



DRAFT
Recreation Committee Minutes
Wednesday, April 7, 2021
6 P.M.
Via Teleconference – Zoom

Members Present: Earl Williams, Council Member, Chairperson
David E. Weiss, Mayor
Jeri Chaikin, CAO
Carmella Williams, Council Member
Anne Williams, Council Member
Alexandria Nichols, Recreation Department Director
Jonathan Kraft, Citizen Member
Troy Neujahr, Citizen Member
Kathleen Hayes, Citizen Member
Sharyn Lowencamp, Citizen Member
Tim Richards, School Board Member
Lisa Cremer, School Board Member

Others Present: Jan Devereaux, League of Women Voters Observer
Sara Schiavoni, Shaker Heights Resident
Patrick Richards, Shaker Recreation Intern and Presenter

CALL TO ORDER

Earl Williams, Council Member, Chairperson

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm by Council Chairperson, Earl Williams

Review and Approval of March 3, 2021 Minutes

Earl Williams, Council Member, Chairperson

Minutes from March 2021 were reviewed and approved as written.

Barriers to Youth Sports Participation Presentation & Discussion

Patrick Richards, a University of Cincinnati student, contacted Director Nichols to ask about any available internships within the Recreation Department. This internship was developed for Patrick to conduct in depth research regarding barriers to youth sports participation as it related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The research presentation can be seen here: [Barriers to Youth Sport Participation](#)

This presentation detailed the research Patrick conducted which included interviews with professionals and educators in the field youth sports as well as research in professional trade journals. Barriers to youth sports impact the ability for youth to participate in sports from a variety of angles from family dynamics, financials, friend groups, gender, and other reasons. As a part of the

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presentation, barriers related to Shaker Heights were highlighted and the presentation also included short-term and long-term solutions the City can consider to help make youth sports more inclusive, diverse, and equitable.

Questions:

As it relates to Shaker, were any sports identified in particular as being more of a financial barrier than others?

Answer: No, there is no specific data regarding a sport in particular. This entire project was done remotely so that information was not readily available in a remote situation.

What does lack of facility access equate to?

Answer: The City's turf facilities are quite worn and the rest of the facilities are not always up to par with other communities. Perhaps the existing facilities can be reinvested in to better serve the community.

In terms of equity versus equality are the City's sports options still an income barrier for some families?

Answer: The City offers a variety of sports programs in terms of equality of the options available. As far as the financial equity of access to the programs some families are still not able to afford the fees for the programs.

Is there a difference between student athlete's needs and expectations versus recreational athlete's?

Answer: Yes, there is a significant difference between the wants and needs of the two groups. The recreational athletes are there to make friends and have fun and enjoy their time away from school. Whereas the student athletes are more competitive and they are doing the extra work for the sport itself.

Do the students that get cut from the middle school sports typically give up on the sport?

Answer: Yes, the student typically gets very discouraged and feels left out. This becomes an issue for the student in the long run sometimes.

Would combining Shaker's recreational programs with another nearby city's facility be a barrier to participation?

Answer: If the child is involved in a sport that they are passionate about most families would be willing to travel within a 15 minute radius for their child to participate.

The Recreation Department and the School district both remain committed to the students in the district and work to remove as many barriers as possible for all students that want to get involved in athletics. In the past the schools have been hesitant to share non-district items with families because they did not want to bombard families with information and paper. However, recently the districts Communication Department has set up a link on the website that showcases youth sports opportunities in the community.

The Committee also discussed the gender divide in youth sports as it relates to the allocation of resources for youth sports. The presenter felt that female sports are heavily underrepresented in terms of importance and equitableness. Prime time practice and game times are granted to the male teams across the board.

Further discussion among the committee recommended that this research and presentation will be shared with the City of Shaker Heights School Board as well as the Forward Together group in hopes that changes and improvements can be made within the City of Shaker Heights to improve access to youth sports programs and participation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7.05 pm.

Earl Williams, Council Member
Chairperson, Recreation Committee