

December 16, 2015

Attendees: Heather Kirk, Bruce Ewen, Debra Ford, Mary Sunderland, Jessica Breckenridge, Norm Gibson, Gabriella Beyer, Karen Heney

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes of the November meeting were brought forward for approval. Mary made a motion to approved. Debra seconded. Approved by all.

Update on past events:

Santa visit

The Santa visit went well. We had many young ones and families attend with some who came and went and some who spent an hour or more enjoying crafts and visiting. The cookies purchased as part of Ashton church's bake sale were a hit. We had five elves volunteer for the event and that was enough to help pass around juice, help with the crafts and the candies for the cookies. The leftover cookies and icing were sent home with an elf who worked at a daycare to ensure they would be used. The crafts Tammy provided were a hit. Santa Andy was once again wonderful. There was a suggestion by someone that perhaps we consider having someone take 'official' photos of Santa and the kids in future years.

Tree lighting

The tree lighting went according to plan with the Beavers and Cubs singing a song to kick it off. Not all of the trees were lit this year and one or two were only decorated roadside due to the time press in getting someone out and then getting the work done before dark. There are still many lights still in storage that we didn't have time to get up. We should investigate other options for getting the lights up perhaps for next year – other sources, ensuring the work starts earlier in the day or having two trucks out, or perhaps leaving the lights up.

Agenda Items

1. Munster playgroup

Gabi attended to introduce herself and the playgroup and also provided summary documents – see these attached at the end. The playgroup is a chance for parents and kids to meet and socialize. Feedback in the past has been that the toy selection is limited and that perhaps more could be done. There was also feedback indicating that the playgroup had previously been located at the school and that this presented a better environment for the kids, less risk to toys being used by others who may not care for them as well, and less work in cleaning up and setting up each time. This though comes with a price. The contract for running the playgroup two hours twice a week from January to June shows an estimated cost of \$650. Running the group from September through June would increase this accordingly.

The original request by the playgroup to the MCA had been for \$500 to buy toys and craft supplies but given the rental rate, this will not be enough.

The playgroup has approached the community for gently used toys and will again after Christmas. The group has the ability to reduce the rental times in the fall and late spring to one hour a day as the group would normally head outside anyway. This would reduce the overall cost.

The increase from once a week to twice a week is to attract more people – ie some attend nursery school Monday so cannot attend or a parent may work one day but not the other.

A question was raised about insurance. The MCA and its sponsored activities are covered by community association insurance but we are unsure about how much we would have to be involved with the playgroup to have it covered. Also the school board asks to be named as co-insured but we are not sure the city will do that or how to get it done.

The comment was made that the playgroup now is word of mouth. If this is a community offering it should be advertised through the newsletter, facebook and so on, so more people have the opportunity to attend.

A motion was discussed and agreed to in principle but as many people were away, the proposal needs to be voted on by email. The email outlining the proposal is as follows:

Proposal: Playgroup

Gabi attended the meeting to introduce herself and to provide insight into the playgroup. She also sent documents which were forwarded to all last night that provided some background and a funding request.

The playgroup currently meets at the community centre one day a week for two hours. The group would like to move to the school as they feel this is a better environment for the kids and they believe the work of clean-up and set up will be reduced by having a space of their own. They would also like to expand their function to two hours twice a week to allow those who cannot attend one day to come on the other. It was noted that at this time the playgroup is just word of mouth. Should it expand and the MCA fund activities, the group should be promoted through the Facebook pages, newsletter and so on so more people can take advantage.

The school board has set a rental fee of roughly \$644 to cover this use from January through June.

Notes about usage include that a September through June rental would be proportionally more; and that during the fall and late spring the group may opt to make the indoor rental just an hour as they often head to the park for part of this time now which would reduce the overall rental fee.

There is a question of insurance which is required by the board. The MCA is covered under city of Ottawa insurance for its own events and activities. We are not sure though how much we would need to become involved with the playgroup for that coverage to be valid. The school board also requires that it be named as co-insured. We are unsure if the city would do this or how to get that to happen. The group can buy insurance from the board for a cost of about \$40.

The group does not believe a drop-in fee structure would be appropriate but did mention in its request that members would offer support for community events and activities.

Originally the group had requested funding for toys and craft supplies, noting that many of the toys were older and craft supplies had run out. The MCA had agreed to provide \$500 in funding.

The new proposal put forth is for the MCA to contribute \$650. This would cover the rental as it stands. Should the group cut its hours at the school for any reason, the extra funds then could be used to buy toys. The group will acquire its own insurance. This is a one-time contribution and does not in any way guarantee similar support in future. Gabi has provided an informative summary to this point and we would ask that this continue so we are aware of the activities of the group and its membership.

As the group hopes to begin in January and with the coming holidays, a decision is required asap so they can confirm their contract.

Yes/ No

The proposal had been agreed to by those in attendance with the exception of one abstention. Those who were not present sent agreement by email so this motion has passed.

2. Winter carnival

A posting was placed in the newsletter requesting volunteers to organize this year's winter carnival as it was found the load last year quite heavy with few groups outside of the MCA involved. The following message was received from Erica:

We saw the announcement in the Munster Mash about Winter Carnival and looking for helpers. I have spoken with my girlfriends (Janet Fisher, Kerry Visutski, and Chris Huber). We would like to volunteer to organize and run the events at the Community center/rink for the carnival this year.

This would include:

- Friday night Bonfire, rink events, movie night and canteen.
- Same program on the Saturday night with fireworks
- Saturday morning events at the rink - likely free skating and a 3 on 3 tournament again.

So basically the same format as previous years. We would not be involved in planning anything for the gym during the Sat afternoon.

We would like all our profits to be donated to a Children's charity. We are meeting on Saturday night to put our plan together and determine our charity of choice.

An email vote showed MCA members in agreement with this proposal. A follow up email:

Update

Here is what we are proposing:

- We will take care of getting and paying for all the food for the canteen. We can coordinate and get fireworks for the Sat night if MCA would like to do that again. We would like the cost of the fireworks covered by MCA. We are looking at no more than \$400. I am actually trying to see if we can do for \$300. But I wanted to present forward the \$400 just in case.
- It looks like the ladies would like to donate to Roger's House. As the canteen does not generate much of a profit, this fundraising will be mostly from ribbon sales.
- We will have a 3 on 3 tourney on the Sat morning and looking to extend it if we can get more teams. Last year you had gotten some Sens prizes donated and that is what I gave as prizes. If there are any of those again this year we can use them for that but the people that go in this tourney really don't do it for prizes so we are not going to put money aside to get any.

In order to maintain status quo with the school activities that normally take place for the kids, Heather will book events for school and help with recruiting volunteers but would like a community tie-in – nursery school or playgroup involvement – so it is not just the MCA. As well, this activity needs several adult volunteers to help set up, supervise and so on so this may be a source for that. Jessica will speak with the nursery school about this as a possibility.

3. Rink

Jay Tremblay has stepped forward to volunteer as coordinator. We also have two other volunteers who have come forward but two of last year's teams have indicated they will not be helping. Henry was to try making calls directly to the other volunteers from last year who have not replied yet. It was noted that given the weather it is difficult to imagine a rink and so may be the reason people have not spoken up. The first cheque for maintaining the rink has come in from the city. The question was raised about what happens to this if the rink never does materialize. Normally the payments will come in installments so perhaps the rest will not come but would this cheque then have to be returned. Jessica will make general inquiries.

4. Use of school

As noted, the playgroup is moving forward with their use of school. We also have two permit requests in – one for an Ottawa Public Health program for seniors and one for an adult walking club several times weekly to give people a place to walk away from slippery roads and weather. At the time of the meeting we were told there should not be an issue and this was confirmed with formal permits later in the week. The OPH program will run Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. The walking group will have use of the gym Monday, Wednesday and Friday

mornings. The group will be in before the playgroup so there is no conflict. The permits were granted a \$5.80 an hour rental fee but it was noted the normal adult rec fee is \$16.55 an hour and we should not expect the discounted rate in future.

The MCA had previously agreed by email to fund both of these as initiatives to support our older residents. Both permits came in at roughly \$350 each.

5. Christmas light contest

Shaun has posted and will continue to promote the contest. He is recruiting judges for each quad as was done with the Halloween contest.

6. Christmas parade

The parade is set for December 20 and start at 345 at the community centre. It will move through the Dogwood and Coldstream quads and end at the community centre. A FB post indicates the Scout groups will be collecting food donations for the food bank along the route. Organizers suggest 50 people roughly will attend including the Beavers, Cubs and nursery school.

Support for the event was approved last month in principle to provide hot chocolate. Pizza had also been discussed but details weren't confirmed. Deb has offered a discount on pizza – 15% on take out or two for one dine in for the event.

A proposal has been put forward for the MCA to provide up to \$150 towards pizza. Organizers to decide whether to dine out at the community centre or do the Danby's dine-in option. Either way, Jessica will coordinate with Deb.

Again, because of low attendance, funding needed to be voted on by email. Email is as follows:

Proposal : Christmas parade

The parade is set for this Sunday at 345. Participants will leave from the community centre and travel through the Dogwood and Coldstream quadrants, ending back at the community centre. The Beavers, Cubs and nursery school members are taking part and at this point it is expected there may be around 50 people. The MCA had approved in principle supporting the event last month with discussion centered primarily on hot chocolate.

The organizers have also discussed pizza.

Deb has offered a 15% discount if the group gets take-out but dine-in they have the opportunity to take advantage of the normal Sunday night 2 for 1. The group is debating the advantages of that in the support to Danby's, as well as avoiding the community centre use and clean-up.

The proposal has been put forward to the MCA to provide up to \$150 towards the purchase of pizza. Jessica will coordinate with Deb. As this event is this Sunday a decision is needed asap.

Yes/ No

Those in attendance at the meeting approved the request and those not in attendance chimed in to approve by email. The motion then has been carried.

7. Financials

No update.

8. New Business

City meeting

Norm attended a meeting with city officials and others from the other parts of the city on behalf of Munster. He shared our desire for infrastructure as well as concerns about expansion. He received approval from Scott to go ahead with speed signage – coming into town and lawn signs for spring – so will move forward with both of these initiatives.

Official meeting adjourned 7:36.

Next meeting is scheduled for January 20 under the new start time of 6:30.

Future dates are: February 17, March 16, April 20, May 18, June 15 (if needed)

Munster Co-operative Playgroup

Objective:

The purpose of the Munster Co-operative Playgroup (MCP) is to provide a safe, fun place where parents, guardians and/or childcare providers can bring their children to play and socialize.

Supervision:

It is the responsibility of the child's parent, guardian and/or childcare provider to ensure appropriate behaviour and safety of their child at all times.

Toys & Supplies:

We own a variety of toys, kids dishes and craft supplies that are currently stored on sight at the Munster Community Centre (MCC). These toys are considered age appropriate and safe. We have gone through the toys and removed any that were damaged. We have also received toy donations from families in the community.

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Playgroup Structure

The structure for the playgroup has varied based on attendance. At one time, parents and caregivers took turns bringing snacks and organizing crafts. Currently, everyone brings their own snacks and we take turns to bring crafts. The structure at the playgroup, when held at the school, would be as follows:

Free Play: (9:30 am — 10:20 am) During free play, children are free to play with the toys that are available.

Craft Time: (10:00 am – 10:20 am) A craft area will be set up so the children are free to participate with the assistance of their parent, guardian or caregiver. As a co-operative playgroup all are welcome to volunteer to set up a craft by signing their name on the craft sign- up sheet. In the event there are no volunteers for specific dates there will be no craft for that day.

Clean up & Story Time: (10:20 am – 10:30 am) Everyone is responsible to help tidy up toys and clean the craft area. We will have a short story time where we read stories and sing songs together.

Snack Time: (10:30 am) During snack time, children are to sit in the designated snack area to eat the snacks their parent, guardian and/or childcare provider has brought. On occasion the parents and childcare providers will bring snacks for all to share.

Gym Time: (10:45 am – 11:30 am) Children are free to play in the gym during this time, using balls and other equipment stored in the gym storage room. Games and other activities may be organized during that time.

As a Co-operative Playgroup we are open to new ideas and changes, therefore this structure, may change so that it best suits our current group of participants.

Attendance:

The Munster Cooperative Playgroup has been running for many years at the Community Centre and has changed every year. It is attended by both daycare providers and parents. In the past, it has been daycare providers who have dedicated their time to organize and take responsibility for cleaning the toys, stocking the supplies and opening and closing the community center. Attendance currently ranges in numbers from 10 to 20 children. With a bit of advertising, and a more appealing location and program, the attendance would certainly increase.

Fees:

There has never been a fee for the playgroup. It has always been a cooperative effort, and there hasn't been a need for a fee. Craft and Art supplies have been donated over the years, but they are all in need of replacing. The fee for renting a classroom and gym is \$5.80 an hour, so for the two hour playgroup would be \$11.60. The total cost for the school from January to June, including all additional fees, would be \$644.13. We are open to fundraising ideas, but not sure if a drop-in fee would be appropriate.

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MCA Contribution:

The MCA has agreed to donate \$500 to the playgroup. Originally this money was to be used to replace worn toys and add a few new items to the playgroup (mats, storage bins, playtents). Any of the newly purchased items would be the property of the MCA, not the playgroup. We also asked for the MCA to help provide funds for purchasing supplies for arts and crafts (\$100 a year). There are many new families moving into the area, and having a community playgroup is a valuable resource for these families to meet the people and children in our community.

To Whom It May Concern:

The current makeup of the playgroup being run out of the Munster Community Center consists of a base of 4 to 5 daycare providers with approximately 20 children as well as a few parents, some of whom attend most weeks and others occasionally. 2 of the daycare providers have been responsible for opening and closing every week for the past few years, and over the course of those years we have had attendance range from 5 children to near 30. The children range in age from newborn to 4 years old. The main goal of the playgroup has been to provide an opportunity for children to play and socialize, and has been a wonderful way for children in the community to meet their peers and for parents to get to know other parents in the community with children of similar ages.

Over the past few years the toys have been well used and have been sorted through and disposed of if deemed unsafe or broken. Although we have reached out on at least 2 occasions via facebook groups for donations, and have indeed received very nice donations, we recently undertook a cleaning that involved the disposal of many toys as well as many of the storage containers these were kept in as they were cracked and posed a danger to any small fingers that may have been in contact with them.

With the goal of replacing many of the toys and containers that were lost as well as brainstorming other items that may be useful or beneficial to the group, a funding request was submitted to the MCA with the hope that supplies and toys could be replenished and make the playgroup even more appealing to potential new members.

The playgroup has historically not collected fees for attending, we have run on a volunteer schedule/rotation of craft and storytime that has worked for the members. In light of the recently obtained permission to run the playgroup out of the Munster Elementary School and the relatively high cost involved, the playgroup has to decide how they are going to fund this. The members are not interested in a pay per use system as they feel this will not draw in new participants and will also add the duty of treasurer to the running of the playgroup. MCA is being asked to consider funding the rental of the school as this has the added benefit of providing the OCDSB examples of how the school is needed and used by the community, and will hopefully support the school remaining available to the community for use in the long run (past the current 2015/2016 agreement). Playgroup members are willing to participate in some fundraising to help support this valuable group.

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As a fairly recent resident of Munster I would like to commend the MCA on all of the wonderful family-oriented activities that you sponsor and organize. My daughter attended MES for JK before it closed and we were obviously upset and concerned that all of the Munster kids bussing to different schools would impact the fabric of the community.

However, the playgroup, soccer league and various special events have played a big part in making me feel welcome and I look forward to raising my children in Munster. As a stay-at-home mom the playgroup in particular has allowed Maclean and I to feel connected and establish relationships here. We would love to see it moved to a bigger and better venue! These programs that appeal to families with young children will really offset the negative impact the recent school closure has had.

Sincerely,

Tami Campbell-Stiles