

AUBURN RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 9, 2014
6:30 P.M.

ATTENDEES: Dave Gonyea, Ravi Sharma, Tizz Crowley, Dana Staples, Dan Poisson, Phil Savignano, Sue Patneau, Eric Audette and Dave Sterling.

GUEST: Jim Berube and Matt Brooks

The meeting was opened by Dave Gonyea at 6:30 p.m.

- I. Minutes of last month's minutes were reviewed. Motion by Tizz Crowley to accept the minutes as presented. Seconded. All in favor.
- II. Chair Report
 - A. Dave met with the city manager regarding the chiller. No permission was needed to sell the chiller because it was part of the package for the new arena and that Ingersoll would no longer be an ice arena. No-compete clause with the Norway Savings Bank Arena. The chiller had to be sold.
 - B. How are we going to pay for the repurposing of Ingersoll? City manager said that it would have to be bonded. The board is to advise Ravi and he will make recommendations. Nothing was asked about the money that was left over after Ingersoll closed. Ravi stated that any money that was in Ingersoll, stayed with Ingersoll. This money was to be allocated for Ingersoll renovations. The proceeds from the sale of the chiller also stayed with Ingersoll. Tizz agreed that, as a city councilor, that it was her understanding that the money mentioned did belong to Ingersoll.
 - C. There are now two enterprise accounts: Norway Savings Bank Arena and Ingersoll Arena. The money that was allocated to renovate Ingersoll in the amount of \$420,000.00, which was a loan from the City of Auburn and not a bond, never went through because the Norway Savings Bank Arena was proposed and the renovations did not take place.
- III. Ingersoll Sub-Committee Report
 - A. Turf vs. Rubber for the floor.
 1. Price for Turf camp in at \$100,000.00 plus \$5,000.00 per year for maintenance. After the 5 year period, the cost would be renegotiable.
 2. Rubber came in at \$110,000.00 with no contract. The floor will just need to be kept clean.
 3. Usage Benefits Rubber – could be used for just about everything.
 4. Turf would be limited for usage. No food allowed on the surface. Could cause staff infection. Field would have to be treated. Both surfaces will have site work preparation. Revenues were not included in the proposal for either surface.
 - B. Potential User Groups – Turf vs. Rubber
 1. Adult Dodgeball
 2. Lacrosse
 3. Tee Ball

4. Indoor Walking
5. Field Hockey
6. Football
7. Adult Soccer
8. Adult Volleyball
9. Sword Fighting
10. Batting Cages
11. Tennis

1. Staffing – depends on demand based on what the building has been repurposed as. The building will need significant supervision unless a group has rented the building and can supervise themselves. Dave was concerned that the audience was being limited. Eric stated that for athletics, going with rubber, we're losing.
2. Sue suggested that a committee be established to research what could be done on each surface and which one would be the most sensible. Ravi and others from the board will look at other facilities that use both types of flooring and bring back their information. Places that they would like to visit included The Rack, Your Space, Gorham Youth Complex, and Howards Sports Center in Saco.
3. The kids at ELHS run in the halls during the winter for track. It was asked if they high school would pay to use the facility. Dave Sterling stated that he was sure that the high school would pay to use the facility if they needed it. There is nowhere else to go.
4. It was agreed that more research will be done before any decisions are made. No matter what it ends up being, it has to support itself. Revenues must be maximized. A turf field will bring in \$150.00 per hour. A rubber field will not bring in as much revenue. The most revenue can be generated by a turf complex. It not only needs to be able to support itself, but do so year round.
5. Our gym time is maxed out during the winter months. There is little to no time available for any other programs.
6. The recreation administrative assistant, who was present to take the minutes for the board, offered some suggestions for the use of the building to include housing rec camp for the younger group rather than having to pay for a school location for the 8 weeks of the program, using it when it is raining for tee-ball games, football practices, etc.

IV. Senior Citizens Sub-Committee Report

- A. Sue Patneau presented reports indicating that the local senior citizens clubs were started through a grant from the Older Americans Act. Norris Ingersoll got the grant for \$15,000.00 to increase the activity of older Americans. The program was mentioned year after year in the annual reports. The acquisition of the Hasty Community Center was partly due to the need for the senior citizens to have a place to meet. There were 1000+ members 51 years ago.
 1. The city finance department manages some of the First Auburn Seniors money. The bills are paid by the city and reimbursed by the seniors to the city to enable them to have tax-exempt status. The average age of the present club is 79. The program has gotten smaller through attrition, so not many new members have been recruited in the last few years.

2. Recommended that the city make a formal commitment to the older population. The city provides funding to both the First Auburn and New Auburn groups in the amount of \$1400.00. The recreation department staff does a lot for the First Auburn Seniors by driving the van for trips, cooking meals, etc.
3. The schedule will eventually be established and put on the city website. Baby Boomers are now starting to retire and are young enough to do more things. Some trips that are being advertised by the New Auburn Seniors, are quite expensive for those living on a limited income. We would like to use the two groups as the basis for this program.
4. Met with representatives from both clubs. They listened to the information presented and were asked what kinds of activities that they are not doing now that they would like to have provided.
 - a. Are the groups willing to make changes?
 - b. Clubs raise their own money. Is the city going to move money out of our accounts. We would not that to happen.
 - c. Government affiliation may indicate the need for changes in the way things are done, i.e. prayer, etc.
 - d. More staff hours. This program will not be able to run without oversight by someone in the department. With formal approval a new group could be established. If they don't agree to the changes, a new program will have to be started.
 - e. The Robin Dow group stands alone and is not sponsored by the City. There is another group based out of the United Methodist Church.
 - f. There are definitely differences between the First Auburn and New Auburn groups. Sue felt that the groups should be open to younger residents. Trips should be organized and be open to everyone and appear on the website to keep everyone informed.
 - g. Both groups like traditional seniors programming. They like playing games. They are going to be encouraged to go to the city website to the "Say It" link. A question is asked in order to gather information, i.e. what games do you like to play? Posters will be created and posted at both seniors locations. That way the group can provide those things that everyone wants to do.
 - h. Hopefully both groups will become part of this program. There are businesses/organizations ready to support the program. Sue and Tizz will meet with both groups again and come back with more definitive information.
 - i. This item will be put on the next agenda and next steps will be discussed.

V. Next Steps

A. Potential User Groups

1. Visiting other facilities will give the answer to potential user groups. The board decided to wait and not pursue user groups at this time. A survey could be done on Survey Monkey to find out what people want to use the facility for. Dave suggested

waiting to ask the potential user groups whether or not they are interested in using the building if there is rubber flooring and/or turf.

2. Tizz asked if anything had been done regarding the special events committee. Encouraged support for a parks commission. Where the athletic fields are parks, more attention should be paid to the parks. There should be a Parks Commission for parks like the Recreation Advisory Board is in existence for recreation. The Ordinance in the Charter still says Parks & Recreation.
3. Eric Audette stressed that no survey should be done until the visitation to other facilities is completed. That will answer all of the questions.
4. Jim Berube was present from the general public and was asked to share his comments about the surface for Ingersoll. He stated that his daughter plays soccer year-round for LAYSA, the middle school and for the Phoenix, and has been in many facilities all over Maine. They travel to Portland all the time to get to a turf facility and that turf floor is far more enticing than a rubber floor for Ingersoll. Soccer teams don't normally play on a rubber surface. Asked if they would pay \$150.00 an hour for turf, Mr. Berube said that they potentially would. A rubber floor is too fast. The game is normally played outside on grass. The program costs a lot of money because they have to travel. They would much prefer to pay the money to use a local facility and not have to travel. Even though the facility is not regulation size, he felt that games could be played in that facility if it were turf.
5. There are quite a few kids playing lacrosse and soccer. Tizz stressed that commitments need to be in place before deciding what to do with the facility. This facility has to be revenue-producing.
6. Ravi reminded the board that the debt that Ingersoll owes still has to be paid out of the money that is generated.

VI. Open

- A. Matt Brooks was present at the meeting and wanted to know if the board needed anything from him to go forward with his Halloween program for the fall. Ravi stated that Matt did not necessarily need his support, but that his program may be able to mesh with what the department is doing. Matt will contact Ravi at a future date.
- B. Jim Berube spoke about the department's support for the middle school. AMS is the only Class A school that has combined teams for boys and girls soccer, boys baseball and girls softball. More players are cut at tryouts than are actually put onto teams. We don't have 7th grade and 8th grade teams. Wants the board to understand that this is a disservice to the middle school athletic programs, and the high school programs. The 7th & 8th grade programs are feeder programs for the high school. With turf in Ingersoll, it is vital that the middle school programs be made a priority. This has been an on-going problem that has never been addressed. He would like the board to support athletics, whether at the school or through recreation programs. Kids want to play, they just want to be given that opportunity. Once cut from a sport, they will not tryout again. Tizz stated that this is an opportunity to expand and offer services through the recreation department. When the school doesn't offer something, the recreation department should try to offer it. A youth strategy plan is needed. This has to be economically

viable. AMS wants to phase in new athletics over the next few years. Once the budget is set, however, the new sports programs are the first things that will get cut.

Voters need to be informed so that when they go to the polls to vote on the school budget, they can vote appropriately. The city council also needs to be informed and on board.

VII. Adjournment – 8:30 p.m. Next Meeting – May 14, 2014, 6:30 p.m.