



Windsor Lake Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes Tuesday, August 11, 2020, 5:30 pm

Commission Members Attending: Arlen Cellana, Jenny Dunning, Susan Chilson

At Large Attendees: Michael Canales, Beverly Cooper, Terry Cooper

Read and accept minutes. Arlen made the motion to accept, Susan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Invasive Pond Weed Remediation.

Mike shared the ESS Group remediation proposal, which includes permitting, pre-treatment surveys, treatment for Phragmites, Curly-leaf Pondweed and Milfoil, and post-treatment surveys, at a cost of \$43,100. This group performed similar treatment between 2014-18. Mike estimates that continuation of treatment will cost approximately \$15,000 annually.

Phragmites control is done in the late fall, milfoil in the spring when the plants bloom. Mike explained that cutting Phragmites is not effective as it creates a thick mat of weeds on the lake bottom.

Mike suggested that the \$12,000-13,000 revenue from parking fees (not being collected this summer due to Covid) could be allocated for sustained funding of invasive pond weed control rather than for lifeguards.

There are no lifeguards this summer because it was not possible to offer training due to Covid, which gives us a “test case” for not having lifeguards in the future. Mike explained that liability is actually lower without lifeguards, as there is no liability for lifeguards actions or inactions. The Massachusetts “Recreational Use Statute” shields the city from liability in parks generally. In past seasons, lifeguards were only on duty between the hours of 10 am – 6 pm. They did not guard the campground beach. Groups using the lake for swimming are required to provide their own lifeguards at a 25/1 ratio. Park police (one person on weekdays, 2 on weekends) could “police” the beaches if there were no guards. People do disregard the rules, but that happened when guards were present as well.

We do need to post more signage about swimming rules. We could also install cameras, which are now quite inexpensive. Another option is to install a gate so that people cannot come into the park after hours, although there would need to be a mechanism to allow campers to enter. Fines are an option, but police will not enforce non-criminal offenses.

Arlen stated that he is no longer uncomfortable with unguarded waterfront, as he has seen that state parks have few problems with that set-up.

Last year, city administrators pushed for discontinuing lifeguards at Windsor Lake, but City Council pushed for guards to remain.

Arlen recommends tabling the discussion of lifeguards until next month's meeting so the discussion can be publicized.

Arlen reported that Rob Cramer has offered to help fund weed remediation, but he doesn't think it's a good idea to rely on philanthropy for sustained annual costs.

Arlen made a motion that the commission request \$43,100 for weed remediation at Windsor Lake now in order to have time to investigate proposals for permanent funding solutions. Jenny seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Campground Update.

Due to Covid, the city allowed 64 full hook-up sites this summer, about 2/3 more than usual, but no short term rentals (typically there are 50 seasonals, with the rest being short term). The season was shortened this year, and fees cut accordingly. Four season campers canceled their reservations and got full refunds. Sixty-two sites are rented. The city is not renting for a partial season, despite requests. Campground revenues are down approximately \$30,000 from usual.

Other Business.

Mike reports that lake water quality has been excellent this year, despite high temperatures and low rainfall.

Plans for campground improvements are on hold due to the Covid crisis.

Open Meeting.

Terry brought up concerns about increased trash in the beach area and around the lake this summer. Mike explained that due to Covid, there are no seasonal DPW workers this year, resulting in 400 fewer staff hours. Staff are doing the best they can under the circumstances, but he will remind staff to pick up trash on weekdays when they are less busy. He could also send a DPW crew to the park.

Bev complained about late-night parties and fireworks at the park. Police have come, but the parties resume when they leave. There have also been more problems during the day. Mike allowed that this is an unusual summer. Some issues would be reduced if a parking fee were charged.

Next meeting will be September 8 at 5:30, at Windsor Lake.

Motion to Adjourn. Susan made the motion and Arlen seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 pm.