

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District  
Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners  
Special Recreation Program Advisory Committee  
April 16, 2018**

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District met in a Special Meeting of the Special Recreation Program Advisory Committee on April 16, 2018 at the Douglas House, 732 North Genesee Street, Waukegan, Illinois.

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by George Bridges who directed a Call of the Roll.

**II. Roll Call**

Present: George Bridges, Board of Commissioner; Errick Beverly, Superintendent of Recreation; Mike Mayfield, Deputy Superintendent; Julie Schneider, Manager of General & Special Recreation; Kari Robinson, Supervisor of Special Recreation; Maria Owens, Specialist of Special Recreation; Elizabeth Fallon, Department Coordinator; Melissa Juarez-Ehlers, Mercedes Rivera, Christian Torres, and Tina Yurik. Interns: Cami Hoerth and Emily Wilbur

Absent: Jay Lerner, Executive Director; Jean Kulczyk, and Janalle Roth

Being that there was no quorum of the board, no official business was conducted.

**I. Review, Discuss, Decide**

**A. Fundraising Efforts**

- **2018 Polar Bear Plunge** raised a record \$9826 during the coldest year for this event at negative 27 degrees with the wind chill factor. There was an increase in Sponsorships, thanks in a big part to Terry Duffy. The increase of 15 to 25 Sponsors basically covered expenses. The 2019 Polar Bear Plunge will be the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual event. Schneider extended a thank you to Bridges and the Dive team for withstanding the elements to provide for a safe event in extreme temperatures.
- **2017 George Bridges 5K Run/Walk** raised \$1902 to add to the scholarship fund for participants.

**B. Camp**

- **Field Trips** are a highlight of camps and Robinson would like to plan a few new field trips for this summer and seeking ideas that might include sensory and movement experiences. Robinson is exploring a STEM park in Lake Zurich, the Wildlife Discovery Center was great last year and she plans to schedule that camps return this year, in addition to a Waterpark.
  - Committee members offered the following suggestions: Bridges – Heavenly Horses; Juarez-Ehlers – Equine Connections; Beverly – Kenosha King Fish Baseball Game; Yurik – Wagner Farm, Glenview Park District

- Robinson added that for the Teen Camps they are usually able to drive up to 1 hour 15 minutes away at the farthest and for Youth Camps about 45 minute drive.

### **C. Programs/Services**

- **IAPD PowerPlay Grant** was not awarded to Special Recreation for 2018.
- **New Summer Programming**
  - Mid-Day Play was a successful after camp option in 2017 and will continue in 2018. These programs offered a variety of experiences including sensory play, swimming, and cooking with two offerings each week for 3 weeks after Special Recreation camps end.
  - GO Waukegan events are an easy and free, inclusive health and fitness event options to participate. When possible these events have been included in the SRS brochure and flyers and have been handed out at programs to promote the GO Waukegan events.
  - Special Olympics will be celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a special event at Soldier Field on July 21 called Global Day of Inclusion and Music Concert. SRSNLC cooperatively are planning on attending some, or all, of this event and are seeking volunteers to assist with obtaining maximum coverage for participants. Committee members Rivera and Yurik stated they could volunteer.
  - Special Olympics Bocce Ball season has been moved to the late summer so the Bocce Ball program has also been moved to coordinate with Special Olympics. Unfortunately those that qualify for Summer State Games will have practiced and competed in the previous Fall season. By keeping Bocce State level competition at Summer Games, an 8 month gap between qualifying has been created.
- **Activity Ideas**
  - H.E.A.R.T. program has not run as of yet. A special meeting with parents and participants was offered and attended by a group of 15 participants and family. Good feedback was provided on some of the issues which included expense, days offered and time frame. Based on feedback the program will be offered two times per month on a Monday from 10am-2pm for \$35 per participant per day. Committee member Beverly asked if scholarships could be offered for this program. Schneider responded that scholarship funds would be depleted quickly if used for this program. Juarez-Ehlers suggested offering a onetime scholarship per participant and will provide Schneider with the scholarship program utilized at the Center for Enriched Living's day program. Schneider will investigate options of potential scholarships to get the program running.
- **Family Programming**
  - Waukegan Park District Family Programs will be promoted in the SRSNLC brochure as well as emailing families this information.
  - Family Zumba has been successful and will be an ongoing program.
  - Family Splash Bash has been offered twice and has not run due to not meeting the minimum registration. This will be offered again this season but as a non-family event to see if there is interest. Committee member

Yurik suggested a movie night by the pool which seems to be popular. Robinson stated that this is currently offered at the Field House Pool as a Family Program and advertised to the families but unsure if any of the families participate.

**D. Strategic Plan Goals related to Special Recreation – WPD Initiatives**

▪ **Management of Special Recreation and General Recreation**

- Secure program specific volunteer commitments. For example will be looking to secure volunteers for the Greenhouse after the renovation is complete for plant care, harvesting and education. Committee member Juarez-Ehlers offered to volunteer as well as organizing a participant group from the Center for Enriched Livings REACH program. Rivera stated that she and her husband have offered to volunteer with the Greenhouse.

▪ **Customer Expectations**

- A survey was conducted to Special Recreation Adult Program participants in hopes of obtaining enough input to determine if we are meeting the needs of the participants as well as establish an overall foundational knowledge of programming for Adults. Staff is determining the best way to implement the survey due to low response from the last survey that was conducted in 2017. Committee member Yurik offered to send what Clearbrook has utilized and provide suggestions on best way to reach clientele. Possibly a phone call by interns rather than regular staff might be best. Juarez-Ehlers asked how many surveys were sent out and Owens responded that 100 surveys were sent out and 8 surveys were completed and returned. Robinson stated that there will be separate surveys for parents and participants and agreed that implementation via the interns might be beneficial in getting more responses whether contact is by phone or face to face. Yurik offered to help with phone calls in the evening.
- Continue to evaluate and chart current Special Recreation Adult Programs through surveys and CAPRA statistics to determine future programming options.

▪ **Innovative Programming**

- Researching ideas for new health and wellness classes. In the current fitness program most participants are not enjoying exercising using the machines so we are looking to create programs that are active and offer exercise without the participant realizing they are getting in a workout. Participants seem to enjoy new activities and new instructors. Rhythm in Motion is going well but may need to find a new certified instructor with current instructor out for medical reasons. Juarez-Ehlers suggested utilizing the Health Matters program and that the REACH program has had success using the Yoga program from Health Matters. Robinson stated that she has used bits and pieces from Heath Matters with success and inquired if the Yoga leader had to be certified. Juarez-Ehlers stated that there are Yoga videos that could be used if a Yoga leader cannot be obtained.

- Researching 5 volunteer opportunities for the TNT Camp to support job training skills. Committee members suggested Feed My Starving Children, Bernie's Book Bank, and Bridges offered to set up a Painting volunteer day at the Fire Department that would also include a tour of the Fire Station and food. Juarez-Ehlers asked to be included in this volunteer opportunity for the REACH day program participants should they need extra people.
- **Operational Excellence**
  - Goal: To improve and implement a new training method for Special Recreation aquatics lesson instructors. Robinson reported that the swim lesson program is going well and growing. She feels more specialized training for the instructors is needed to teach individuals with special needs and how to address behaviors that are related to fear of and/or sensory issues in an aquatic setting. She plans to train the summer camp counselors as well. Juarez-Ehlers suggested contacting the Epilepsy Foundation for resources. Beverly suggested reaching out to JEM who provides the lifeguards for the park district. Robinson reported that all of the special recreation swim instructors did go to the in-house training provided by Jordan Pavlovich and found it very helpful but are still in need of training on how to deal with certain behaviors. Schneider suggested contacting Keeler Pool Program in Aurora for resources. Intern, Cami Hoerth is surveying current instructors to get feedback. Rivera suggested videotaping the training and a swim lesson. Then provide a link for families to view. This would let them learn how great the program is and increase comfort level for families new to swimming.

**E. Priorities for Next Meeting – Monday, October 29, 2018**

- Polar Bear Plunge
- Program and Service updates
- Strategic Plan Goal status updates
- Any other Comments – none

**IV. Closed Session**

There was no closed session

**V. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm

**Respectfully submitted,**

Julie Schneider  
Manager of General & Special Recreation