

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Minutes January 18, 2022, 6:30 pm via Webex

Attending:

Director Joe McRae
Christopher Kendel, Assistant Commissioner of Parks & Recreation

Deby Auerbach-Brown
Lenora Cruz-Price
Mike Payne
Alex Pesta
Peggy Spaeth
Peter Titas

Peter Titas chaired the meeting in the absence of the chair

December minutes were approved

Cumberland discussion

Director McRae said that the proposed 2-week cut of the pool season, due to the 30% budget reduction, was restored by City Council.

Christopher Kendel

The 2021 pool season was open, as is traditional, from the first Saturday in June to Labor Day, but some large programs were not presented to limit the possibility of super-spreader events.

The 2022 pool season is scheduled with the full complement of pool programs from June 4 to Labor Day. August 22-September 2 weekdays will be on a reduced schedule because the life guards are back in school.

There was a brief discussion about the lack of access to the Heights High pool during the winter, reflecting a desire on the part of some residents for an indoor community pool.

There was also a comment about use of the Heights pool off-season to increase access to learning to swim to African Americans. Director McRae will reach out to discuss this further.

Elections

The following officers were elected for two-year terms:

Peter Titas, Chair
Deby Auerbach-Brown, Vice-Chair
Peggy Spaeth, Secretary

A question was asked whether the Heights Youth Scholarship Fund could fund free programs for all rather than a piecemeal approach. The Director explained that the fund is funded primarily by the Happy 5K Run, which hasn't been held the last 2 years due to the pandemic. The Run has generated from \$5000-\$10000 a year through sponsorships. He

suggested that the Board put discussion and effort in increasing the fund and making them available. Currently the scholarships are only advertised when people come to register for a program when they ask, because of the fear that there is not enough in the fund to cover all need. However, before the pandemic the fund was close to being sufficient. Adam Fleischer of The Wine Spot has initiated many of the sponsorships, and runner Deby Auerbach-Brown volunteered to be on the Planning Committee for this year's Happy 5K Run. Donations can be made by check made out to the City of Cleveland Heights with Heights Youth Scholarship Fund in the subject line.

Discussion of South Ice Rink

Director McRae has provided written answers to questions submitted by members of the board.

Staff does not have a position on the ice rinks as it is up to the community to decide about them.

The South Rink (1960s) is beyond what is considered its useful life, with pipes under the floor eroding and sometimes breaking. Peak times of use of both rinks are afternoons and until late in the evenings.

The South Rink is an NHL rink (smaller) and the North Rink is Olympic size. The North Rink pipe infrastructure was installed in 2001-2 but needs more maintenance. It's open year-round.

The South Rink is open October-March. Its floor is concrete and used by summer camps.

There is a question about whether the community needs two ice rinks or one converted to multipurpose artificial turf used throughout the year. The community needs to discuss the use of the two rinks, and Council will make the decision.

As requested, the Director will provide revenue and expense data so that the Board can understand the economics of the ice rinks.

Basketball, open gym, and pickle ball are popular uses of the building.

A concern was expressed that the ice community has a perception that a decision has already been made. Director McRae said that no decision has been made about the degrading South Rink. There are community members who see the needed investment as an opportunity for a discussion about indoor turf.

Staff will implement whatever decision is made by the community and Council. There will be a process to determine input.

Future agenda items:

February

Scholarship fund

Cain Park—please forward questions in advance

Programs

Capital needs

March—end of ice season discussion

April-Friends of Heights Parks and capital needs of all parks

The meeting was adjourned at