

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
February 17, 2021
Minutes

Members Present:

Loren Anthony
Tyson Nielsen
Brett Remsberg
Camielle Austin

Members Absent:

Russ McCaig

Visitors:

Shane Loy
Matt Engel
Wendy Scribner

Commission Representative:

Kendra Wilkinson

Staff Present:

Kevin Wishart Don Argo Tabitha Sharp

Tyson moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

Camielle seconded.

Motion carried 4 – 0.

YMCA Proposal for Youth Sports Programming

- Matt Engel with the El Dorado YMCA stated that they were interested in taking on the recreation activities in El Dorado so that the City could focus its efforts on other items. He stated that play could happen in the area at Y facilities. He stated that he understands that the YMCA's pricing structure is different than the City's, but many families would qualify for financial assistance and they plan to come up with other pricing structures to help with cost. He stated that they plan to offer one free registration to any child who has not previously played in a YMCA activity. He stated that if an agreement is reached, they would like to begin in the fall of this year.
- Camielle asked if there was concern regarding the non-member rates for families with multiple children.
- Matt stated that if people come and talk to them, their goal is to maximize participation.
- Loren asked how the \$20 increase between member and non-member is justified.
- Matt stated that they are a member driven organization, there is not an increased cost, but the increased cost
- Tyson clarified that if a coach comes with a full team, they would get to have all of the kids on that team.
- Matt stated that he was correct.
- Tyson asked how the free agent kids would be placed.
- Matt stated that they would be placed on a team that has space.
- Tyson asked if a child comes in and wants on an advanced team, would they be placed on one of those, or just a recreation team with an empty space.
- Shane stated that if a child comes in without a team, they would try to place them locally on the level of team they request.
- Loren asked how the levels are determined.

- Matt stated that there is not a test to determine, but they would rely on parents and coaches to determine where they belong. He stated that once they have experience with the kids, they would be able to better determine the level.
- Loren asked if they would allow teams to sign up for lower levels if they should be in the advanced group.
- Shane stated that if a team shows more skill, they would be asked to sign up for the next level the following year.
- Tyson asked if they would take baseball/softball.
- Matt stated that they believe that league is run very well by the City and they do not have plans to ask for those sports.
- Loren asked if the Y has enough practice space.
- Matt stated that they will schedule their space and if they need more space, they will try and work it out with a trade with the school/city.
- Brett asked if the Y was aware that 60% of the 490 school district is on free or reduced lunches.
- Matt stated that they are.
- Brett stated that his concern was that families will not know it is available.
- Matt stated that the hope is that with the first free session, they will be able to get information out about scholarships.
- Loren asked what they would consider a trade for the city/school facilities.
- Matt stated that some of this already exists, the 490 swim team has been using the Y pool while the high school pool is not available. He stated that they would just have to have an open dialogue with the city.
- Shane stated that the Andover branch has worked with the school district as they need it, so it is something that the Y is used to.
- Tyson asked if the Y had talked to the school district yet.
- Matt stated that they have a good working relationship with 490 already, but haven't actively discussed with them before talking to the City.
- Tyson stated that he knew there was concern about allowing outside groups in the school now.
- Tyson asked what the City's stance was.
- Kevin stated that like the Y, the City is here for what is best for the community. He stated that staff are not excited about it for obvious reasons, they are here to offer these opportunities and keep up facilities, but if they are not responsible for that, there is concern about what would happen to their positions.
- Tyson stated that the Y's heart is in the right place. He stated that when you give something up, if you want it back, it is difficult.
- Camielle stated that she was really worried about the prices for families in our community who might make just over the income guidelines for scholarships.
- Loren stated that they are trying to get more members through youth sports. He felt the funds would be sent to Wichita.
- Kendra said that money raised here stays here.
- Tabitha stated that she is a Y board member and in 2019, they raised \$130,000 in funds and gave out approximately \$170,000 in scholarships.
- Loren stated that the Wichita Y could not exist if the El Dorado Y didn't pay them for some things like insurance, etc.
- Loren stated that his other problem is that they will be hiring people like coaches and officials but we would have to lay people off.

- Kevin stated that he didn't know if we would have to lay anyone off, it's just a concern of some of his staff.
- Tyson stated that coaches would be volunteers, they would just be hiring someone to help Wendy run the program.
- Loren stated he was sure that this would increase the enrollment and if kids don't benefit, they should do it.
- Kendra stated that she has stated every year of her term that the parks and recreation department is woefully understaffed, but she hasn't managed to get more help for them yet.
- Tyson stated that he liked the idea of being able to play at various skill levels. He stated that he is for whatever gets kids more active.
- Camielle stated that she felt they would lose the elementary children because many of the moms she has heard from are upset with the YMCA. She stated that if you miss one payment, you are kicked out in the middle of the summer.
- Brett asked if the rec department could do one level and the Y do the other levels.
- Loren stated that the teams who want to be handpicked could play for the Y and the rec department could do their thing.
- Tyson stated that it is already happening, advanced teams are going to play elsewhere in more expensive leagues.
- Camielle stated that she thought the city would do a better job of making sure the kids are still having fun. She stated that if the kids want to enter more competitive leagues, they could go with the Y.
- Kendra stated that in her time on the Commission she has learned that we have to think outside of the box, and this is definitely out of the box. She stated that they need to think on it.
- Kevin stated that they have some options. They can proceed, schedule public meetings to get input, they could pick and choose what sports to give them, or do any other number of items. He stated the last time this came up, the public meeting at the civic center was very spirited. He stated that they could talk about it at the next meeting or schedule a special meeting to discuss it.
- Camielle asked if the Y had this agreement with any other cities.
- Kevin stated that McPherson has an agreement, but was not sure it was the same as what is proposed here.
- Tyson stated that he moved to table the issue until the March meeting.
- Camielle seconded.
- Kevin stated that they can reach out to others in the community between now and then.
- Motion carried.
- Kendra asked if they would like to bring them back to the next meeting.
- Kevin stated that if the board has questions and would like to talk to them, he will make sure they are present.

Special Events

- Kevin stated that they are working on some special events for this year. The first is Step it Up/Walk it Out El Dorado, which will promote walking the bike path and other areas of El Dorado. He stated that they will provide t-shirts, logs and there will be prizes for those who compete. He stated that it is about getting people out and being active.
- Kevin stated that one of the things they hear most is that there is nothing for teenagers to do. He stated that they are planning a talent show at the band shell. He stated that it is tentatively scheduled sometime in June right now.

- Tyson stated that he thought it would be very popular.
- Kevin stated that in April they will bring back the kite flying day.
- He stated that the hope of staff is that these activities will reach out to people who aren't into sports.

New Business

- Tyson asked if someone puts on an event in conjunction with the City, could they donate funds to specific projects.
- Kevin stated that currently when people have tournaments, they pay a rental fee and staff do set up and clean up.
- Kevin stated that they are open to all of those discussions, but it just comes down to details. If staff have to run it, there are costs associated with paying staff and so the revenue is decreased.
- Loren asked if sponsorship of teams has been looked into further.
- Kevin stated that not in any detail to this point, but that would have to be discussed with the Commission.

Program Update

- Kevin stated that we are in week four of basketball. Mask ordinance compliance has been okay.
- Loren asked how many kids they have.
- Don stated that there are 64 enrolled.
- Tyson asked if the city is following the KSHAA guidelines.
- Kevin stated that the city is following those rules. The partner districts are not following the guidelines.
- Kevin stated that the upper age group games are being live streamed on Facebook.

New Business

- There was none.

Director's Report

- Kevin stated that they are in the early stages of going to an online reservation system for facilities and sports registrations.
- Kevin stated that the Riverview Playground is here and will be installed by city staff. He stated that it will not be started until the shoreline work is done. It has been permitted, but bids are not in yet.
- Kevin stated that they need summer workers. He stated that staff will be working with the local high schools to try and get the word out more.
- Registrations are out for spring and summer, he anticipates that enrollment will go up when it gets warmer.
- Kevin stated that in reference to the earlier discussion about the YMCA taking over recreation programming, City employees aren't fearful of losing their jobs, but they came to work here because they would get to work with children and if it goes away, they would be sad.

Adjourn 7:16 p.m.