

**TASK FORCE ON EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES – MINUTES
SECLECTMEN’S MEETING ROOM – TOWN HALL
NOVEMBER 9, 2011**

Present: Dan Scharfman, chairman
Anne Lougee
Jim Davis
Michelle Dooley
Jane Ewing
Megan Pickett
Leigh Lynch
Elizabeth Pew

1. Call to order:

Chairman Scharfman called the meeting to order at 7:35pm. He then introduced the members of the Task Force to other attendees.

1. Presentation

Mr. Scharfman presented the Task Force’s work to date, including a lengthy report of research both completed and in progress. The presentation includes the Task Force’s goals and agenda, as well as the status, fee structure, and participation and fee waivers of existing programs. He noted that the survey from other towns may not be correct or up to date. Mr. Scharfman also explained that he had met with student government, and they do feel an impact from higher fees, choosing between fine arts and sports. His presentation concluded with the observations that a town-wide directory might be helpful to families, and that the Policy subcommittee wanted the task force to research the network of support for extracurricular activities.

2. Town-wide directory

Mr. Scharfman and other members observed that a town-wide directory of programs would be very helpful to consumers. No clear line of responsibility exists for such a directory.

3. Quantify amount of donations and support coming in

Mr. Scharfman informed the Task Force that the School Committee had asked for an inventory of community support – donations and in-kind efforts – that make the extracurricular programs possible.

4. Public Input:

Jane Feinberg Kaplan; no system just fragments of a system ,verbiage should be intra-curricular activities instead of extra-curricular.

Ellen Sullivan; thanked the task force, major concern is the revolving accts. , she feels the balance is excessive, need to set a policy regarding the revolving account. Also feels stipends for coaches and advisors are inconsistent, inequities need to be explained.

Ann Jansen; why are fees assessed for some clubs and not others? Advisors (fee based only if we need to pay an advisor) feels the timing is off regarding clubs, fees are due before club offerings are announced.

Olga; menu of clubs needed, middle school very confusing, no system, a directory is needed!

Susan Smith; are fees proving a barrier to entry, and why is first sport fee so much higher? Feels there are too many fund-raisers. Fees are high and fund-raisers are also high. (Jim Davis, responded; sensitive to cause, boosters card only, participation rate to break down fees, break for kids who play more than one sport,) lure to keep kids in the program (Dan Scharfman).

Leon Dire; questioned the cost and revenue for middle school activities, what does the number include? Are Chenery Basketball fees merged with the fees at the High School? (We need to check that number, not sure what is included, Dan Scharfman) Do we see a possibility of reducing fees? Leon said, parents don't really have an option if your child wants to play, we pay.

Ann Jansen ; feels that fees have an impact, kids are not getting the chance to try different things, fees are high and burdensome. Regarding Instrumental programs; has participation gone down? We should not have to pay for instruction during school time, most have to rent instruments, maybe that is enough.

Jane Feinberg Kaplan; what do we know about the 20% of students that don't participate? We need to look at that student population. Are they making connections outside of the community?

(name not transcribed); need a directory, new to the community, has found it very difficult to find information regarding programs. Shocked at fees, thought he was moving to Belmont for all of these things. Why did we remove Family cap? Why don't we base fees on cost of actual cost of sports?

Mr. Scharfman responded: we will look at family cap

Ellen Sullivan; responded that the flat fee was financially driven, we are a community, why penalize kids who like the more expensive sports. This is the 3rd year we have had this fee structure. She would like to see some sort of fee relief for revolving funds.

Jane Feinberg Kaplan; would hate to see an Arts vs. Sports issue develop.

(name not transcribed); advises us to look at a long term investment to save programs, sustainability.

Mr. Scharfman asked; have we given you enough info? Transparency?

Andrew Montford; A comprehensive list of options across the community is needed. Wondered what families are looking for in terms of activities. No obvious resource other than the Recreation Department.

Mr. Scharfman; If anyone is interested, please let us know. (Creating a list)

Jim Fitzgerald- town soccer program, rec. department has numbers on participation.

Elizabeth Pew, wonders if students are missing some sort of vocation programs? Different aspects of our town.

Debbie Barry, schools can't do it all. Greater transparency is needed across the board!

Olga, could we utilize volunteers for some of these programs?

Mr. Scharfman responded; Per Union contract first preference goes to teachers.

5. Next steps

The Task Force will present recommendations in early January, and have another public meeting.

6. Adjourn

On a motion made by Ms. Lougee and seconded by Dr. Ewing, the Task Force adjourned at 9:23pm on a vote of 8-0 with no abstentions.

Respectfully submitted by


Daniel Scharfman, Chair