

MINUTES

October 29, 2021 @ 10:00 am

Council on Aging Governance Committee

Senior Center

230 Webster St., Marshfield, Ma 02050

ATTENDANCE:

Marilee Comerford – Staff Carol Hamilton - Staff, Fred Monaco, Kathleen Monahan - Staff Bill Scott and Barbara Van Houten.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 10:01 am.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Fred moves to approve the minutes of September 10, 2021. Barbara seconds the motion. The Motion passes unanimously.

DISCUSSION: The Governance Committee came together to discuss operation of the new park. The question came up about the Pickleball Court and whether or not the court would be open or shut down for the winter. The committee members and staff weighed in. One concern was about liability in inclement weather and by leaving the court open does this invite non players or even vandalism.

One member suggested that the Pickleball Court be closed by a certain date such as December 1st. At this time the nets will come down and be stored for the winter. Notice will be given once a decision is made. A committee member also commented that most Pickleball players do not play in wet conditions. Playing in wet conditions per the COA's established Guidelines is prohibited and posted on a sign near the door to the Pickleball court.

Some players expressed a desire to stay open all winter. The Committee felt that this being our first year we should air on the side of caution. The gate will have a lock on it, as not to encourage people to play on unsafe conditions. The committee is concerned about older players slipping and falling. Most players look for indoor courts once it gets cold and wet. There are indoor facilities such as the Boys and Girls Club or the indoor club in Hanover that offers Pickleball. Cost may be a concern to some players if there is a charge.

One other concern is maintenance. The DPW maintains the Park but does not have the capacity to shovel or salt the walkways once it snows or there is ice. Keeping the park open would put an added burden on the staff if they had to make a judgement about whether or not conditions were safe for play each day.

We think that deciding on a date to close as opposed to waiting for the first snow fall, would give staff the opportunity to take down the nets, notify patrons a head of time and alleviate confusion. The committee also felt that we should announce a reopening date for April 1, at the same time we announce the closure.

The staff would post a sign if this plan is approved by the COA Board as to the closure, we can also put it in the December newsletter, on social media and Barbara will get the word out so that it can be put on the Marshfield Pickleball app. Another point brought out was that investing in portable nets would be an added expense. The committee also discussed the issue about who manages The Park. The Park is on town owned property and the campus is shared with Youth Baseball and Conservation for various activities. The Park area is managed by the COA including the scheduling of activities during operating hours, scheduling special events in off hours and for repairing and maintaining the equipment and the grounds. The COA works with the DPW on grounds maintenance and when necessary collaborates with the campus neighbors.

It was the committee's consensus that liability is higher for Pickleball in the winter months, there were also concerns about the area being more isolated, not well lit and not being adequately monitored. There is also an impact on resources and staff. Although we want to provide recreational activities, safety is our main concern for

our older citizens which take precedence. The governance committee will make a recommendation to the COA Board at their next meeting to shut down and lock the Pickleball Court on December 1, 2021 and to reopen the court on April 1, 2022.

NEXT MEETING: No meeting time was set.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m. Motion by Fred and seconded by Barbara passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Hamilton, Director Council on Aging