

Ice Rink Advisory Meeting  
September 10, 2014

Carol Anderson, Mark Van Everen, Ron Brunk, Maria Butts, Shannon Holmes, Jason Loveless, Murray Craven, Jake Topp, Karen Cross, Chad Goodwin, Donna Taylor, Greg Esakoff, Kelly Davidson

Ron Brunk moved to approve minutes, Donna Taylor seconded, passed

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Carol asked for a free season pass for her extensive time and energy she has dedicated to this rink. She was instrumental in the founding of the figure skating club and has served as an ice host for years. She is 84 and a matriarch of the facility. This year she did not receive her free season pass. Maria asked Carol to meet with her after the meeting to discuss.

There has historically been extensive use of the “free pass” for services given to the rink in many forms and Maria will look into this process.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Muldown program has been set. Murray has secured funding for busing from the Community foundation. The second grade students will be divided into three groups to come 4 times each in October on Mon, Tues, and Wed starting October 6. They will be bussed from Muldown at 12:30, get to rink at 12:45, skates on and on the ice by 1:00, ½ hour lesson and then skates off and on bus by 1:45, back to school by 2:00. City is donating skate rental and ice time. The Whitefish Wolverines will donate instruction staff. Will use this as pilot project and then expand to Whitefish Christian and Columbia Falls elementary schools. Group suggested that we try to publicize this event and get paper there. It should be on the website.

**NEW BUSINESS**

This is a new season and time to open the chair, vice chair and secretary positions. Board voted to retain all positions, Greg Esakoff as chair, Mark Van Everen as vice chair and Kelly Davidson as Secretary. All three voted in by a democratic majority despite the fact that they were not enthusiastic.

**OPERATIONS**

Andy Hergesheimer resigned as Rink Manager September 2, 2014. He moved to start his own company. Shannon Holmes is now concession manager and will deal with ice rental, party room, ice schedule and advertisements. Jason Loveless is Parks maintenance superintendent, the City is looking for a building superintendent. Lots of questions about who does what, like deal with medical emergencies (concessionaire). Emergencies that deal with the building go to the maintenance staff. All employees are over 18 and CPR trained. The maintenance staff will be available during all the time the ice is used but

they may not be visible, might be in room with Zamboni or somewhere. City looking into two way radio, or emergency button because cell phones don't work well in the rink. Concessions will be open during public skate. Regular Ice rate is \$115 per hour and no break when there are no concessions. Greg does not want to pay for concessions when Glacier Skate does not need them there. Concessions will be open Monday-Friday beginning at 4pm. Otherwise, Shannon is present at the building if someone needs her during the day, but would not be selling concessions. During the weekends, the concessions is open all day long.

Rates increase every year but one in recent past. There was a large increase one year and then none the next.

Shannon has questionnaire about what kind of food to have and wants to improve quality and health of snack bar food. Will include cliff bars, nuts, trail mix, jerky, cheese sticks, frozen burritos. Looking for a smoothie machine, espresso machine and pizza oven for 12 inch pizzas. Considering veggie sticks, hard boiled eggs and fresh or dried fruit. City emphasized it wants suggestions for pro shop and food.

Jake Topp will be in charge of programming and management of user groups

City wants a collaborative effort in this transition. We should get tentative schedule for ice in March and want to rank need for ice (emphasize need vs. want) and determine priority. For now, everyone has their time that they have had historically. Only some times vary. 4pm-9pm is typically for kids and 9pm-close is for adults. Weekdays, 9 am - 3pm is typically public and other user groups. . GHA usually has its schedule in May.

Greg communicated that the budget issues are outside scope of this group and that it is hard to have input to adjust and change the budget or to get the opportunity to review or comment. For instance, Chad from Glacier Skate is looking for ice for private lessons for home school kids and will be buying 10 hrs a week for 22 weeks which is \$12,000. Should the budget be increased then to reflect revenue? Lots of questions regarding budget and budget process. Greg has papers reflecting utilities, payroll and concessions.

City wants to tighten up schedule to use it effectively and efficiently. Wants to hear from user groups.

The adult hockey community formed an organization (WAHA) and a board. The city has worked with WAHA to run their tournaments, league and drop in sessions. We all agree that it is best for everyone if WAHA can make this arrangement work. City offered to maintain control over Adult Hockey and have Jake run it if WAHA cannot get organized. Maria wants to work with WAHA to make sure that adult leagues take place.

IRAC recommends that the city retain control over the adult hockey programming until they are a qualified and organized group ready to manage adult hockey. Mark moved to recommend, Carol seconded and unanimously passed.

In FY13, City council stated the rink budget should be net neutral and should not lose money but it has been losing money for years. At that time, Chuck Stearns said the city would not subsidize the rink and now the city has the task of how to do more with less. The City felt then that they would need to raise rates for league or have a shorter season.

Kelly cannot understand why the IRAC was not more involved in the discussion regarding changes at the rink and its staff. User groups are very concerned about the changes and making sure their needs are met.

Evaporative condenser came in slightly over budget but it is done and the water bill is less. Should we be worried about budgeted utilities.

IRAC mission is tabled

FY 15 user group priorities, should get one from each group. Will get copies of previous ones. Capital Improvements - Roof is getting fixed, budget includes \$50,000 for low ceiling but Mark remembers half of the roof getting done for \$35,000 before. Josh may donate the bleacher heaters.

Jean Ann Swope has the \$800 for the lobby remodel but we don't know where money is right now. Greg reminded us that we can do a lot around that rink with private donations.

Maria says that all user groups need to sign an alcohol waiver and pay \$10 per group per season. To sell alcohol, we need a special request form that is signed off on annually. Maria also inquired about storage areas and who uses what. Maria also suggested that the IRAC might want to be a subcommittee of the Park Board like the Wag Board is doing. Advantage is that volunteer work would be covered by liability insurance and instead of interviewing with council, it would be the Parks Board. Does not change our function, we still report to the Park Board then they report to the city council.

Board comments – Can we add people to IRAC? We would need to change charter. Some members felt it would be good to include the Wolverines, as they have a nonprofit arm, the Montana Hockey Academy.

Greg wants accounting report with just the numbers from the rink, not include beach or other line items.

Can we get a monitor in lobby to display information about upcoming events etc. on the screen?

Next meeting October 7, 2014, alternate date is October 8.

Written by Kelly Davidson