

ROAR Conference 2014

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This conference was jammed pack with presentations and activities. There was much learned on my end and I am sure my co-attenders felt the same way. I attended three sessions on each of the first two days and two on the final day. There were many activities planned for the evenings but as I stayed with family I did not attend the dinners or the get-togethers.

My Sessions:

Risk and Liability

This session was presented by Debra Murphy of Crown Life and first dealt with Occupier's Liability Act, which is "anyone who has control of a premise has the power to admit or exclude others." The occupier is responsible for those on their property and as an occupier must take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable incidents from occurring.

Courts consider the following points;

1. Was the danger foreseeable?
2. Did the Municipality follow accepted standards of practice?
3. Was there an inspection system?
4. How long did the hazard exist?

The Risk management process would consider the following points;

1. Identify & analyze
2. Formulate options
3. Select the best technique
4. Implement the plan
5. Monitor & modify.

This session also covered the need for good signage. Signage shows some due diligence in notifying the public of risks. A good sign consist of language and pictures/symbols. In addition to signage for equipment that is designed for a particular age group, consider: Hours of operation, Rules of conduct, Parental supervision required, Location of nearest telephone, Contact Information and any other warning or dangers.

Recommendation; The Recreation committee, in conjunction with staff, should look at buildings, parks and green spaces for what signage should be out there to protect the municipality and bring the findings to council for consideration and action.

Documentation was also covered with emphasis on;

1. What do your documents from 2, 5 or 10 years ago look like?
2. Could someone look at those documents today and follow the actions you took?

3. Have you had any staff turn-over?

This is just an indication of how documentation needs to be reviewed and revised to best support the Townships should a legal issue arise.

I was interested to learn that the courts have adopted the attitude that “**if something is not recorded, it did not happen.**” The onus is on the organization to keep good records and staff should be advised that any notes or records are a potential legal document.

It was strongly suggested to “show your DUE DILIGENCE !” by, Understand your Duty of Care, Knowing your Governing Legislation, Incorporating Accepted Best Practices, Having an Inspection System in place, Creating a Process to effect repairs, having a maintenance routine, and document inspections/maintenance/incidents. It is also important to train – full-time; part-time; seasonal; volunteers.

Recommendation; look at what current practices we are using and at how we document the information tied to areas of concern. Make appropriate recommendations to council and staff.

Waivers, were covered by a second speaker, Jeff Jackson of Algonquin College.

The question here is, how are waivers presented to a potential participant? A participant needs to be aware that a waiver will be presented for signature prior to an event as well as being informed they will have to come in and sign the waiver. That they will be expected to read it over in full with township staff member or township volunteer and then that when they sign there are signing away their right to sue among others. Should something happen you need to show due diligence in informing the participant of the impact of signing the waiver. The more often he is presented with the fact that a waiver is eminent the more due diligence the township is showing.

Recommendation; Township needs to review waivers and how they are handled with a participants.

It should be noted that waivers don't work for minors, if poorly presented, in gross negligence circumstances, or should misrepresentation occur. Waivers for volunteers are also a different matter and may need some review.

Trends in Rural Recreation

This session dealt with the impact of the following five trends in rural areas;

- Demographic
- Behavioural
- Organizational and Workplace
- Infrastructure
- Environmental

The basic message here is there is an increase in older adults but we have fewer children/ youths, and we have a decrease in the volunteer pools. There is more demand for walking, cycling and other outdoor

activities, such as gardening, as well as an increase in programs for rehabilitation and wellness. The need for structured, organized activities is less, with individual and family activities on the rise. Canada lost a million volunteers between 1997 and 2000 and more and more of those volunteers remaining are willing to volunteer for shorter term projects only. There is an increased demand for drop-in opportunities in recreation and cultural facilities. Ecotourism is a growing trend. Also, the need for standalone facilities is also decreasing and municipalities were encourage to consider carefully before taking that route. New facilities are now designed and constructed to reduce energy and resource consumption.

Nature: It's in Your Backyard

Fred Blackstein presented an interactive session outside with his alphabetical list of items you could use as a reason for hiking. (A. is for Astronomy, D. is for Dung, I. is for insects, W. is for wetlands). This whole premise in my mind was supportive of the walking trail of which we have an interest in here in HCM. The challenges would be the costs of the trails as well as the maintenance cost. However partnering with a funding group might be beneficial. Look to Shaw woods for some ideas. Fred also recommended the purchase for the series of books put out by Algonquin Park for a minimal cost of about 40.00. There was also a second recommended series that we could look at of which the cost was also minimal for I believe a series of 12 booklets. The books could possibly be housed in our library.

Recommendation; Purchase both sets and house in the HCM Public Library as part of their reference material.

Working with Small Budgets

The strongest messages here is; having one person to manage the grant applications process is not recommended. The trend is a team to work on grant proposal to avoid, missed opportunities because of delays due to sickness, holidays etc. Most discussion was based on individual issues with the concern that Recreation was one of the first items to be cut in hard times. Pitching the funding opportunities to council and the tools needed to get things done is challenging. The suggestion is to make use of partnerships, as well as the "community champion". This person is often well connected within the community and these references are well received on grant applications.

Letters of support should be very specific about the event being supported the money being committed etc. Collaboration is critical. Gone are the days of stating "I am really into this project" each partner needs to acknowledge their part of the application.

Best practice of "Gather and Share knowledge" was stressed.

Key funding for projects need to be decided on Capacity and Sustainability- is it sustainable without grant money within the community? Look to resources such as Carmen Goold to come and assist with your applications as she has great tips. Now applications are becoming very complicated.

Action and Assertive stance is very important as a wishy-washy attitude will no longer fly. Be assertive and act like you almost have the money. Passive language will work against you. Think of the government/funder as your partner. They want to know how you are fulfilling your goal.

Another thing I took away is that all the funding agencies appreciate and respond to the acknowledgements for the moneys given. They do check. During interviews mention your partners by name.

Pay attention to the throne speech, budget talks, to know your government trends so you can align your application with government ideals.

Media is a recommended partner as this is a resource in which you can show your need and build capacity partnerships within the community. Engaging the media can also bring out contributions.

Jumpstart Canadian Tire – Marc Wolvin

Marc Wolvin outlined Jumpstart noting first off that they are a funder and yes they want to see the recognition. Look at their mandate and make sure your request for funding is in line with it. (Kids in need of sports and recreation) Carmen Goold commented that the Ontario Senior Secretariat has funding for intergenerational funding.

Recommendation: Review what is available from the Ontario Senior Secretariat that we can apply for, for activities in our facility.

Note: Jumpstart works with libraries.

Inverse thinking (or thinking outside the box) When reviewing a project needs look at what else needs funding. This can direct you to different sources of funding. Remember there are different ways to get you to where you want to go. Make use of social media to promote the funding you received. The grantor uses social media to announce or “tweet” the successful applicants.

Pickle Ball

This was just a hoot! This event was one in which the group participated in a game of pickle ball. Great fun and I would recommend this as an activity for our hall. The kit sells for about \$350 and we would have everything needed to start. Something to consider for the new year.

Recommendation: for the recreation committee to consider this item in their 2015 budget and promote it as soon as possible.

Seniors & an Aging Community

The big message is “Seniors are living longer and healthier lives but as they age some are lonely, isolated and facing challenges.

Recommended googling the report by Dr. Samir K. Sinha “Living Longer, Living well” Try to work with the philosophy of 1. Do what makes you happy. 2. never quit 3. Always remember #1.

Sometimes things work out sometimes they don't. SO don't be afraid to try something new and if it does not work out leave it and move on.

Jennifer Harris of the Heart Institute presented a talk on heart smart lifestyles.

Jennifer's talk encouraged regular exercise with daily aerobic components. It was recommended that a warm up and cool down period was important and that you need to monitor yourselves. She states, allow participants to exercise at a safe level with low impact options. Programs can accept participants with cardiac disease. Provide health screening for all participants asking the question, does anyone have any issues we should know about? Have an AED in house and a well communicated emergency plan.

Jennifer went on to discuss some forms of low impact exercising bringing pole walking up. This exercise works a major group of muscles and is an all over body workout.

Recommendation: Suggest to the "Tone and Fit" group to think about adding pole walking to the routine. Note: There may be funding for this.

You are what you eat

This session was presented by two speakers, Dan Caldwell and Krysta Kentfield and health advocate and chef. The message is that good food is available without using over processed items purchase. Example would be soup stock, you can make your own without any of the harmful additives with the primary ingredient being water. Another message was bring the kids into the kitchen to help prepare and interest them in healthy options. The session was a discussion of what different communities were doing to make healthy choices work in their communities.

Recommendations: as many areas are looking for kitchens such as what we are I would recommend the recreation committee look at some of the following ideas to make use of the kitchen. I put it to the group what they would suggest. Some of the suggestions included "wild game dinner", Christmas Cake program, Kids and cookies session, group cooking to do meals or things together so you don't have large batches at home.

One other interesting suggestion was rotating kitchens. Those with kitchens could share with other townships having different sessions and rotating the location, charging a fee per class with ½ the funds to the townships and ½ to the cost.

Planning Large Events (no slide presentation)

Lindsay Sinclair of "Peaks" and Brian Henry of Quality entertainment in Ottawa presented this session. I did find some mixed messages here as Brian is in the business of events organizing and Lindsay took the approach I think more to our point of view. Both recommend partners in funding. Lindsay handed out a sheet with steps to planning an event which may be useful to our group.

Some of the "food for thought" I brought back with me;

1. Don't just think about the sunny perfect day plan for the not so perfect day.

2. Volunteers can cost the event money, i.e. meals, parking, etc. Is this a factor when you are fundraising and have limited resources?
3. Take an event you are already running and add a silent auction to it.
4. Look at more pledge based events Winter Walk, fashion show,
5. Assign tasks to committee members and let them make the decision the only person who can change that decision is the chair. These members report their results but their results are not up for discussion unless it is a problem being discussed. The chair works with the members directly. This is supposed to limit the large group meetings.
6. People who retail to seniors make good partners for senior events. Look to these retailers for donations as they want the business. I.e. Listen up
7. Look for partnerships, i.e. what services can you trade.
8. Find a business to tie the event to, OPG, Trans Can. Pipeline, etc. and don't be afraid to look outside the area i.e. AECL, Deep River Shops, Highway Restaurants and motels
9. Risk issues are supported with alliances with Police, Paramedics, etc. Plan for the risk.