RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION –
In attendance: Philip Pessina, Jeanette Blackwell, Sal Uccello, Anthony Jaskot, Kristen Jensen, Dan Deconti, Lincoln Everest (arrived at 5:41)
Absent: Matt Fraulino,
Staff: Cathy Lechowicz, Director

AGENDA:

Call Meeting to Order:
Meeting called to order at 5:31 pm

Public Hearing:
No members of public in attendance

Approval of the Minutes:
Did not meet in April, no minutes to approve

Department Reports:
Senior Programming is robust. Due to increase in cases right now, we consulted the Health Dept. and we put out a health alert encouraging, but not requiring, people to wear masks and to get boosted. We are offering an additional walk in booster clinic on Thursday 5/26.

Recreation moved into the new administrative offices. Preparing for summer camp where registration is strong. Applied for a state grant to support scholarships for up to 30 campers at each of our school based sites. Camps will be at Moody, Spencer and Crystal Lake. Councilman Pessina inquired about adding spots at Crystal Lake, we are conservative right now as we are limited in terms of shelter and we want to be sensitive with Covid regulations. Councilman Pessina inquired if we had enough lifeguards and since we only have one waterfront this summer, we should have sufficient staffing.

OLD BUSINESS:

Budget - The Common Council approved the FY22-23 budget. They did include additional funds (~$58,000) for this department in order to operate the Recreation Center, which was not originally in the budget.
Commissioner Replacement – Director Lechowicz proposed Sowgol Zakarian as a new commissioner. We need minority party or independent representation, if anyone has suggestions. Due to the new charter revisions, commissioners are limited to 3 consecutive terms, which does affect members of this commission. In addition, we have 3 vacancies. Director Lechowicz proposed Sowgol Zakarian as a new commissioner which was unanimously approved by the group.
Recreation Center Updates – there have been delays in the schedule due to some administrative issues, including processing change orders, as well as supply chain issues.
Staffing Updates – we officially hired an evening custodian, Quinn Drake. The Building Superintendent/Pool position will post soon.
Riverfront Redevelopment – Councilwoman Blackwell shared that the vision documents will be released at the beginning of July. She said it is magnificent!
NEW BUSINESS:

Basketball Updates – there is transition in both leagues. The Recreation Dept met with both leagues to discuss the transition and how we can create more structure for the program as it has operated in a quasi-organization mode – the league can either become part of the department or create its own 501c3. If they become part of the department, they would not receive the sports grant which would free up some of that money for other leagues. We had an initial conversation and will be reconvening with them in the next month to finalize a path forward. A discussion ensued about sports grants and reviewing the application so we receive more accurate and informative information from the leagues. The commission will likely form a subcommittee to review the application and bring recommendations to the full commission in the fall. There was also discussion about the interview process and how we can make the whole process better.

ARPA – The Recreation and Community Services department applied for ARPA funding through the city. The committee approved the grant and it will go to the Common Council in June for final approval. The grant is in collaboration with Russell Library and the Arts & Culture Division. It is roughly $500,000 over 3 years to support pop up events with various focus populations throughout the community to provide resources and information to people and incentivize them to reconnect with our regular programming. Discussion ensued regarding art projects related to new Rec Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Lincoln Everest made a motion, Councilwoman Blackwell seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:28pm. For those that wanted, a tour was given of the Recreation Center renovations.