

AUBURN RECREATION & SPECIAL EVENTS ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
February 12, 2014
6:30 p.m.

ATTENDEES: Ravi Sharma, Denis D'Auteuil, Dana Staples, Eric Audette, Dave Sterling, Tizz Crowley, Sue Patneaude, Dan Poisson, Phil Savignano

GUESTS: Dan Bilodeau and Rob Potvin.

ABSENT: Dave Gonyea

- I. Meeting was opened at 6:30 by Ravi Sharma.
- II. Review and approval of the minutes of the January 15th meeting. Tizz asked that the minutes be edited to state that she was not sworn in as of the 1/15 meeting and to add Gary Dow as a guest at the meeting. Motion to accept the minutes with the revisions by Tizz Crowley, second by Dana Staples. All in favor.
- III. State of Recreation in Auburn. Presentation background
 - A. The department employs 5 full time employees which includes an administrative assistant and a building maintenance technician. There are also 23 part-time staff – help us to facilitate all of our programming by coaching, instruction, refereeing, building supervision, etc. Also, about 29 full-time seasonal staff for our summer camp program is employed annually: Directors, program leaders and councilors. All the staff, including part-time, seasonal and full-time employees, has worked around 12,500 hours year-to-date from July 1, 2013 to present. There will be more hours worked between now and June 30th.
 - B. We utilize about 110 volunteers for our youth programs and special events throughout the year. For FY 14, our current budget year, the recreation division budget accounts for approximately 1.6% of the overall municipal budget of \$36.1 Million. If the municipal and school budgets are included, the total is \$73.2 Million. The recreation budget would account for .8% of that budget.
 - C. Programs: We offer 44 programs and special events per year
 1. 34 organized activities for youth 17 and under
 2. 4 organized activities for adults 18 & older
 3. 6 special events for all ages
 - D. Out of 44 programs, 37 programs are fee based and 7 are free
 - E. Program Fees:
 1. Range of program fees: Free to \$800.00 (adult sports – softball and basketball – for entire team)

2. 7 free programs, one program \$5.00, 1 program @ \$15.00 4 programs @ \$25.00 6 programs between \$30 and \$35.00, 7 programs \$40.00 one program between \$50 and \$55.00, 5 programs between \$60 and \$65.00, one program between \$70 and \$75.00, 2 programs between \$80 and \$85.00, 4 programs between \$90 and \$130.00 and 1 program between \$135.00 and \$500.00 and 4 programs between \$505 and \$800.00.
3. We are projecting that about 1500 kids participate in all of our programs annually. This represents approximately 59% of all program participation. Approximately 96 kids took advantage of the financial aid that we offered last year. That is about 6.5% of all the youth participants in all of our programs. There are approximately 1000 adults who participate in our adult programs annually. That represents 41% of all program participants - a 60/40 split youth to adults. Overall program participation growth going as far back as FY 2011 - July 1 – June 30, 2011, numbers were at 2,178 people overall. Since then, participation numbers have increased to 2472 in FY 2013. Overall increase of 13.5% We hope to increase to around 2532 people in FY 14 or 16.25% from FY 2011.
4. Facilities: 23+ facilities are used to offer all of our programs. Some of these facilities are not municipally owned.
 - a. Hasty Community Center/gym
 - b. Pond Building
 - c. Upper Pettengill
 - d. Lower Pettengill
 - e. Lakeview 1 Field
 - f. Lakeview 2 Field
 - g. Cleveland Field
 - h. Chestnut Street Field
 - i. Norway Savings Bank Arena
 - j. Auburn Suburban Little League Fields
 - k. Festival Plaza

Not Municipally owned:

- l. Tribou Field
- m. St. Dom's Gym
- n. Walton School
- o. Walton Field
- p. Auburn Middle School Fields
- q. Sherwood Heights
- r. Fairview School
- s. Park Avenue School
- t. ELHS Track & Field Complex
- u. Boys & Girls Club
- v. Fox Ridge Golf Course

- w. Lost Valley
- x. Central Maine Community College

Eric Audette asked what we attribute the increase in participation to. Ravi responded that more programs have been offered and we have gone from 30 to 50 teams in the adult softball league. We've made scheduling changes in the existing programs to accommodate more participants in the adult programs. People work different shifts, and we have tried to adjust schedules to accommodate their work schedules. We have also offered new programs. Schedules are now online so people can have access from home. People can also register from home through our registration software.

Tizz urged Ravi to send his report to the city council for community information and so that it can be put on the recreation website. Tax payers will be able to see what they are getting for their money.

Ravi stated that the recreation operating budget has decreased every year since he has been with the department. One of the goals of the department is to look forward and research different supplemental programs, identify what people are looking for and put together solutions and recommendations. We also want to sustain the programs that we have.

The "Say It" question of the week on the city website is, "What do you think should be cut or not be cut from the municipal budget?"

Sue Patneau asked who supervises all the part-time and seasonal staff? Managing volunteers is important. Ravi responded that everyone goes through a background check. Three of the full-time employees are responsible for supervising all of the staff. The camp director at each camp is responsible for all of the staff at that camp. Beneath the director is the program leader who assists the director in the supervision of the rest of the councilors. Sue stated that the city has been fortunate that nothing dramatic has happened to a child under the department's watch that could put the city in a bad position. Ravi stated that we are very careful with our volunteers and getting background checks on everyone.

Sue asked if volunteers are recognized? Ravi responded that volunteers are recognized at the program's year-end banquet. He also sends out letters to volunteers for events, etc. Tizz suggested that "Thank Yous" be put up on the city website. That way, others are aware of the volunteerism. Ravi stated that photographs can be taken of anyone on public property without getting permission, as long as it is not used for commercial gain, but we normally ask, as a courtesy, if they mind putting their child's picture on our brochure, etc. Phil suggested adding a check box on our registration giving permission to put the child's name or picture on our publications, or include the statement in the liability statement.

We try to keep our programs as affordable as possible. When fund raisers are done, people like to know what they are getting for the money raised. All the programs that we offer are operated from their own fees. No taxpayer money is used to pay for programs. Taxes do pay for the full-time staff only. The program pays for equipment, transportation, referees, etc.

A question was asked as to whether the department gets any CIP money. Ravi explained that recreation does not get a lot of CIP money, depending on the economic climate for that year. Ravi was asked whether CIP money was used for the Lakeview Field work that was done last year, and Ravi responded that the money for that work came from out softball program. Tizz stated that \$38,000.00 was requested for playground equipment specifically for Pettengill, but was changed to read \$38,000.00 for playground equipment city-wide.

Dennis explained that \$38,000.00 was put in for Pettengill, because playground equipment is very expensive. Just to replace one section of plastic playground equipment came in at \$1500.00. All of the city's playground equipment is old and needs some TLC. There are unsafe conditions at Chestnut Street also. There hasn't been funding over the years for equipment upgrades, and we need to start investing in some new equipment. The investment will have to be significant in order to replace all of the equipment that needs to be replaced. Sue stated that the investment should be made because it is only going to take one child getting injured, and the city may have to spend more than what it would have cost to replace the dangerous equipment. Sue also suggested that we find companies in Auburn that would "adopt" a playground. Tizz suggested that there are playground equipment manufacturers right here in Maine or friends of a particular park, who might help and volunteers to get the equipment fixed.

IV. Status of Ingersoll Repurposing Study

- A. The city hired Cordjia Capital Projects Group who performed the repurposing study and are in the process of producing a draft report.
 1. Background on the building itself – construction, dimensions, observations of mechanical equipment and other building specifications.
 2. Land use – 2010 Comprehensive Plan and what was recommended for this district.
 3. Demographics – use some evaluation from the 2010 Comprehensive Plan to include population trends (youth and adult), recreation opportunities and recreation trending, both municipally and privately.
 4. Brief market review – overview of current market conditions for similarly sized buildings and property – sales activity.
 5. Community support through the "Say It" function on the city's website. Will also highlight some recent council actions that move in favor of recreation, i.e. Norway Savings Bank Arena. Big investment. Big project.
 6. All existing building systems – mechanical systems, options for retrofittable upgrades for heating systems, fire suppression system, electrical, structural, etc.
 7. Highest and best use. Outlines a recommendation for repurposing.

8. Budgeted costs: range of projected costs for repurposing based on the recommendation they provide and cost summary outlining budgeted costs for different systems and a range of costs.

Questions:

Will we be getting rid of the compressors? Ravi responded that this would probably be part of the mechanical review. Ravi was asked if there was an offer on the table for the compressors, and also what that equipment is worth.

Tizz stated that getting rid of the compressors would depend on what the building would be used for. There is support for retaining an ice arena for recreational skating. Sue commented that the boards and glass are all gone and that the concession equipment is also gone. Tizz explained that the concession equipment was sent out for cleaning and would be returned. Ravi stated that if there is a turf floor put into the building, no food, beverages or gum would be allowed on the turf, so a concession may not be available. Eric Audette stated that those who are not on the field, but outside the netted area, should be able to have concession items available to them.

Denis added that if the field is treated and sanitized. It is sometimes a pelletized rubber that provides cushioning. In any case, special care is required. After the Cordjia report is received, a recommendation will have to be made by the board to the council in the form of a proforma with operating expenses included. The report from Cordjia will be just repurposing costs. Operating expenses will have to be added to the repurposing costs. The report will be available for the next meeting in March. Ravi was asked if we could reach out to the company in Vermont who is interested in the compressors just so that it can be in the works so that we don't lose the opportunity. Denis said that he will follow up with Cordjia to see if they can include the sale of the compressors in their report. He will also discuss the issue with the city manager.

V. Member Goals and Objectives

A. Ravi asked for written or verbal goals from the members.

1. Tizz submitted her goals in written form. They include: A senior program for Auburn residents, ages 50 and older for recreation. Strong communication and promotion campaign for Auburn's and its recreation and special events opportunities. Keep website updated. Create work groups for specific areas of recreation programs so that the board doesn't have to do it all.
2. Dana also submitted his goals in writing
3. Dave – Ingersoll converted to rubberized floor/indoor track (multi-purpose field house) sell any unused equipment/property that the department doesn't need and acquire 2 outdoor turf fields. Our facilities are the worst in the state compared to all other school facilities/fields.
4. Phil – Multi-use facility in Ingersoll. Coordinate programming with Lewiston for better efficiency, i.e. winter fest, balloon festival, etc. More programming for kids, i.e. skateboarding, etc.

5. Sue – Pay more attention to seniors at many different levels. Expand the seniors program. Coordinate with Lewiston’s program to engage seniors in activities. Ingersoll to be a place where people could go for walking, running, classes, bikes, and be a center for everyone to go to do just about anything. Have some space made available for groups of various kinds to meet. She would like dedicated staff hours to facilitate seniors activities.
6. Dana – Repurposing Ingersoll as a multi-purpose facility with an indoor track. Interested in doing things that increase awareness and participation in running. Would also like to see the public better informed when fields/facilities are undergoing projects.
7. Eric also would like to see Ingersoll turned into a multi-purpose facility. He is tired of seeing the community sending their money to Portland. Because they have several multi-purpose facilities, they are dominating all sports. Bring in more programs, i.e. soccer by the Portland Phoenix. Secondly, we’re one of the biggest cities around that doesn’t have a turf field. Sponsorship of a scoreboard by a large company like P & G. Produce revenue by installing advertising signs on the field fences. Thirdly, he would like to adjust fees up for adult programs. Asked if we are in line with Lewiston programs. Ravi was asked when the last increase in fees took place.
8. Dan Poisson – Repurpose Ingersoll to a multi-purpose facility. Turf fields would be a good idea. Establishing a dog park.

VI. Open Session

Dan Bildoeau from Auburn, and is on the Auburn planning board. Received copies of handbooks, Robert’s Rules, city policies and procedures, FOAA procedures and general guidelines. Will provide PDFs for Ravi. Planning Board is very pro-recreation. He was interested in hearing the board’s comments regarding Chestnut Street and Cleveland Fields. Send these items to the planning board through Eric Cousins. Rob is a member of Auburn Snow Groomers. Dan is the Trail Master of LACC and member of the Perkins Ridge Snow Travelers. There are three snow mobile clubs in with almost 90 miles of trails in addition to pedestrian paths. Has contacted 9 municipalities with a summary of what is done with snow mobile registrations. Once someone registers his/her snowmobile, the money goes to the state with a small amount be deducted, and then the remainder is reimbursed to the municipality. The city has been taking the money and using it for things like the general fund. All the other municipalities give the money back to the snowmobile clubs. He would like to see this money (about \$4,000.00) be allocated differently. The three snowmobile clubs run their equipment into the ground, building trails, bridges and grooming trails. If each club was given \$1,000.00 and another \$1,000.00 given to the rec department. Each \$1,000.00 would get another \$5,000.00 for the trails. Rob stated that \$1,000.00 per club isn’t a lot, but it helps defray the costs of fuel and materials. A little goes a long way.

Tizz asked that the reallocation of the snowmobile registration money be on the next agenda. People are not required to register their snowmobiles in Auburn. Where the money goes is not clear.

Denis stated that this has been worked on. Ravi has contacted each club and has asked for a letter asking what each club is looking for. Good idea to put this on the next agenda. Information is needed by the 24th of February. The board can then make a recommendation.

Dan Poisson commented that there is no flag on the second sheet of ice at the new arena. Suggestion to contact Ed Desgrosseilliers to get that addressed.

There was a suggestion that the new hotels in the area be asked to donate money for the repurposing of Ingersoll. Sue stated that the requests should be coordinated so that not everyone is requesting money over and over from the same businesses.

There was a question as to whether an hour a month would be enough with the repurposing of Ingersoll. Ravi responded that the meeting times may have to be expanded.

It was suggested that the events that will be coming up in the next 90 days be put on the next agenda, i.e. Memorial Day, Spring Celebration, Hats Off to Neighborhood Businesses. These events need support. For bigger events, review should be done within 120 days of the event. The city's 150th anniversary is coming up.

VII. Next meeting will be March 12, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. Tizz requested that all of the meetings are posted on the website.

VIII. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Biron
Administrative Assistant