Growth of Irondequoit Recreation a Motivator in Pursuing Community Center
Week of June 3, 2019

I recently made a trip to our Senior Center on Pinegrove Ave to meet with our Town’s Recreation staff. Upon entering, I saw an adult cardio class taking place in a converted elementary school classroom. Nearby, I said hello to the Silver Sneakers exercise class taking place in our lunch room. From there, I ventured to the conference room that uncomfortably seats 8, but instead hosted a meeting of 14.

Moments like this serve as a reminder of one of our primary motivations to pursue a community center at the former Irondequoit Mall – one that our community will have the opportunity to vote on come July 30th. We have a first-rate Recreation Department that lacks the space to grow.

Over the past five years, our Recreation Department has grown considerably in size. Generally, in government, we don’t boast about increasing the size of our organization. However, the growth of our recreation program tells a promising story. Since 2014, the number of residents utilizing Irondequoit Recreation programming has increased by 104 percent. The number of programs we offer has increased by 74 percent.

The growth of Irondequoit Recreation has helped meet a growing demand for such services which enhance our quality of life. Indeed, it is an investment we have been happy to make at Town Hall. However, the largest barrier towards continued growth of our Recreation department is limited space. I use those above examples to highlight the fact, but we see the manifestation of this problem regularly.

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association, recreation has three core values that make them essential services to communities: economic value; health and environmental benefits and social importance. I see the first two values everyday: our residents are more active and recreational programming enhances the value of living in Irondequoit.

The third value -social importance – is so important to a community like Irondequoit. In a day and age where we spend so much time “conversing” with one another through social media and via technology, we must never forget the inherent value in having a place to come together as a community, to build social capital that is essential to any civil society.

Even if we didn’t have a recreation program in need of additional space, I have argued that a community center is something that the people of our Town deserve because it is an amenity that other communities enjoy. Just like Irondequoit, our neighboring municipalities have many attributes to offer their residents and to attract prospective homebuyers. Most of those same towns already have a YMCA/JCC-type facility, a town community recreation center – or both! At present, Irondequoit has neither.

I am proud of the strength of Irondequoit’s recreation program. On July 30th, I believe we have a great opportunity to continue to build upon that tradition and create a lasting asset for our community to enjoy for generations to come. For more information about the proposed community center and Irondequoit Recreation, please visit www.irondequoitcommunitycenter.com

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