

John Long

From: Blake Evitt <blake@parkourgenerations.com>
Sent: Friday, June 20, 2014 1:16 AM
To: John Long
Subject: Rec support of parkour in Somerville

Dear Board of Aldermen,

It has recently been brought to my attention that there is a movement underway to cut the Somerville Recreation Commission from the city budget. While I would agree that there are a number of things that need to be changed and improved within the Rec and the way that it operates, there are also a large number of things that it does well, and parkour is one of them.

The Somerville Recreation has been a staunch supporter of our efforts to offer parkour classes for kids, teens, and adults since we launched in Somerville nearly 2 years ago. George Scarpelli had faith in this unique (and some might say slightly crazy) idea from the very beginning, and with his help and support, the parkour programs have become some of the most popular activities offered by the Rec. The classes regularly reach a wide variety of participants throughout the city, and span a wide range of demographics. The support of the Rec has allowed us to offer a unique athletic outlet to the growing number of people that are looking outside of the "traditional sports" options, and to offer them at an accessible price- something that sets us apart from other communities, and yet another reason why Somerville is such a great place to live.

Just some of the things that wouldn't have been possible without the Rec:

- Subsidized teen classes for Somerville High School students that has allowed us to offer parkour classes at greatly reduced prices (\$5/class).
- Regular classes for kids & adults for nearly 2 years based out of the unused Cummings School gym. Offering them through the Rec allows us to keep the prices low and accessible for the wide range of incomes within Somerville.
- Partnering for our national American Rendezvous event which brings together practitioners from around the country for a weekend of training and seminars with elite coaches from around the world.
- Support for the ADAPT instructor training program to train new instructors (including SHS students and graduates). Some of these new instructors now work with the Somerville classes, and in our classes in the public schools.
- Free workshops and demonstrations at community events like Somerville Parks Day and the East Somerville Main Streets Carnival.
- A half-day summer camp for kids that offers them a unique and fun way to explore their city.

As a Somerville native, resident, and owner of a Somerville-based business (Parkour Generations Americas), I have interacted with the Rec for many years. As I mentioned earlier, I will readily acknowledge that there are number of things that need to be changed within the Rec to bring it up to date and to a level in keeping with the needs and demands of Somerville today. That being said, cutting the Rec Commission completely will do much more harm than good by eliminating programs that George and others at the Rec have been working tirelessly to nurture and grow, some of which, like parkour, are very unique to Somerville. I urge you to reconsider the current approach toward dealing with this issue and would encourage you to keep and build upon the strong elements that already exist within the Rec and to use them to expand the availability of this valuable programming to Somerville residents.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing the results of your upcoming discussions,
Blake

--

Blake Evitt
Co-Director & Instructor
[*Parkour Generations Americas*](#)