional outreach. However there has been staff turnover so some difficulties continue. The Boys and Girls Clubs have been contacted.

Mr. Smith does not know how many children continue to the second week and Shea is concerned about this. Shea personally would like to see the financial aid aspects promoted and Mr. Smith agrees; the program is about getting children who would not otherwise have access, on the water. There is no other means for them to do so, as there is in other communities.

Waiver of \$4500 owed: Callahan appreciates the prompt payment of the balance owed. He asks about them working on a deficit; Mr. Smith comments that at the end of the year, they usually get contributions that put them in the black; any overages go back into the program. Callahan opines that Sail Salem is doing a great job and approves of their work.

A motion to approve is made by Shea, seconded by Callahan, and all approve.

Partanen comments that the boat racks are very nice.

Joshua Claudio – Walk for HAWC – Requesting the use for the Salem Common for April 24, 2016 for the 24th annual Walk for HAWC

A motion to approve is made by Callahan, seconded by Shea, and all are in favor.

Claudia Chuber – Polar Plunge – Requesting the use for Winter Island for the Annual Polar Plunge on February 7, 2016

Ms. Chuber describes the event for the North Shore Community Development Coalition. The event will be held at the ramp.

A motion to approve is made by Shea, seconded by Callahan, and all are in favor.

Becki Christie – Freeze Your Tush Off – Requesting permission to use Winter Island for the Annual Freeze Your Tush Off on January 1, 2016

This is the seventh annual event. They will use the function hall from 10-1. All proceeds go to Salem pantry.

A motion to approve is made by Shea, seconded by Callahan, and all are in favor

Mark Lovely – Wreaths Across America – Would like to discuss the possibility of having as carnival at Leslies Retreat in 2016

Not present; this item is not heard at this time.

TR Ramsdell – Wicked Running Club – Requesting permission to use the Salem Willows of the Wicked Frosty Four on January 1, 2016

The race route is described. This is on a Friday morning. The logistics are further discussed; last time the Commissioners were concerned about noise but the starting area is not an issue in that respect. Callahan questions whether, since the main area is a city street, if it is necessary, for him to come before the Commission,

A motion to approve is made by Callahan, seconded by Tuttle, and all are in favor.

Shea asks about the route. They will be running through the Willows but it is a City street.

Superintendent's Report

Revenue Report

Everything is going well, with the golf course down a bit. The Willows metering struggle continues. Smart Meters at the Willows is a maybe in another phase; Partanen will write a memo asking City Council for them. A rate increase has been requested for years.

Callahan opines that a meter control person could be hired over the summer, for the Willows area to enforce meter payment. It could be a part time position performing random spot checks. Partanen thinks this is a good idea and adds that the position could be made full time if the applicant also checks Pooch Passes at the dog park.

Stacy Kilb, of 39 Northend Ave, comments that another idea for enforcing Pooch Passes could be to have some sort of key code or scan pass for the entrance.

• Discussion about financial information for road races

Partanen sent a follow up letter to B & S, who does not want to submit their financials for this race; the Commission is not requesting them for the entire company, just races for which they are applying. Other organizations have volunteered such information without question. They are meeting with Beth Gerard to see if they are legally allowed to submit them; the Chair points out that this Commission doesn't have to let them use the space and Callahan agrees. It is unclear what the City Solicitor thinks.

There is discussion about whether it would be better to simply charge a fee to applicants for races vs. requiring them to make a donation. Whether the organization is for-profit or non-profit, and the size of the race, should be taken into account. In this case, if the race is denied, Callahan opines that the Commission can cite its inconvenience. It is for the Black Cat race and the application is still pending.

- **Update on the Facility Needs Assessment**

A draft has been promised by the end of the week, but has not been completely reviewed. Partanen has also received drafts of recommendations, which conclude that the Department is underfunded compared to standards. Payment to the provider of the report is being withheld until the final version is received as it is long overdue, but should be provided in the next month.

- **Program update Parks & Facility**

Parks and Rec has now been offering free classes, which they run even if enrollment is low. An email newsletter has also been helping to increase participation, with some classes full.

A discussion of the basketball program ensues; there is no travel girls' team this year and the lack of participation, logistics and other issues are described. Partanen will look into the possibility of combining our league with those of other towns since they face similar difficulties.

Shea opines that the fees for league in general are too high, and would like to see more advertising and scholarships promoted, and the fees lowered, to keep the league from dissipating altogether.

Shea motions to lower the fee from \$50 to \$35 and to advertise on website that anyone who cannot pay the fee can play for free.

Discussion: Shea comments that if a participant says they cannot pay, they play for free with no verification needed. Basketball is expensive to run, but there is already only one referee except during playoffs.

Uniforms are also a major expense and options for shirts are discussed. Callahan comments that since Parks and Rec turns over a large amount of revenue to the General Fund, the program should be free for a year; that way, if numbers are still down, we know it is a lack of interest and not a cost issue. Tuttle also wonders about interest levels.

Shea amends motion to reflect that the Program for Youth Basketball should be run for free this year as a pilot.

Additional discussion: Partanen had requested more money last year and the line item was declined. Several commissioners comment on their own and their children's participation in the league. Tuttle feels that if some people can afford to pay, they should. In the past it was offered for free because it was funded by the city.

Further discussion of fees and possible donations to the revolving fund. The basketball program is the only one run by Parks and Rec that has not been taken over by another organization.

Recap of Shea's motion:

That the Youth Basketball Program will be run for free this year, paid out of the revolving fund, as a pilot test to gauge interest. Donations will be accepted.

Callahan seconds and all are in favor.

- **Salem Woods volunteers recently enhanced one of the bridges**

Burke describes the work done on the bridges – both were fixed. The manager of the golf course helped out. He could use more manpower and Partanen will check on his requests. Work continues on the 8th tee.,

- **Willows working group to enhance paved area near Hobbs**

Jason Silva has put this together. This will be a passive seating area rather than seeming to be a parking area.

New picnic tables have also been installed at the Willows.

The upcoming visit to Newburyport's Senior Center is discussed.

Callahan comments that two years ago Brendan Walsh requested a season golf pass be donated to Children's Charity, and it brought good money. Nothing is being requested this year, but he feels it is an easier way to give back, rather than hosting a golf tournament. Burke agrees.

A motion to donate a season golf pass to the Children's Charity fundraising auction is made by Callahan, seconded by Burke and all are in favor.

Program Update:

Various upcoming events including Breakfast with Salem and Holiday Cheer are outlined. The office will be closed on Dec. 14th at 1PM, a Monday, for the staff party at Winter Island.

Burke asks about a brochure that went out. Also some have already paid for the youth basketball program, and would need to be refunded. There is a push is for the newsletter to go away and to instead do marketing via email, social media, and press release since the booklet costs \$5,00/year plus staff time to produce .

A motion to adjourn is made by Shea, seconded by Callahan, and all are in favor.

The meeting ends at 7:50PM.

Next Meeting: December 15, 2015

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy Kilb
Clerk, Salem Park & Recreation Commision

