



# *Harris County Recreation Board*

## **Meeting Minutes**

January 27, 2021

7:00 pm – Harris County Community Center

**Board Members Present:** Thomas Vowell, Wade Pirkle, Mike Fuson, Lee Starling, Steve Felt, Brad Johnson, Garnett Ray, Rob Grant, Sondra Moss (attended meeting via phone)

**Board Members Absent:** Brandon Fletcher (had medical issues and was at hospital)

**Others Present:** Stephen Waskey, Director, Ashley Marston, Assistant Recreation Director

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

- a. The regular meeting of Harris County Recreation Board was called to order at 7:12 pm on Wednesday, January 27, 2021, at the Harris County Community Center by Board Chair, Mike Fuson.

### **II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- a. The agenda was reviewed by the board members. Motion to approve unanimously by.

### **III. Election Of Board Members: (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer)**

- a. Chair
  - i. Mike Fuson nominated for Chair by Steve Felt.
  - ii. Motion made by Steve Felt to make Mike Fuson the Chair.
  - iii. Motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lee Starling.
  - iv. Motion passed unanimously for all voting members in attendance.
- b. Vice Chair
  - i. Steve Felt nominated for Vice Chair by Mike Fuson.
  - ii. Motion made by Lee Starling to make Steve Felt the Vice Chair.
  - iii. Motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Thomas Vowell.
  - iv. Motion passed unanimously for all voting members in attendance.
- c. Secretary

- i. Sondra Moss nominated for Secretary by Mike Fuson.
  - ii. Motion made by Mike Fuson to make Sondra Moss the Secretary.
  - iii. Motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lee Starling.
  - iv. Motion passed unanimously for all voting members in attendance.
- d. Treasurer
  - i. Ashley Marston nominated for Treasurer by Mike Fuson.
  - ii. Motion made by Mike Fuson to make Ashley Marston the Treasurer.
  - iii. Motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lee Starling.
  - iv. Motion passed unanimously for all voting members in attendance.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. The August 12, 2020 Special Called Meeting Minutes and October 28, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes were reviewed by board members. Motion to approve unanimously.

#### **V. Chairperson's Report**

- a. Previous meeting was tasked to revise Magazu scholarship verbiage with an excerpt about John. Mike would like Ashley to write the verbiage about John because she has more and more copious information. The board agrees that this is good for Ashley to do.
- b. Informed the board of decision by Mike to send flowers to Robert Grant for memorial of his wife who passed.

#### **VI. TREASURER'S REPORT**

- a. Balance of \$13,102.81 in the bank account
- b. Just received two checks from soccer for their fees.
- c. Ashley will invoice football for their player fees when she gets the number from the football board. Steve Felt provided those numbers Ashley during the meeting.
- d. Balance of \$1,815 in the John Magazu Fund account.
- e. Motion made by Thomas Vowell to approve the Treasurer's Report.
- f. Motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sondra Moss.
- g. Motion passed unanimously for all voting members in attendance.

#### **VIII. RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- a. Stephen Waskey presented the Recreation Director's Report-attached and as-is with these additional comments.
  - i. Basketball postponed until summer, right now do not have access to other gyms for practices. Six Saturday clinics were planned. 45 kids signed up; jerseys were bought by the recreation center.
  - ii. Little league finishing signups this week. Tryouts this weekend and next week. Opening day March 15.
  - iii. 105K budgeted for 80 LED lights on the soccer fields.

- iv. Looking to add a Recreation Center Volleyball league for children in 4<sup>th</sup> thru 7<sup>th</sup> grade, following GRPA rules. This will get kids ready for High School Volleyball through cooperation between the Harris County high School and the recreation center.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Discussion – Recreation Dept running Football and Basketball programs**

- **Steve W:** We would like to discuss the county running football and basketball at the county wide rather than the youth organizations. We will do the scheduling, registration, scorekeepers, referees, book the school fields and gymnasiums. We will also control the draft and group kids by schools and also merge and load balance the kids with drafts. Looking at doing true blind drafts. Uniforms ordered in bulk and can be gotten at discounted prices. This will free up time and allow coaches to coach rather than have the burden of running the program. The Recreation Department will build the bridge with the schools.
- **Steve W:** We have had issues with volunteers. Basketball only starts meeting in October and need more time. Football is having issues with volunteers helping with the games and logistics of running the season because of the lack of help.
- **Thomas V:** How about the board?
- **Steve W:** We are discussing with the boards and will bring it back. We need to have our budget ready by March and need to understand as soon as possible so that we can cover the cost.
- **Thomas V:** Are you confident about the budget?
- **Steve W:** We will have to work with the county commissioners.
- **Lee S:** Was this a gateway to take over little league?
- **Steve W:** Troup, Manchester and Columbus run most of the programs already. For now, this is a proposal for just basketball and Football. Later down the road we will look at little league. Right now there is good participation in little league and we are not addressing them at this time.
- **Brad J:** Will the team names change?
- **Thomas V:** Will the communities be involved?
- **Steve W:** If we group with the schools then we will have to use the school mascots. I do not care about the which mascots. We just want to get the programs running. There are different ways to manage naming and mascots. We could use the schools or even be generic Harris County and have the same uniforms and be named different.
- **Brad J:** Kids have not gotten the same quality of coaching over the years because of community differences. If we have all the kids in a county football program, then we can make sure they all get the same training.
- **Robert G:** You cannot guarantee that all kids get the same because the teams will be spread out.

- **Wade P:** I have seen in Harris County that the challenge is a potential failure point if the adults do not do their job, then the kids pay the price. I prefer maximum participation which will improve quality. Centralized will eliminate those fail point. This has happened with pine mountain in baseball and they are coming back. Also issues in Cataula creating the turnover to get more effective folks in. In the Cataula meeting this past weekend they discussed if they could start with one sport, basketball, and see how it plays out. We need to make sure if we do it that we do it right the first time.
- **Thomas V:** Will we have to change by-laws?
- **Steve W:** Not if it would fall under the county. The Recreation Board will not have to do any changes and it will be reported by me at the Recreation Board meetings.
- **Mike F:** Based on the current by-laws, it will need an entity and the Recreation Board will need to accept that entity as a part of Recreation Department or Recreation Department will have to do the same things the other boards have too.
- **Ahsley M:** This will be ran completely by Recreation Department and the purview will be with the Recreation Department.
- **Robert G:** No more registration fees or dollar per player? If ran through the Recreation Center then the Recreation Board will have to state in the by-laws that there are not those leagues to support.
- **Lee S:** What will happen to concessions?
- **Steve W:** Communities would like to still run concessions to fund their other programs. He would have to hire employees for the concessions, so he would likely keep it at community level.
- **Robert G:** Where is the registration money going too? Will the communities get any of that money? Communities will not get hardship money, registration fees, they will lose out on that money.
- **Steve W:** Right now, football cost \$150 and with the rec it will be only the uniform fee. I will show where all the money is spent.
- **Mike F:** In Waverly Hall we were talking about the equipment. They were not too keen on donating the equipment to the Recreation Department. The youth sports association has procured the equipment and have maintained over the years. That money could have been spent on other programs. If you take the football away, then the money spent on that could have been allocated to other sports or the community.
- **Steve W:** That equipment was bought for those same kids. Any refurbishing of equipment after they take the equipment will be paid by the Recreation budget. Those same kids will get the same helmets and shoulder pads. I also asked to take whatever money they have leftover and setup a hardship fund where kids could have a chance to play without the financial hardship.
- **Thomas V:** Would we be involved?
- **Steve W:** I would still lean on the rec board to help like they do now as advisory.

- **Robert G:** This board would not be advisory because those recreational sports will not exist. If you go school based, Hamilton is spread, across three schools. Why would they donate.
- **Steve W:** I was talking about getting the money from the sport board that disbanded, not from the communities.
- **Wade P:** Cataula still has a facility to maintain. We will round up folks for fund raisers and concessions to support their facilities.
- **Lee S:** What are you going to do about the communities that have facilities?
- **Steve W:** We will work out a user agreement with the cities to use their fields.
- **Mike F:** Are you going to group cheer in with football?
- **Steve W:** Cheer will be grouped in with football. We will make sure also that the siblings between cheer and football will be on the same teams.
- **Robert G:** What will you do if the county commissioners do not support you? We already have money allocated elsewhere.
- **Steve W:** I will work out the budget and work with them to make sure the money works out.
- **Robert G:** It took a lot just to get lights for soccer and we already have people to hire, so not sure that Recreation Department will be able to get the money in their budget.
- **Mike F:** When are you trying to look for recommendations from the board? The community recs need to take back.
- **Steve W:** I want to hear in the next meeting so that the budget can be planned.
- **Thomas V:** Is this up to the individual board for this?
- **Steve W:** It would be up to the individual boards if they want to go county wide.
- **Wade P:** This needs to be a unanimous decision across the county for all communities.
- **Thomas V:** I think you will get there with basketball, but probably not football.
- **Robert G:** If we take this over and shuffle kids, then there might be a problem with kids playing at different communities.
- **Steve W:** This is already this way for baseball.
- **Wade P:** We had this problem with folks in baseball where kids wanted to use the community borders rather than playing on a team across the county. This is not a problem anymore and this has helped build the program.
- **Mike F:** The community reps in here need to go back to their boards and weigh the pros and cons. Get as much feedback as possible. Need to get feedback from coaches and board members past and everyone that you can to understand how your communities feel and if they will support the decision. There will be plenty of folks with feelings and opinions. Bring those back.
- **Steve F:** We could create a survey and send it out over social media.
- **Thomas V:** That would be good to get that feedback.
- **Steve W:** If we do a survey then we will need to add content for the communities to understand.

- **Steve F:** I will work with Stephen Waskey to get the survey created and ready for the communities.
- **Steve W:** We will send it out to all to the presidents and through social media platforms.

**b. Discussion – Out of County Recreation participants**

- **Steve W:** We would like to have an out of county fee to bring in other counties.
- **Thomas V:** This is against the current by-laws and that would need to change.
- **Robert G:** The commissioners would need to discuss and weigh in.
- **Steve W:** This could be an out of county fee at the Recreation Center to offset the tax cost. This is per sport per season. That fee would come to the county, not to the association.
- **Robert G:** This will bring kids in for us to train at the rec level and compete with our school programs.
- **Wade P:** This will help our programs by bringing in diversity into the programs.
- **Mike F:** Are you looking for the board to vote on per case basis or looking for a by-law change?
- **Steve W:** I just added it to discuss because a parent asked.
- **Mike F:** Then there is no reason to make a motion. For the time being we will deal with this at a case-by-case basis.
- **Thomas V:** How does that work? Should they have to come to our Recreation Board meetings?
- **Mike F:** They would have to go to the sport board.
- **Thomas V:** This was just a question from the parent and did not go to the board.
- **Mike F:** This would have to be a majority vote at rec board in three meetings and then to the board of commissioners to decide if the change could be made.

**X. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. John Magazu Scholarship – Continued Discussion on Application and Process**

- **Mike F:** Ashley is going to create the verbiage for John and mike will bring hard copies when the documents are complete.

**b. Other**

- **Steve W:** US flags getting added to parks with lighting; Portable mounds for baseball will be brought in. We are building four ball walls placed at both Moultrie and Pate for kids to hit against instead of balls being bounce around the park outside of practice and games. More bigger bleachers order for baseball but they will not be out there for spring.
- **Lee S:** Will there covers?

- **Steve W:** We have covers for them and they will be out there in spring when the bleachers get put in.

**Steve F:** motion to adjourn at 9:04 PM

- **Sondra M:** 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion
- Motion passed unanimously for all voting members in attendance.

**XI. NEXT MEETING- Wednesday, February 24, 2021.**

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Mike Fuson - Chair

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Ashley Marston, Assistant Director

**\*\*2021 MEETING DATES\*\***

**January 27<sup>th</sup>**

**February 24<sup>th</sup>**

**March 31<sup>th</sup>**

**April 28<sup>th</sup>**

**May 26<sup>th</sup>**

**June 30<sup>th</sup>**

**July 28<sup>th</sup>**

**August 25<sup>th</sup>**

**September 29<sup>th</sup>**

**October 27<sup>th</sup>**

