Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes
4:00 pm
November 10, 2014

Present: Vice-President Peggy Condon, Commissioner Pat Lenski

Staff: Nicole Vickers, Mike Younie, Beth Keen, Mickey Boyle, Keith Schmerer, Kelly Wales, Elliott Bortner, Traci Wicks

Absent: Joann Able

Athletic Supervisor Keith Schmerer: Mr. Schmerer is responsible for Gymnastics/Tumbling, is liaison for Geneva Baseball Association, manages use of Western and Harrison gyms, oversees outdoor athletic fields/leagues, basketball leagues and assists with special events. Spring 2014: Gymnastics/Tumbling numbers were fairly stable. Despite the competition with the newer gym in town, revenue did not decline significantly. Summer 2014: The 3-on-3 Basketball event had an increase in the number of teams from last year. Profit was reduced slightly due to the increased staff required by the larger number of teams/games. Summer gymnastics had a decrease in profit, but an increase in enrollment due to a structure change. Summer numbers are historically low so the season was broken down into 3 week segments (June, July & August) which helped enrollment; however, many classes ran at minimum enrollment, resulting in low revenues with the expense of instructor salaries being fixed. This structure will be evaluated to determine whether to continue it next summer.

SPRC Facility Manager/Aquatics Manager Mickey Boyle: Mr. Boyle oversees SPRC operations, Sunset and Mill Creek Pools, as well as adult athletics. There was a drastic decline in summer adult athletics, solely with basketball leagues. Due to the extension of the winter leagues because of several weather cancellations, we were not able to run the summer leagues. The goal is to be done with winter leagues in March/April, but with 6 weeks of cancellations this past winter that was not possible.

Recreation Supervisor Kelly Wales: Ms. Wale’s responsibilities include Friendship Station Preschool, Kids’ Zone, Summer Camp, Day-off Trips, special events, and supervises Ms. Densmore’s program areas of Teen and Birthday Parties. Spring 2014 teen trips and programs were down a bit from last year. Moving forward we are weighing our options per our feedback to improve these programs, including the option of developing a teen leadership camp. The day-off trips/camps had a higher enrollment due to the amount of snow days this school year. Preschool was comparable to last year and Kids’ Zone was up slightly. Summer 2014 day-off trips & camps were different in the enrollment totals because we had one less week.

Recreation Supervisor Elliott Bortner: Mr. Bortner’s current areas of responsibility are Toddler, Youth, Adult, Cultural Arts and most special events. The Breakfast with the Bunny event had less enrollment this year, but the profit was up due to the use of more volunteers. The Egg Hunt event was extremely successful with an estimated 1,100 participants. Our Night Owl Egg Hunt had a significant increase in numbers as well and we had 7 more Bunny Basket deliveries than last year. TV Turn Off Week saw an increase in participation also. Spring 2014 programming updates: toddler classes had a dip in enrollments, but a profit overall. Adult enrollment is comparable to last year. The summer Battle of the Bands event had a dip in participation. Ms. Vickers mentioned that we have been in talks with The Geneva Chamber of Commerce to possibly collaborate and pool our resources for their Geneva’s Got Talent event. The Poolside Luau had a dip in participation this summer due to colder weather and this year’s Folk Fest went well overall. Summer 2014 programming: we had an increase in toddler registration, but decrease in profit; a dip in youth registration, but we believe these youths have moved over to cultural arts programs; there was a slight increase in adult registrations.
Recreation Supervisor Beth Keen: Ms. Keen oversees cheer, dance, ASSI, senior programming and all contractual programs. Spring 2014 went well in most areas. Dance is still a bit down with the Spring recital being reduced from 5 performances in past years to 4 this year. The aging-out of a number of long-time dance team participants has affected numbers in this area over the past year. General athletics have done very well. ASSI for Spring appears to have declined over last year, however, this is a result of the revenue for the T-ball program being transferred from Spring to Summer, which is the more appropriate season in which to report it. Senior programming is going well, with a number of very popular and well-attended trips. Summer 2014 dance was consistent with Spring, again demonstrating the loss of some older participants. Athletics were strong with the Summer sports camps continuing to be well attended. Volleyball is a particularly positive area, as the program continues steady growth. The result of the above-mentioned revenue adjustment in ASSI is reflected in the jump in numbers for that program area, which is already strong during the Summer season. ASSI one-week Summer camps had not done well last year. Strong marketing efforts had a very positive effect this year, with all camps showing significant increases in participation. Martial Arts was comparable to last year. Mr. Lenski asked for an explanation of the Senior trip programming. Ms. Keen explained the cooperative arrangement with Batavia Park District with the planning of trips. She further explained that some fests and annual events that are popular with seniors may be offered annually, while plays and other events are changed to offer variety, frequently taking suggestions from the seniors for future trips.

Director of Facilities Mike Younie: Mike reported on the Summer 2014 Twilight Mini Golf and Mini Golf Kids’ Day events. Both were comparable to last year, with good weather having a positive effect on the Kids’ Day event. Ms. Condon inquired about the skateboard competition held in past years. Ms. Vickers explained that the event has continued to be offered with no registration.

Sunset Facility Manager/Fitness Supervisor Joann Able: Ms. Able, who oversees Fitness programming was absent due to a family emergency. Ms. Vickers reported that both Spring and Summer 2014 fitness were quite comparable to last year, pointing out that Summer was up this year after a couple of years of a downward trend. She anticipants continued growth in this area.

Summer Camp Report Kelly Wales: Ms. Wales gave an overview of the camp structure and detailed participation and profit for Traditional and Specialty camps for Summer 2014. Due to the extension of the school year caused by snow days, the first week of camp was cancelled. Going forward, this first week will be altered to offer day-off trips rather than a camp week, which will provide more flexibility in the event of a similar situation. Having used this year to observe the current camp structure, Ms. Wales has made recommendations for changes that she feels will improve the program in future years. Highlights include; separating the incoming 6th grade participants into a pre-teen camp, rather than including them in the Teen X-Treme Camp which is currently 6th-8th grade. This may provide a better transition from the elementary to middle school experience for this group. The camp hours for both these groups may be altered to match that of the other traditional camps; the elimination of the Counselor in Training program, which had minimal participation, in favor of a specialty camp that focuses on developing leadership skills; working to utilize pool staff to assist in swim skills evaluation of campers.
Director of Marketing & Public Relations Traci Wicks: Ms. Wicks’s report focused on the increased use and benefits of social media as a tool in marketing. Facebook has been utilized to great effect, particularly with the posting of photos of participants from all the various events, as well as regular programming. These efforts have increased our Facebook “likes” considerably. Additionally, when the marketing department is on site taking photos, they distribute social media business cards encouraging participants to go onto the Facebook page to view their photo posts. Current “likes” stand at 1,506 which Ms. Wicks considers a great success. She also analyzes the activity of the various events to further enhance the use of this marketing tool. Twitter continues to be used as an informational tool, currently focused on use for Playhouse 38 productions. While use is low, Ms. Wicks still feels this is a form of social media worth pursuing for specific program areas. Use of Twitter for Sunset and Mill Creek pools has been very successful in communicating the often last-minute weather-related closures and swim lesson cancellations that are inherent to pool operations. The photo sharing site Instagram is another social media outlet that is being launched and initial data on its use and effectiveness in reaching the teen and tween market will be reported at the next meeting. Email use continues to be steady and efforts to continually enhance the effectiveness of the website are ongoing. Ms. Condon asked about the aspect of sharing Facebook posts and whether this occurs. Ms. Wicks responded that our Facebook community does not seem particularly savvy as to the use of tagging and sharing photos, but that the marketing department uses their own posts to promote and educate the public about the sharing of photos.

Ms. Vickers asked for any questions from the board members. Mr. Lenski had no questions, but did wish to comment on a couple of areas. He felt that, while declines in certain program areas may be viewed as a negative for the Park District, when it is known that competition is created by new businesses opening in certain program areas, such as dance, sports, etc., this trend should be looked at as overall positive sign for the community and not a failure on the part of staff or the Park District as a whole. He also acknowledged the constant struggle to reach the teen market and suggested teaming with the high school to create an avenue to reach this difficult demographic, possibly tapping into volunteer opportunities. Some discussion was held as where we see the greatest participation by teens and how these areas may be enhanced to broaden their appeal. Ms. Condon initiated the idea of a biking club or similar program to tap into this growing interest and discussion ensued.