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Recreation Programming Study: Prepared for the Town-School Coordination Committee

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**THE EDWARD J. COLLINS, JR.
CENTER FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT**

**MCCORMACK GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF POLICY STUDIES**

University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393
P: 617.287.4824
www.collinscenter.umb.edu

Recreation Programming Study

Prepared for the Town-School Coordination Committee

October 2010

Table of Contents

PURPOSE.....	1
METHODOLOGY	1
SUMMARY OF RECREATION PROVIDERS AND PROGRAMMING	2
PROGRAM DUPLICATION	4
FACILITIES AND RESOURCES.....	5
AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY	6
Appendices – Recreation Program Data	7

PURPOSE

The Town of Ipswich, acting for its Town-School Coordination Committee (the Committee) contracted with the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston to conduct a preliminary assessment of the current recreation program offerings of the Town Recreation Department, the Ipswich School Department and the Ipswich YMCA to assist the Committee in discussing options to optimize programming. Project Leader for the assessment was Center Senior Associate Richard Kobayashi. Associate Chris Howell performed the on site work and was the principal author of the report. Specific objectives of the assessment included:

1. Identifying areas of programming overlap;
2. Identifying over- or under-utilized facilities; and
3. Identifying programs that may benefit from increased resources.

The Town-School Coordination Committee included both the Town Manager and School Superintendent as well as representatives from the School Committee, Selectmen and Finance Committee.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this preliminary study, meetings were held with Committee members and Town Manager Robert Markel to identify objectives. Consultants gathered data in meetings and conversations with the following employees of the Town, Schools, and YMCA:

- Robert Markel, Town Manager
- Betty Dorman, Recreation Director
- Rick Korb, Schools Superintendent
- Tom Gallagher, High School Athletic Director
- Gerry Beauchamp, Executive Director, YMCA
- Suzanne Hilyard, Member Service Director, YMCA

Following these meetings, the available data was used to construct an inventory of recreation programming (Exhibit A) in the Town of Ipswich to identify program duplications. The Ipswich Town Hall Space Utilization Study prepared in January 2009 was used to analyze resource requirements of various programs. Areas for further study were identified in order to clarify provider specialties and align program offerings with available resources.

SUMMARY OF RECREATION PROVIDERS AND PROGRAMMING

The Town Recreation Department, Public Schools, and YMCA are the three primary providers of recreation programs in Ipswich. Program offerings consist of: athletics and physical activities; adult leisure programs; children's educational and cultural programs; and youth groups and children's activities. Each provider offers a variety of programs in multiple areas, summarized as follows:

Recreation Department

The Recreation Department's primary programs include year-round youth groups and adult leisure activities, a summer day camp, and school vacation-week activities. The Department provides a limited number of athletic programs, and also arranges a wide variety of individual community events. Programs are primarily conducted in the Town Hall Lower Level and the Town Hall Gym.

Program participation fees are deposited in a Revolving Fund, from which program expenses are paid. FY09 program revenues were \$65,499, and expenses were \$66,666, leaving a year-end fund balance of \$45,799. From 2006 to 2010, the year-end balance increased by \$858 on average.

Department salaries and expenses are funded through the annual operating budget. FY09 salaries were \$130,251, and expenses were \$11,148.

The Department reported 467 individual participants in FY10. The Director identifies teens and low-income residents as particularly important constituents. Additional revenues support income- and need-based scholarships.

Based on available data and the Department's own report, the most popular programs are the Summer Day Camp, the Teen Drop-In Center, Friday Fun Nights, School Vacation Week activities, and tennis lessons. Participation in tennis lessons has decreased for three consecutive years. The Recreation Director expects participation in adult leisure programs to increase.

The Director identified the principal obstacles to the department's program offerings as a lack of fields and shared facilities, limited Departmental administrative capacity, and low volunteer staffing levels.

Schools

Ipswich Public Schools offer a wide variety of athletic programs, educational clubs, and cultural activities. Sixty percent of the students in the Middle School and High School are reported to participate in School programs. The Elementary Schools provide fine arts and string instrument instruction beginning in the third grade, and an Extended-Day Program to provide additional activities outside of regular school hours. Programs are not offered during the summer.

Programs are funded through participation fees. Approximately 400 students participate in High School athletics annually. Participation in High School athletics costs \$400 per year, with a maximum of \$650 per family. Students may apply to have participation fees waived. Program fees and charges for nighttime stadium use generate approximately \$175,000 annually. Participation fees are not segregated by program; as a result identification of which programs are self-sustaining is not possible.

Participation is projected to increase in the After-School Program, Middle School intramural sports, and High School interscholastic sports. The Superintendent identified fields and facilities as a primary asset in the Schools' program offerings, and expressed a willingness to increase administrative capacity and use School facilities to support recreational program operations.

YMCA

The Ipswich YMCA offers a large array of year-round and seasonal athletic and aquatic programs for all ages. The YMCA also provides a number of programs for children, including after-school activities, preschool, and educational programs. Beyond its primary programs, the YMCA hosts community events and offers a limited number of exercise programs for seniors and adult continuing education courses.

The Executive Director and staff noted the organization's role as a community center having partnerships with organizations in Ipswich and the area. Participation data were not available, but YMCA staff identified the Aquatics programs and Summer Day Camp as its most popular offerings, and projected enrollment to increase in the Preschool and After-School Programs.

The Director also noted the YMCA's mission-driven financial assistance program, reporting that over 500 members received scholarship aid in 2009, representing one third of participating children. The YMCA awarded \$115,000 in scholarships in 2009, and projecting \$125,000 in 2010. The bulk of the available scholarship funds are raised through golf tournaments.

PROGRAM DUPLICATION

Among athletic programs, children's educational clubs, and children's cultural activities there is minimal significant duplication. While different providers do offer similar programs and activities, there is little seasonal or age overlap in these areas.

Offerings are duplicated in programs for children's activities, however. Three of the providers' prominent offerings overlap:

1. After-School Programs;
2. Summer Day Camps; and
3. School Vacation Week activities.

After-School Programs

Each provider offers after-school program activities during the school year. Participation in the Schools' and YMCA's After-School Programs is expected to increase. There was an average of 26 participants annually in the Recreation Department's after-school program from 2003 to 2009, with 21 participants in 2009.

Provider	Ages	Facilities	Participation	Projection
Recreation	K-8	Town Hall	26	Level
Schools	K-5	Doyon, Winthrop	N/A	Growth
YMCA	K-5	YMCA	N/A	Growth

Summer Day Camps

Both the Recreation Department and YMCA offer summer day camps. The YMCA identified the camp as one of its most popular seasonal programs.

Provider	Ages	Facilities	Participation	Projection
Recreation	Age 4 – Grade 9	Bialek Park, et al.	62	Level
YMCA	Ages 4 – 14	YMCA	N/A	Growth

School Vacation Weeks

Both the Recreation Department and YMCA offer activities during School vacation weeks. Participation data was not available for the YMCA program. The Recreation Department identifies these activities as some of their most popular offerings. There were an average of 36 and 39 participants in the Department's respective April and February vacation week activities from 2004 to 2009, with 38 and 21 participants in 2009.

Provider	Ages	Facilities	Participation	Projection
Recreation	K-5	Town Hall	April: 36	Level
			February: 39	
YMCA	K-5	YMCA	N/A	N/A

FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

As described in the January 2009 Ipswich Town Hall Space Utilization Study, several departments in Town Hall would immediately benefit from additional space for additional storage, offices, or workstations. Long-term needs for space in Town Hall will also require consideration.

Town Hall Lower Level

The relocation of Ipswich Cable Access Media to the Lower Level of Town Hall reduced the space available for the Recreation Department. The Recreation Director identified shared facilities as a current obstacle to optimal programming. Given the competing needs of other departments in Town Hall, the Lower Level could be allocated for use by other departments if Recreation programs could suitably be provided and administration could be housed elsewhere.

Town Hall Gym

While many outside groups utilize the Town Hall Gym in addition to the Recreation Department, this facility is not overutilized. Space in the Gym could be reallocated if certain programs could be served elsewhere.

Schools

School facilities may be underutilized seasonally as programming runs exclusively during the school year. There may be an opportunity to optimize recreational programming using school facilities. The Schools Superintendent stated a willingness and ability to house Recreation Department administration at the High School.

AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Town will benefit from a more detailed assessment of the Recreation Department's mission, constituencies, and essential functions in comparison to the Department's capabilities and resources. In particular, other program providers may be able to provide recreation services on a shared cost basis or shared facilities basis or on a contractual basis.

A global assessment of Town Hall and School facilities that focuses on current and long-term needs would benefit the departments in Town Hall facing space limitations, and address the facilities requirements of a more defined Town recreation program.

Appendices – Recreation Program Data

SCHOOLS				
PROGRAM	AGES/GRADES	FACILITY	SEASON	PARTICIPANTS
Athletics				
Badminton	Middle School	MS/HS	Spring	
Baseball / Softball / T-Ball	High School	Mile Lane, Doyon, Bialek	Spring	81
Baseball / Softball / T-Ball	Middle School	MS/HS	Spring	
Basketball	High School	MS/HS Gym	Winter	69
Basketball	Middle School	MS/HS Gym	Winter	
Cheerleading	High School	MS/HS Gym	Fall	19
Cross-Country Running	High School	Mile Lane	Fall	42
Dodgeball	Middle School	MS/HS	Spring	
Field Hockey	High School	Bialek Park	Fall	35
Field Hockey	Middle School	MS/HS	Fall	
Football	High School	MS/HS	Fall	63
Golf	High School	Ipswich CC	Fall	10
Golf	Middle School	Cape Ann Golf, Essex	Fall	
Gymnastics	High School	Gloucester HS	Winter	2
Hockey	High School	Rockport HS	Winter	9
Lacrosse	High School	Mile Lane	Spring	64
Soccer	High School	Mile Lane	Fall	84
Soccer	Middle School	MS/HS	Fall	
Swimming / Aquatics	High School	MS/HS Gym	Winter	31
Tennis	High School	MS/HS Courts	Spring	41
Tennis	Middle School	MS/HS Courts	Fall	
Tennis	Middle School	MS/HS Courts	Spring	
Track & Field	High School	MS/HS Track	Spring	68
Track & Field	High School	MS/HS Gym	Winter	107
Track & Field	Middle School	MS/HS Track	Spring	
Track & Field	Middle School	MS/HS	Winter	
Wrestling	High School	Georgetown HS	Winter	10

SCHOOLS, continued				
PROGRAM	AGES/GRADES	FACILITY	SEASON	PARTICIPANTS
Children's Educational & Cultural Programs				
Art club	Middle School	Middle School	School year	
Band	Middle School	Middle School	School year	
Chess club	Middle School	Middle School	School year	
Computer club	Middle School	Middle School	School year	
Debate club	Middle School	Middle School	School year	
Homework club	Middle School	Middle School	School year	
Math League	Middle School	Middle School	School year	
Performing arts	Middle School	Middle School	School year	
Youth Groups & Children's Activities				
After School Program	Grades K-5	Doyon, Winthrop	School year	
Dances	Middle School	Middle School	School year	
Early Release Thursdays	Grades K-5	Doyon, Winthrop	School year	
Before School Program	Grades K-5	Doyon, Winthrop	School year	

RECREATION				
PROGRAM	AGES/GRADES	FACILITY	SEASON	PARTICIPANTS
Athletics				
Day Camp	Age 4 - Grade 9	Bialek Park	Summer	62
Fitness / Conditioning	Grades 1-5	Town Hall fields	Winter	
Golf	Grades 1-6	Rowley CC	Fall	
Golf	Grades K-5	Rowley CC	Spring	
Golf	Ages 12-17	Ipswich CC	Summer	
Skiing	Grades 3-8	Bradford	Fall	55
Tennis	All ages	Richardson Court	Summer	66
Track & Field / Cross-Country	All ages	MS/HS Track	Summer	25
Trikes	Grades 6-8	Town Hall	Summer	
Adult Programs				
Bridge	Adult	Town Hall Lower Level	Year-round	
Community Band	Adult		Summer	
Ping Pong	Adult	Town Hall Gym	Year-round	20
Sewing / Knitting	Adult	Town Hall Crafts Room	Year-round	
Children's Educational & Cultural Programs				
Concerts	All ages	Various	Summer	
Friday Movies	All ages	Library	Summer	
Performing arts	Ages 6-14	Town Hall	Summer	
Youth Groups & Children's Activities				
After School Program	Grades K-8	Town Hall	School year	21
Community Service	Grades 9-12	Town Hall	Spring	4
Drop-In Center	Grades 6-8	Town Hall	School year	181
Friday Fun Nights	Grades 1-5	Town Hall Lower Level	School year	88
Peer Leadership	Grades 6-8	Town Hall	School year	32
School Vacation Week	Grades K-5	Town Hall	School year	

YMCA					
PROGRAM	AGES/GRADES	SEASON	PROGRAM	AGES/GRADES	SEASON
Athletics			Athletics, continued		
Archery	Ages 7-10	Fall	Soccer	Ages 2-6	Year-round
Archery	Ages 7-10	Spring	Swimming / Aquatics	All ages	Year-round
Baseball / Softball / T-Ball	Ages 3-6	Fall	Tennis	Ages 2-12	School year
Baseball / Softball / T-Ball	Grades 4-5	Spring	Volleyball	Adult	Year-round
Baseball / Softball / T-Ball	Ages 3-6	Spring			
Basketball	All ages	Fall	Children's Educational & Cultural Programs		
Basketball	Preschool	Winter	Art club	Ages 3-5	Spring
Basketball	Grades 6-8	Winter	Babysitting class	Ages 11+	School year
Cheerleading	Ages 9-14	Spring	Construction club	Ages 3-5, 6-8	School year
Cheerleading	Ages 10-14	Summer	Crafts	Ages 3-10	Fall
Cross-Country Running	Ages 14+	Fall	Crafts	Ages 2-3	Summer
Dance / Ballet	Ages 2-10, 16+	Year-round	Nature exploration	Ages 3-5	Fall
Day Camp	Ages 4-14	Summer	Pre-School	Ages 2.9 - K	School year
Equestrian	Ages 10+	School year	Science class	Ages 3-5	Fall
Fitness / Conditioning	Ages 7+	Fall	Toddler development	Ages 2-4	Winter
Fitness / Conditioning	Ages 13+	Spring			
Fitness / Conditioning	Ages 10+	Summer	Youth Groups & Children's Activities		
Fitness / Conditioning	Ages 13+	Winter	After School Program	Grades K-5	School year
Football	Ages 3-10	Winter	Birthday parties	All ages	Year-round
Gymnastics	Ages 2-6	Year-round	School Vacation Week	Grades K-5	School year
Hockey	Ages 7-10	Fall			
Martial arts	Ages 3-9, 14+	Spring			
Martial arts	Ages 6-9	Summer			
Martial arts	Ages 14+	Winter			