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DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION

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To: The Common Council

Fr: Timothy Catella
Chair, Parks & Recreation Commission

Re: Annual Report 2015

This report is intended to highlight the topics of discussion and pertinent recommendations conducted by the P&R Commission during 2015.

- During the winter months the City worked with a group of volunteers interested in helping to keep Hodges Pond clear of snow for skating. The group was dedicated and worked well with the various City departments involved (OFD, P&R, and Public Service). 17 days of skating were conducted. The group presented a list of equipment requests to the commission in May. The most important of these items was a tractor for increasing the effectiveness of snow removal and this has been purchased. The group will be making a future request that the City consider purchasing ice skates that can be made available at the skate house for public use.
- The director of Parks & Recreation separated with the City prior to the spring/summer recreation season. There was discussion with the administration as to whether the position would be filled or not. The position was advertised but not filled. It became apparent during the 2015 recreation season that there does need to be someone in an administrative role for P&R. A part time position has been advertised and the hope is to fill this part time position prior to the coming outdoor recreation season. Filling this position is seen as a priority by the commission.
- At the request of the City the YMCA took over the adult volleyball recreation program in 2015. This program was conducted at the Asa C. Alison Municipal Building.
- The Wilber Park Briggs Pool bath house improvement project was completed including a new floor, changing rooms, lifeguard facilities, accessible bathrooms and mechanical, electrical and plumbing work. These upgrades were well received by both staff and pool users.

- 2015 was the second year of collaborating with the YMCA to run our aquatics and other parks recreation programs. This partnership continues to evolve with programs expanding.
 - Neahwa Park Adventure - arts and crafts, fitness, group games, etc. is a NYS registered program that was conducted Monday – Friday from 9am to noon. Over 200 children participated.
 - Wilber Park Discovery Swim & Hike - nature based activities, hiking and swimming at the Wilber Park pool is NYS registered program that was conducted Tuesday – Thursday from 1:30pm to 4:00pm. Over 300 children participated.
 - Outdoor Aquatics - open and family swimming, lessons and lap swimming. 169 children completed swim lessons, up 30 children from the year before. Total attendance was 8,752 pool patrons
 - Safety Around Water Week – 4 day free program for anyone to learn water safety. 189 children participated in this program
 - YMCA Lunch Bunch (partnering with Catholic Charities) and Y Fit Kids – two new fitness related programs providing parents an option for all day recreational programs for their children.
 - T-Ball – 64 children participated
 - Warm temperatures were experienced in late August and early September, a time when the pool was closed and swim season concluded as scheduled (based mainly on the lack of available life guards as students go back to college or begin high school fall sports practices). We did receive complaints regarding not being open during this warm period and as such the YMCA has put into place a plan for extending the swim season.
- The handball/tennis wall in Wilber Park was deemed structurally unsafe by Engineering and was demolished in early spring. The commissioners received a number of complaints and petitioners expressed their concerns with the removal of the wall. The commissioners have asked that Engineering develop a proposed layout and cost estimate for a new wall.
- The commissioners discussed the condition of the grandstand/pressbox at Damaschke Field and the desire to make improvements. The City is currently working with Delaware Engineering on an analysis of the grandstand. This analysis will be used to pursue a larger grant to make the needed overall improvements for the grandstand. The commissioners consider this a priority.
- The commissioners were kept informed of the planned improvements to the James Georgeson Avenue entrance into Neahwa Park. The less than desirable appearance of this park entrance has been a concern of the commission, especially the area over the creek currently barricaded with orange construction fence. The commissioners support the planned improvements.

Respectfully submitted:

