



**Auburn Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2013
6:30 p.m.**

ATTENDEES: Dan Poisson, Phil Savignano, Ravi Sharma, Leroy Walker

ABSENT: Paul Douglass and Eric Audette

SPECIAL GUESTS: Tizz Crowley, Denis D'Auteuil and Howard Kroll

Ravi opened the meeting with the review of the previous month's minutes. No exceptions taken.

Ravi stated that a needs assessment will be conducted to go along with the planning phase of the new high school. The assessment will outline the recreation facilities available city-wide, the activities and scheduling taking place, and the demands of the community. This will encompass all facilities in the city, not only the city-owned facilities. Leroy was concerned about having all the city's facilities lumped together. Denis D'Auteuil stated that having all of the city's facilities listed is a good thing. The city will be able at some point in the assessment to separate all the private facilities and establish that our recreation programs are not able to use the private facilities, which will reduce the scope of facilities in the assessment. This will be a benefit.

Howard Kroll reported that Wright Pierce, John Hollywood and Gale were the only three bidders for the needs assessment, and the contract was awarded to Wright Pierce, whose bid was \$6500.00 lower than the second lowest bid, in the amount of \$29,000.00.

Ravi opened discussion relative to what the board members would like to include for future meeting agenda items.

Dan Poisson would like to have updates on the Ingersoll Arena, and on the progress of the new twin arena project, to include financial reports.

Phil Savignano is interested in establishing a dog park in the city and asked if there was a possibility of pursuing one.

Ravi suggested that New Auburn Greenways is another project that they might be interested in getting updates on, as there are plans to expand Little Andy Park, and the Rails to Trails project along Minot Avenue.

Leroy Walker would like to have updates on Camp Exchange Tot Lot and the Auburn Municipal Beach as to what succeeded and what failed. He also asked what is needed at each facility to improve it and make it more user-friendly and enjoyable.

It was suggested by Leroy Walker that the department partner with the YMCA to build a new recreation center. The YMCA has the land, but doesn't have the money or the funding to do a project of that size. Ravi indicated that there must be a determination as to how it will mutually benefit both organizations. The Auburn Parks & Recreation Advisory Board should meet with the YMCA board to hash out the details. He suggested that if anyone knows of a grant that is available for this type of project, that we would like to look at it.

Tizz Crowley inquired as to whether or not there was a representative on the advisory board from Ward 1. Ravi responded that Ward 1 is represented on the board. She continued that she is present at the meeting because she wants to see the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board use its power to get things done in the city. With regard to the dog park, she stressed the importance of getting others engaged with the project to move it forward.

Opens Session:

There are 2 vacancies on the board. If anyone knows of anyone who might want to serve on the board, they should advise them to fill out the application at Auburn Hall. Diversity is encouraged.

Phil Savignano brought up a program that has been developed by the Y for cross country skiing through the Bill Koch league, headed by Whitney Condit. He urged the department to pursue a cross-country program again. He also would like to see a cross-country program included in Winter Festival next year.

Tizz Crowley expressed her disappointment with the fact that she had offered to hold a couple of events for Winter Festival and never heard back from anyone. She asked why the public was not informed when Winter Festival events are being organized.

Leroy Walker asked what has happened to the Ingersoll Arena. He stated that this final year was supposed to be a memorable year and he hasn't heard of anything special being done. He feels that the advisory board should be on top of it.

Tizz would like to see the department develop a plan to meet the challenge of getting the cemeteries ready for Memorial Day. Denis D'Auteuil commented that parks and public works learned a lot after Memorial Day 2012. He realizes that the parks division does not have the resources to get it all done with what they have to work with. The public works department has developed a plan for events so they can supplement the parks crew to get everything done. It was suggested that the department coordinate with veteran organizations or solicit volunteers. There was also a shortage of flags last year for all veteran's graves and ignoring veterans is against the law. There are few cemetery records available for the old cemeteries, but if a grave it marked, it should have a flag. Tizz suggested starting a community conversation about flags so that when Memorial Day comes, the problem doesn't exist. She also suggested building a contact list of volunteers to call on when the need arises.

Phil Savignano is involved on the committee to build an additional access road into Mt. Apatite. The National Guard area access will be closed to the public. An article will be done by the Sun/Journal about the project. The National Guard has the money to get the project done.

Ravi invited anyone to email him with topics that they would like to have discussed at future meetings and he will include them on the agenda.

Leroy indicated that he asked a lot of questions at the last meeting to which he has not yet received a reply. Ravi assured him that the manager will forward the reports he requested to him, and that he needed time to get all the other information together.

It was stated that there hasn't been much discussion about the arena. Ravi informed the board that the June, 2012 minutes contained information about the arena. Mike Berube was present at the meeting, and he and Ravi had replied to the questions posed at the meeting.

Leroy would like to be in the loop as to what the department needs for the budget and CIP. Being aware of the department's needs will assist the council during the budget process to make the appropriate decisions. He stressed the importance of bringing the department's needs to the advisory board so that the advisory board and councilors will all be informed and make every effort to get those requests funded.

Motion by Phil Savignano to adjourn. Second by Dan Poisson. All in favor.

Adjournment: 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Jan Biron, Administrative Assistant