

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District
Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
Recreation Program Advisory Committee
September 23, 2024**

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District met in a Special Meeting of the Recreation Program Advisory Committee on September 23, 2024, at the Field House Sports, Fitness, & Aquatics Center.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by Errick Beverly who directed a call of the roll, introductions were made and welcomed all.

II. Roll Call

Present: Errick Beverly, Director of Recreation; Kaitlin Fischer, Superintendent of Sports, Fitness & Aquatics; Jennifer Dumas, Manager of General & Special Recreation; Javi Martinez, Manager of Fitness & Aquatics; Ty Rohrer, Manager of Cultural Arts; Mercedes Rivera; Sheryl Streicher; Christian Torres

Absent: George Bridges, Commissioner; Jacqueline Herrera Giron, Commissioner; Jay Lerner, Executive Director; Brian Cowart; Maria Calderon; Jo Dooley; Sam Johnson; Melissa Juarez; David Motley; Lori Nerheim; Martha Padilla-Ramos; Dulce Ortiz; Roxanne Swanson; MaryFran Troha; Jane Waller; Tina Yurik

III. Review, Discuss, Divide

A. Programming Updates

- Waukegan Symphony Orchestra & Concert Chorus
 - WSO 50th concert recap and 50th Season Introduction
 - For the 50th Anniversary concert 2 former conductors returned to participate in the concert and a former mayor of Waukegan who was instrumental in establishing the WSO also attended the concert.
 - The first WSO concert for the season is “Forgotten Gems” on October 6
 - The Joseph A. Favero Memorial Do It Yourself Messiah is on December 8 and will include the Master Singers of Milwaukee again this year as well as added new this year to the concert will be Beethoven’s *Choral Fantasy*.
 - The WCC begins the concert season with “Love: Sonnets and Songs” on November 23. There are few new added members of the Concert Chorus this year, so it is nice to see this group growing.
- Committee Member comments:
 - How many members are in the Concert Chorus?
 - Rohrer responded they are up to 23 members.
- Arts Programming & Theatre Productions
 - Summer Arts Park programs had over 800 participants and the Movies in the Park had 1000 people attend this summer.
 - The Arts Park Academy weeks were developed to allow youth and teens an opportunity to go more in-depth into an art project.

- The Youth Theatre now has 3 public performances due to demand and a Friday evening performance was added to the Saturday and Sunday afternoon performances. All summer performances were sold out. This fall the Youth Theatre production is Aladdin Jr., and the family holiday production will be A Christmas Carol with auditions starting next week.
- General and Special Recreation Programs & Events
 - Summer Camp participation in General Recreation camps was 521 and Special Recreation Camps had 33.
 - The Special Recreation All Star Swim Camp had 14 participants.
 - Urban Ag Lab had 5 new summer programs with 73 registrations. These were free programs for families.
 - Touch a Truck in August had close to 1000 in attendance.
 - The Halloween Trick or Treat Trail is on October 26 in Bowen Park. There are costumed characters that the children can meet and get candy and treats.
 - New this year will be a Special Recreation Halloween Trail at the Adaptive Recreation Center on October 18. It is free but pre-registration is required. It will be a sensory friendly activity for individuals with disabilities.
- Fitness & Aquatics Programs
 - Yoga at the Beach runs through September. In June through August there were 861 participants for this free program which is a record attendance.
 - Raise the Bar is a new free program this Saturday, September 28, in the Fitness Studio to introduce Barre workouts which combine yoga and Pilates.
 - The SplashZone closed on September 15 with a total of 13,600 visitors this season which was record attendance over the past two years the SplashZone has been operating.
 - A new program for the indoor pool this fall is the Great Splash Games on November 16. It will provide fun and challenging activities in the water to give families an opportunity to do other activities besides swimming in the pool.

B. Facility Updates

- The Waukegan History Museum at the Carnegie is in the final stages of construction projects, the construction trailers have been removed and exhibits are being installed. The permanent exhibit that provides a history of Waukegan should be done next week. The archives and collections will be moved soon.
- Committee member comments:
 - Will there be a grand opening event?
 - Rohrer responded that there will be a grand opening.
- The Adaptive Recreation Center new parking lot construction and soffit/fascia repairs are scheduled to begin at the end of September and completed by mid-November. This is the last part of the renovation for this project.
- Field House member locker room updates for both men's and women's member locker rooms will undergo updates starting tentatively in February.
- Committee member comments:
 - Is this a busy time for doing member locker room renovation with the surge in new memberships with new year resolutions?

- Fischer responded that the past few years summer has not been less busy with our all-time high membership occurring in July with over 9000 members additionally during summer pickleball attracts a large group of seniors who utilize the Field House for indoor play. We will utilize the public and pool locker rooms while only closing and working on one locker room at a time.
- Have you considered hosting a pickleball tournament?
 - Fischer responded it's definitely something to consider. Our current pickleball group is self-organized and seems sufficient.

C. WPD News/Updates

- We are an NPRA Gold Medal finalist in our population group and have been a finalist for this award for the past three years. In October at the NPRA conference the Gold Medal awardees will be announced.
- Roosevelt Park, adjacent to the Adaptive Recreation Center, will be renovated with an inclusive playground and expanded parking.
- We received a \$5000 Grace Bersted Grant to fund a new outreach leisure education program and gardening program. Rally at the ARC will provide up to thirty 1-to-1.5-hour visits for Diverse Learner classrooms within the Waukegan School District. These visits offer highly interactive learning through art, physical activities, music, and more. And then a portion of funds will go to build on the garden area of Adaptive Recreation Center in the backyard.
 - Previously outreach leisure education was done in the school classroom with Kari Robinson bringing and providing activities to the students in the Diverse Learners program but now with the grant there will be funds to bring the students to our building to experience all that we have to offer.

D. What Can We Do Better?

- Committee member comments:
 - When there is a drop in participation or involvement do you find out why?
 - Beverly responded individual staff running the programs do program surveys for feedback and can reach out to past participants to find out why they might not be registering. We track statistics on programs which include tracking how many cancelled programs are due to lack of enrollment and over the past few years the number of cancelled programs has decreased significantly due to better response to community needs and improved marketing.
 - How do the marquees get updated, so old information isn't on the marquees, and how do you get information out to the community?
 - Fischer responded that two of our marquees have been updated so they can be scheduled to change but two of the marquees are an older version and require a staff member to update the marquee, but the older marquees are scheduled to be updated next year.
 - Beverly responded to say thank you for bringing it to our attention so we can update the marquee in a timelier manner. We have targeted constant contact email lists to help get information out to interested community members.

Errick Beverly closed the meeting by thanking the committee members for their feedback and the community for supporting all that we do.

IV. Closed Session

There was no closed session.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Errick Beverly
Director of Recreation