



TOWN OF PALM BEACH

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

MINUTES OF THE RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION RECREATION CENTER PRIVATIZATION STUDY GROUP HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2010

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

A meeting of the Town of Palm Beach Recreation Advisory Commission Recreation Center Privatization Study Group was held on October 20, 2010, in the Town Council Conference Room at Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Danielle Moore, Chairman of the Recreation Advisory Commission at 11:00 a.m. Other individuals of the study group in attendance were Mr. Chris Storkerson, Mr. Donald Singer and Mr. Larry Siedlik. Staff members in attendance were Director, Mr. Jay Boodheshwar, Assistant Director Mr. Rod Gardiner, and Office Manager Mrs. Lisa Walkowich. Also in attendance was Town Council member Mr. William Diamond and RAC Commission Mr. Daniel McDonnell.

II. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Mrs. Moore suggested that rather than taking citizen comments at the beginning of the meeting she would prefer to have a questions answered as information is presented.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mrs. Moore asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Singer made the motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Siedlik all were in favor.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Boodheshwar stated that at the last meeting the study group identified a number of items that they asked staff to review and report back to the study group. He said the report he had provided to the study group addressed these questions and provided some additional background information.

A. Quality of Programs

Mr. Boodheshwar stated that staff understands the importance and direct connection between quality and customer satisfaction with programs and historically has used a customer satisfaction survey to help measure this. Along with the survey, the use of program evaluations has resulted in practical improvements and enhancements to programs. Mr. Gardiner reported that in the past two years a greater focus has been placed on the orientation and training of the Activity Leaders. There is an employee handbook and ongoing education through regularly scheduled in-service trainings.

Staff will look into revising the survey to try and draw more feedback and information from the participants.

B. Marketing Program

Mr. Boodheshwar reported that staff has been researching the potential use of the Town's cable access channel, developing e-mail databases for direct marketing, creating a more coordinated approach to departmental cross marketing between facilities, more strategic use of informational display boards, and will approach the Palm Beach Daily News about a "Community Calendar" idea for agencies serving the Town. Additional suggestions include a broader internet presence with links to and from Town serving agencies, seasonal newsletters/fliers and utilizing social media.

Mr. Storkerson asked if staff was considering on-line registration. Mr. Boodheshwar said that was something staff could investigate for the future but it may require purchasing software. He also noted that staff has researched this option in the recent past but decided to hold off due to software costs and integration problems with our financial software. He said that staff was also reviewing the structure of the Town's website so that the Recreation Department could be more visible. The study group members suggested that the Recreation Department have their own website with a link to the Town's website.

C. Program Expansion

Mr. Boodheshwar stated that staff had already begun planning for the expansion of programs into the evening hours, in an effort to offer more opportunities to the public, while increasing revenue potential. He said staff will begin reviewing the current instructors for transferable and additional program offerings while seeking new instructors to fill the programming needs of the community. Staff will investigate additional programming of summer classes utilizing the partnership currently in existence with the Palm Beach Day Academy and holding classes at the school.

D. Palm Beach County School District

Mr. Boodheshwar requested that we hold off from sending a letter of request to the school district for maintenance cost sharing for the athletic field until the study group process has completed. He stated that results of the privatization study could possibly affect the amount for the annual maintenance cost of the field. The Study Group agreed.

E. Corporate Sponsorship

Mr. Boodheshwar stated that staff feels there would be significant interest from the business and civic community in Town if there is a policy which encourages staff to seek title sponsorships for events. Mrs. Moore said that this is an item that needs to go back to the Commission for their recommendation to change the policy.

F. Recreation Center Budget without Maintenance Costs

Mr. Boodheshwar stated that the Recreation Center budget was adjusted as requested by the study group and maintenance/utility costs were removed so they could see the cost recovery of Recreation Center programs. He said that maintenance and utility

costs are approximately \$214,000 and when removed the Recreation Center budget cost recovery increases to approximately 61%.

Mrs. Moore asked what current or other functions of the Recreation Center budget could be performed with contractual services. Mr. Boodheshwar stated that currently we use independent contractors for a variety of things, such as teaching classes, and these instructors are supervised by a full time employee. He said we hire part time staff (without benefits), who work as coaches, camp counselors, and in our afterschool program. One approach we could use is a labor service provider for all of our part time staff. He said he felt that this approach is fine for general maintenance work but would advise against it when working with children. Mrs. Moore stated that she agreed with Mr. Boodheshwar that the safety of the children needs to come first.

G. Additional Maintenance Functions to Consider for Privatization

Mr. Boodheshwar said that to further privatize the current maintenance functions and reduce costs will require the elimination of the General Maintenance Worker position. The tasks that are performed by this individual would need to be handled by a combination of a shift in staff responsibility, contract labor, and Public Works assistance. Mr. Gardiner reviewed the duties of the position, some of which included the set up of rooms for classes, maintenance of game room equipment, supplemental janitorial tasks, general policing and damage mitigation, and outside maintenance of the grounds and field. Mr. Siedlik said that it sounded like we would need several people to cover this position. Mrs. Moore said that the net savings by eliminating this position would be approximately \$40,000. She asked the study group if they felt that the savings was worth the eventual diminished level of service. Mr. Singer stated that one of the reasons that he moved to Palm Beach was because the higher level of service and that the employees are very loyal and special people. Mr. Storkerson said that he was not in favor of cutting this job. He said that if an organization continues to make cuts it hampers the effectiveness of the organization. Mrs. Moore said that she was not in favor of cutting this job and \$40,000 was not enough money to offset the loss of staff morale and the negative publicity that would come out of this. Mr. Siedlik stated that he was not in favor of eliminating this position, but recommended possibly eliminating this position through attrition or transfer to another position in the Town. The Study Group members agreed.

V. ANY OTHER MATTERS – Mrs. Moore asked the committee for any final comments.

Mr. Siedlik reiterated staff should look into expanding adult programs and open the center for community events when possible. Mr. Storkerson said that staff should consider similar social evening programming for children as well. However, both acknowledged that a fee would be needed to cover costs or generate additional revenue.

Mrs. Moore commended the committee members for their hard work on the study group. No additional meetings were scheduled at this time.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Mrs. Moore at 12:30 p.m.