

Recreation Advisory Board
Thursday, March 28 2019
Parks and Recreation Office
Senior Center

1. Call to Order

Members present: Stephanie Papakonstantis, chair; Mike Wissler; Jen Harrington; Rob Ficara; Dan Provost, Darren Winham, Economic Developer, and Greg Bisson, David Tovey, and Melissa Roy of Parks & Rec.

Ms. Papakonstantis called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Greg Bisson presented Rick Aplers, Primex to conduct a workshop to develop a mission, vision and value for the Parks and Recreation Department. To start the creative thinking process Rick asked the group was asked two questions about the current department and following are the results:

What is currently going well for and within the Exeter Parks and Recreation Department?

- New Director and Staff
- New Programming added
- More of a focus on senior programming
- The Department offers “Something for Everyone”
- A new van for programming transportation has been added to the fleet
- Current programs are affordable
- Strong Financial Assistance from the community and for the community
- Great collaboration between TEAM, Various Sports Leagues, Kiwanas Club and the Lions Club
- Many positive large events throughout the year
- The Department communicates well
- Staff is engaged and portrays themselves in a professional manner
- Department provides summer employment opportunities for young adults

What needs attention within the Parks and Recreation Department?

- Facilities need to be updated
- Increase in the number of summer maintenance staff
- Lots of services delivered with little staff
- Grow relationships with the schools
- The need to improve the departments marketing of its services
- Grow relationships with local businesses
- Work to ensure our parks, facilities and transportation is ADA
- Our older parks are in need of an updating
- Continue to increase Adult and Senior programming
- Summer Camp Registration in need of a overhaul

- Grow a partnership with the library
- Consider and explore other uses of Town Hall for recreation needs
- Continue to look for alternative funding sources.

Mission Statement: Why Does Exeter Parks and Recreations exist at its core? Vision Statement: Where does the Exeter Parks and Recreation Department want to go as a department in the future? The group was asked to provide what words or phrases they thought should be included in a mission Statement. The following are their answers:

- Quality of Life
- Multi-Generational
- Accessibility
- Opportunity
- Community Engagement
- Inclusion
- Affordability
- Building confidence in youth
- Pride in the community
- Customer Service
- Memorable
- Conservation
- Sustainability
- Recreation
- Health and Wellness
- Connecting People
- Green Space
- Collaboration
- Safe
- RECOgnize
- Attract new families

The group was asked to provide what words or phrases they thought should be included in a Vision Statement. The following are their answers:

- Stay Current
- Adapt
- Integrate all generations
- Increase economic impact
- A shining example across the state
- Improve Inter-Modal transportation
- Increase the number of volunteers
- Improve our facilities and parks
- Strive to be more ADA accessible
- Work to increase current staffing levels
- Consistently articulate the Departments value to the community

- Diversify outdoor programs
- Strive to be financially self-sustaining
- Increase community involvement

Once the previous exercises were completed the group was ready to start threading a Mission and Vision Statement collectively. The following is the Mission & Vision Statements crafted by the group:

Mission Statement

The Exeter Parks and Recreation Department is committed to providing affordable, inclusive, accessible opportunities to a diverse range of abilities and interests, across generations, to build confidence, quality of life, and pride in the community.

Vision Statement

Exeter Parks and Recreation is building an Active, Healthy, and Engaged Community. Potential Core Values for the Department.

The group is encouraged to choose 2-3 core values from the list:

- Affordable
- Sustainable
- Inclusive
- Community
- Health
- Wellness
- Resource
- Enrichment
- Culture
- Service
- Fun

Additionally Parks and Recreation Director, Greg Bisson facilitated a series of questions to his staff regarding the past and future of the department. The following are the questions and answers:

1. What services do you want to add or cancel?

- Outdoor adventure programming
- After-school programming
- Senior programming
- Teen center
- Outdoor activities
- Multi-generational community center
- Improved park system
- Scholarships
- Connectivity
- Collaborations

- Annual program evaluations
- Participant program evaluations
- Community events
- Walking path
- Community garden
- Dog park
- Overnight trips
- Arts and culture
- Park stewardship
- Ski trips

2. What are Exeter's Parks and Recreations Core Services and who will utilize them?

- Summer camp
- Park maintenance
- Enrichment
- Community events
- Supporting passive recreation through park maintenance
- Partnerships
- Aquatics
- Economic stimulation
- Sports – introductory and instructional
- Public services – youth and seniors

3. Where is Park and Recreation heading moving forward?

- Increase senior and adult programming
- Additional outdoor programming
- Accreditation
- Expand facilities
- More inclusive programming and facilities
- Additional professional development for staff
- Be a community resource
- Be a leader in the community
- Be self-sustaining
- Grow partnerships throughout the community
- Improve summer camp registration process
- Improve risk management
- Add seasonal park staff
- Develop a maintenance plan for all parks and facilities

4. Why Does Parks and Recreation Exist?

- Improve the community's quality of life
- Provide fun and services of Exeter area kids

- Teach team work
- Build character of children
- Help build a sense of community
- Inclusion for all
- Everything for everyone
- Affordable for most
- Steward for the parks system
- Public services for adolescents and seniors
- Education of the natural environment and recreation activity
- Build lifelong skills
- Promote health and wellness
- Largest employer of youth
- Teach people skills
- Mental well-being
- Risk mitigation
- Customer services
- Engage youth
- Economic and tourism
- Socialization
- Promoting social and emotional intelligence
- Conservation
- Provide a safe environment for all

5. What do you want Parks and Recreation to be?

- A community resource
- Inclusive
- Affordable
- Sustainable
- Environmentally-conscious
- Accessible
- Professional
- Supportive
- Efficient
- A Leader
- Offer diverse programming
- Fun and friendly
- Be fiscally responsible
- Customer service
- Role models
- Instructors
- Inspirational
- Innovative

- Health awareness

6. What Core Values does the current programming and facilities exemplify? Are there any core values that we should implement?

- Exemplify Community cohesiveness
- Socialization
- Education
- Leadership
- Fun
- Quality of life
- Quality programming
- Affordability
- Program variety
- Customer service
- Department longevity
- Implement
- Inclusion
- Health
- Accessibility
- Stewardship

7. Do Exeter Parks and Recreation facilities support the direction the department needs?

Yes or No?

Yes

Facilities and equipment

Educate park and rec staff

Aquatic center

Softball fields

No

Custodial services

Online registration

Facilities – non ADA

Program space

Playgrounds

Playing fields

Indoor camp space

Senior center

Parking

Storage

Lack of an ADA van

Secure office space

Rick Alpers will take this information back and create a report to present for approval of the recreation advisory board.

Other business:

Summer Camp registration was discussed. Greg discussed how the town's bandwidth did not meet the demand and IT was looking to upgrade it in the summer. Jen Harrington suggested allotting spaces for returning campers to alleviate the rush. Melissa was concerned this would give the impression that the camp is closed. Mike Wissler liked the the concept and asked if we could look to see if others have done it. Greg will look into it.

Adjournment:

Mr. Wissler moved to adjourn, Mr. Ficara seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.