

# **SOMERS RECREATION COMMISSION**

## **Regular Meeting**

**November 2, 2009**

Kibbe Fuller Community Center

**Members Present: J.J. Wassmuth, Alicia Albert, Karen Murdoch, Michelle Tingley, Troy LaMontagne, Anna Gagnon, Karen McGuane**

**Non-Members present: Mike Provencher, Jenifer Charette,**

**Audience:** See Attached List

### **I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm

### **II. Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Minutes from October were read and accepted with no changes.

### **III. Audience**

Somers Basketball Association

Ed Polomba and Kevin McGuane spoke on behalf of Somers Basketball Association (SBA).

SBA is concerned with weekend usage of the gymnasium. Usage fee had previously been subsidized by either the Board of Education or the Recreation Department. Weekend usage requires overtime pay of custodial staff at time and a half on Saturdays and double time on Sundays. SBA has tried to not schedule weekend games because of cost. Last years custodial costs were over \$5000, SBA was assess \$668 of that fee. The line item for support of custodial staff has been drooped from the Recreation Department budget. SBA cannot afford to pick up that cost. Middle school basketball program was dropped by the BOE because the Recreation program was determined to be a sufficient feeder program. Other Recreation sports use outdoor facilities, which are maintained under the Parks Maintenance budget. If SBA was required to increase participation fees to cover the cost of custodial support, the fee increase could be upwards of \$50 per participant. Monday through Friday the custodian fees are covered because they already in the school for other reasons. Union rules require a custodian to be on site during weekend usage of facility. SBA feels there is inequity since basketball is asked to subsidize custodial fees and other sports do not have to subsidize park maintenance costs.

SBA requests support from Recreation Department to help offset fees.

Additional comments made: Elimination of the middle school basketball program was done with the understanding that the SBA would pick up the slack to develop the feeder program for basketball. Current fees are \$50 per participant.

Increase would go to \$80 per participant. SBA feels there is inequity since basketball is asked to subsidize janitors and other sports do not have to subsidize field maintenance.

There is a Union rule that there must be a janitor. In SES when the gym is in use the other parts of the building are not accessible. Other towns hire a “responsible” person at a lower rate than a janitor. SBA could survey other towns to see how they handle weekend use of schools. Only need gymnasium and bathrooms other parts of schools can be closed off.

All participants pay \$50, travel is additional 15 for uniform. SBA has made renovations to the MBA school to add basketball hoops that are adjustable, added scoreboard to SES. High school coaches are not even allowed in the high school without janitorial supervision. Union contract requires a custodian in every building that is open. Last year’s cost was \$5168, \$4500 subsidized.

Dave Pinney commented that BOE pays until their budget is exhausted (4500), then Recreation Commission pays after that. SBA is responsible for the excess over 4500. BOS froze funding, eliminated the custodian line item. BOS is looking to cut spending. Dave thinks it is worth pursuing to get cooperation from BOE to ease requirements on custodial staff. Need to pursue a conversation with school administration and staff.

Last year there were 150 participants. 4500/150 is roughly 30 additional per participant. Recreation commissions will follow up on how to pursue this issue with BOE. Previous talks have not been very fruitful, but we should attempt to have the discussion again. May consider equal fees for all associations. Associations constantly put investment back into the town property. Town should support recreation department sports.

Question about monies from gravel pit. There has been money coming in. Is it possible to use some of that money to go to basketball offset? Question was not answered.

Gym usage is a concern on weeknights. Try to get 2 games in on Friday. Gym usage is a high priority. Travel program cannot schedule games very late against towns far way. With all the recreation and travel teams and the number of available slots the gym usage is maxed out. Also slots used for volleyball, men’s basketball and school functions. Minimum expenditure for a custodian is 4 hours. School usage is not well communicated. Sometimes they show up for practice and the gym is in use. Some of the other towns that Somers plays have their gyms open on weekends. Somers may not be welcome to participate in leagues if they don’t offer weekend games.

Recreation Commission next step: talk to BOE see what they can do to help. We’ve gone that route before asking for non-school employee, not well received. Custodial contract requires one janitor, contract requires one per building. Question of whether STEAP grant could go toward this program. The STEAP grant is for capital improvement only. Recreation commission had no money allocated already to capital that could have been diverted to basketball fees.

Complaint about the service rendered by the janitorial staff that they are paying for. Parents have to move bleachers, hoops and put things back. Janitors

unlock the doors and are unavailable after that. Janitors don't even sweep floors between games.

Basketball can handle the expense this year, do not want to discourage parents from participation this year. Need a long term solution. SBA is asking recreation department for support. If can't support, then basketball needs clear written procedures so they can plan a long term sustainable solution. Long term SBA doesn't want to ask for a 60% increase in the fees. Solution can be found if participants are willing to work to a solution. Recreation commission should make a recommendation for a solution and present to the BOS. If moneys need to be moved, then would have to take recommendation to board of finance.

Basketball is willing to go to BOE, but came to Rec commission first since they are a Rec program. Security is not an issue, the issue is the union contract.

## Tennis

Aileen Henry spoke on behalf of Somers Tennis

Acknowledged Mike Provencher for help in getting quotes. Girl scouts are working on silver badge for community service. Have collected names of students in school who are interested in playing tennis. Names are from middle school.

Two quotes to look at the tennis courts. Life of courts are 20-25 year. Cracks have been repaired several times; the courts need to be re-done.

Quotes received for repairing cracks and for re-doing courts. For redoing the courts quotes range from \$50K per court, to \$113K for all courts. Plus \$8600 to repair practice courts. Courts could be engineered to allow for skating in the winter in addition to tennis. Would add probably \$20K to price to include skating. Engineering would have to be done by town engineer. Difference in price for adding skating would include berms and drainage, piping etc. 4-6 inch berm to hold the water. Having the skating rink on the tennis court inside of fencing would protect it from vandals. Skating rink would require redoing the fencing. Figures presented for different quotes from different companies.

Coop tennis with Ellington uses Somers courts.

To do the skating rink, would have to be designed into the court at the beginning. Could not easily change later. Some experts say the layer over the courts may increase the life of the courts. Skating rink is vandalized almost every year. Last year it was ok, because it froze quickly. Inside the tennis court, the rink would be protected.

Tennis asks for Recreation Commission consideration for funding of tennis courts.

## Skate Park

Chuck Carson, town resident for 17 years. Started the old skatepark with \$10K from the Board of Selectmen and added \$5K through donations. STEAP grant initiated because of the fundraiser held on behalf of the skatepark last October. Penney Bachiocci attended fundraiser and liked what she saw. She said she would put

the STEAP grant in. The initial proposal for a skate park is concrete rather than metal ramps. Concrete is low maintenance, if doesn't drain right construction company will fix it. 5 year guarantee. The group is getting a couple of quotes. There are several plans from \$200k on down. Plan is to expand as additional funds are raised.

Initial estimate of building cost is \$35/sq ft. Cost can be offset by town in kind service, such as earth moving. Highway department would have the capability of doing some earth moving, would have to schedule time with them. Skate park can be started with some area and will add on to as more money is brought in. Somers prosperity restricts us from getting much national money, such as the Tony Hawk Foundation.

#### **IV. Coordinators Report**

Basketball registration is over. Library is moved out of Kibbe Fuller. Meeting rooms not yet available. Library left some furniture that will be available for use such as tables for meeting rooms and computer cubbys. Meeting rooms will probably be ready by the end of the month. Contacting old programs that were bumped out of Kibbe to get more Recreation offerings. Next brochure for December thru February will come out before Christmas. Chief financial officer (Greg Simmons) getting camp and other programs to register on line. This activity is in plan to be worked on this month. "Active.com" has feature for town programs, but large fees. Tax fees already accepted online. Online registration for camp would enable people to register earlier.

#### **V. Parks Report**

End of fall season. Co-ed softball has ended. Soccer has one more week. Lacrosse is done. Working to make repairs before winter. Irrigation pipe is being repaired. Ordering fall fertilizer. Sokol Road manholes painted if anyone wants to look at layout. Turf on infields behind town hall is looking well. Minor league field cut out, major league field needs to be done. Bill McClosky wants to do work at field road on dugouts. Compressor scheduled to blow out irrigation systems and little league building this week.

Sokol Road field is very bad, dug up by skunks or some other animals. Wore than ever before. Leach field is under that area and drains too well. Need to add topsoil. Once soccer is off field, will add topsoil and reseed.

Softball field has been top dressed before and stones still show through. Field 3 (lit field) is in bad shape also. Most damage from football players. Field 3 overused this fall. Used by soccer, football and co-ed. Only lit field. Soccer used fields on weekends that rained. Associations need to self-regulate on the weekends. Parks department cannot make calls on weekends. During the week, parks dept makes the call on field usage during the week. If Mike closes a field, Jen contacts the association heads. It is their responsibility to contact coaches. Should be president of each league's responsibility to take care of the fields. Lacrosse association tournament not likely to be cancelled during heavy rains. Mike and Jen can contact association heads on suitability. Association heads need to be reminded of procedures.

**VI. Old business**

CIP items discussed.

Items on spreadsheet are currently in CIP request.

In past, improvements to field 3, improvements to field 4, irrigation,

Baseball has asked for STEAP money for lights on field 4.

Lacrosse and soccer have asked for fencing for firehouse field to keep balls in.

**VII. New Business**

None

**VIII. Correspondence**

None.

**IX. Next Meeting**

A special meeting will be held on November 16<sup>th</sup> to continue discussion on recommendation for STEAP money.

**X. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Karen Murdoch  
Secretary, Somers Recreation Commission

November 2<sup>nd</sup>

Cottontail CC

Jim Belisla

Joe Palanga

Jody Bartley

Diane Stiles

Steven Smithson

Linda Smith

John Smith

Dana Dwyer

Marty K. Garcia

Karen M. Garcia

Edward Ayala

Linda Smith

Celine Smith

Mary Ann Desobrowski

Robert Trusch

Rachel Smith

Jessica Trusch

Linda King

Emily Howell

Kipra Williams

Ellie B. Smith

Emily King

Margaret King

Lynette B. Smith

