

**WESTON RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2020 7:00 AM VIA ZOOM**

Pursuant to Gov. Baker's Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 modifying the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, the Recreation Commission, to ensure the safety of all participants, held its meeting remotely via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/925462282>, Meeting ID: 392 344 366.

Members Present: Melissa Crocker, Trevor MacDonald, Julie Johnstone, and Marcy Dorna

Absent: Eric Rosenthal, Elly Pendergast

Staff: Chris Fitzgerald (Director), Sharon Locke (Assistant Director), Lauren Smith (Program Coordinator)

Guests: Maija Cirulis-Gooch, Gerri Scoll, Kate Meeney, Mel Lavenberg, Jane Donnelly

Resident Comments:

Ms. Scoll asked the Recreation Commission to rethink their decision of closing the pool, noting that Senior citizens look forward to the pool for the social aspects, the physical aspects and for physical therapy. She noted that the decision was made before the state guidelines were released and that public input was lacking. She said that seniors would be willing to pay more if they had to.

Ms. Levenberg introduced herself as a member of the COA who was attending the meeting today as an observer to find out more about the recreation commission and what they do.

Mr. Fitzgerald introduced Ms. Cirulis-Gooch as the person who was nominated at the Town Caucus to run for one of the open spots on the Recreation Commission. Ms. Cirulis-Gooch is now interested in being appointed to the position vacated by Mr. Zhu.

Minutes

The minutes from the May 21 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Ratify Covid-19 Program Changes

Chris Fitzgerald

Mr. Fitzgerald reiterated the reasoning for the changes to the summer programming.

- **Day Camps:** There will be a drastic reduction of the number of campers allowed as well as limitations put on programming and activities. Access to schools have been denied, which is a critical part of meeting state camping guidelines. The decision was to refund all fees currently collected for day-camps because whatever will be offered will not be the same as what was advertised. Ms. Smith is currently working to see what can be offered safely within the guidelines.
- **Memorial Pool:** There were many factors weighing in on the pool decision:
 - Safety – related to the uncertainty of the pandemic and lifeguard preparation

- Financial – Expenses were expected to increase significantly while revenues would drop significantly, which would result in approximately \$150,000 deficit for the Recreation Enterprise Fund. Retained earnings does not have enough to cover this, and the availability of other funds to cover such a deficit was uncertain. The accuracy of the deficit was also uncertain, as it assumes programming and revenue levels will return to relative normalcy in the fall.
- Timing – Prep work takes 4 to 6 weeks and costs \$20,000+, there was a risk of closing down shortly after due to a state mandate reversing opening phases.
- Mechanical - A submersible pump that is critical to both opening and operation had malfunctioned and was in the process of being looked at as a warrantee issue, it is not known how long this would delay opening.

These issues were brought to the Select Board on May 26 in a discussion that focused on budget. They were indecisive on how to advise Recreation Commission to proceed, but encouraged Recreation Commission to continue evaluating and make the decision they feel is best.

Discussion took place among the Recreation Commission. The Commission agreed that refunding camp revenues while working on alternative summer program was a positive move but there was concern over the pool. A discussion ensued that included the following points:

- Time is running to be able to get the pool operating
- Uncertainty of cost
- Safety
- Reduced programming, no swim lessons, no special events, etc.
- Additional staff needed for sanitizing and as “social distance police”
- Revenue shortfalls and uncertainty of shortfalls to be covered
- Others pools are opening why can't Weston
- The pool should open for the senior citizen population in town.
- Budget was already set for the pool
- Why announcing before guidelines were released?
- Limited opening is better than no opening

Mr. MacDonald would like to state that the decision to close the pool was not made lightly but there are too many unknowns. He would also like to express that leaving the job of disinfecting and policing social distancing is a lot to ask of 16 and 17-year-old lifeguards who are already being asked to perform a very responsible job.

After the discussion, the Recreation Commission entertained motions to ratify the decisions.

VOTE: Motion to ratify all new and alternative day camp programming to fit under the MA guidelines

Moved: Mr. MacDonald, Second: Ms. Crocker

Roll call vote: Ms. Johnstone – Yes, Mr. MacDonald – Yes, Ms. Crocker – Yes, Ms. Dorna – Yes.

The motion passed unanimously

Motion to close the Memorial Pool for the Summer of 2020 due to safety and financial concerns

Moved: Ms. Crocker, Second: Mr. MacDonald

Roll call vote: Ms. Johnstone – yes, Mr. MacDonald – Yes, Ms. Crocker – Yes, Ms. Dorna – No.

The motion passed by majority.

Replacement of Commission Member

Chris Fitzgerald

Mr. XinSheng Zhu submitted his resignation from the Recreation Commission. Mr. Zhu's term was officially set to expire in May 2020 but due to the delay of town meeting due to the Covid Crisis his term has been extended. Mr. Zhu has chosen not to extend his term so he has resigned from the board.

Maija Cirulis-Gooch was previously nominated at the Weston Caucus to run for a seat on the Recreation Commission and expressed interest in being appointed to finish his term. She is already on the ballot to run for a full term when the elections are held, which would begin after Town Meeting. She has lived in Weston for 18 months and is mom to a 7 and 9-year old. She has her MBA in corporate strategy. During her 18 months in Weston Ms. Cirulis-Gooch has enjoyed various recreation services and feels they have helped her family settle into Weston. Her family especially loves the pool and after school classes. Ms. Cirulis-Gooch is looking to get involved and give back to the town.

Motion to approve appointment of Maija Cirulis-Gooch to the recreation commission to finish the term of Xinsheng Zhu

Moved: Ms. Johnstone, Second: Mr. MacDonald

Roll Call vote: Ms. Johnstone – Yes, Mr. MacDonald – Yes, Ms. Dorna – Yes, Ms. Crocker - yes

Motion passes unanimously

Programming Update

Chris Fitzgerald

Phase II Guidelines for fields are out and allow for group activities of no more than 10 for drills and general exercise only. Ms. Smith spoke to the Weston Board of Health yesterday regarding a day camp exemption which would allow the department to run clinics and workshops hopefully at Burchard Park. Some ideas that Ms. Smith is looking into for the summer are hiking, fishing, tennis, yoga, and art. More ideas and activities can be added once the staff is comfortable. Programs would be half day meeting 9am – 11am and 1pm – 3pm.

New Business:

Ms. Johnstone would like to recognize the Recreation Staff and thank them for working hard through all the uncertainty and new regulations.

Next Meeting It was agreed that the Recreation Commission should meet more frequently over the summer due to the uncertainty and new guidelines. Mr. Fitzgerald will send out a Doodle Poll to the Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 AM.

