

Recreation Advisory Board
Tuesday, April 28, 2020
Remote via Zoom
7:00 PM
Draft Minutes

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Dan Provost, Mike Wissler, Brinn Sullivan, Stephanie Papakonstantis, Jenn Harrington, and Val Castonguay; Molly Cowan, Select Board rep; and Melissa Roy, David Tovey and Greg Bisson of Parks and Rec.

Members Absent: Courtney Marshall, Steve Geiger

Ms. Papakonstantis called the meeting to order at 7 PM. Mr. Papakonstantis said that per RSA 91-A:2(3)b, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body being physically present in one location. All votes will require a roll call vote.

2. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

3. Minute Approval

- a. Minutes of Feb 25, 2020

MOTION: Ms. Castonguay moved to approve the minutes of Feb 25, 2020 as presented. Mr. Wissler seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

4. New Business

- a. Rec Sports

Mr. Bisson said that all spring sports had been cancelled. With the Covid-19 cancellation of schools, they didn't think it was proper to move forward. It's hard to play a baseball or soccer game with less than 10 people. Adult softball is hoping to get a season in during the summer. Their start date was pushed to June 1, but he would be surprised if this were a feasible date. It may be tough to get sponsorship money, but the league has \$2,000 in their account that they can contribute and they will find ways to cut costs. They have no news yet on fall sports; they're concerned about a rebound in the fall, but everyone's moving forward with plans for fall and winter for now.

Ms. Roy said they offered those enrolled in spring sports a refund or a credit on their account for future registrations. About \$850 was left on accounts as of yesterday. Mr. Wissler suggested giving parents the option to give that registration money to their sponsors.

- b. Summer Camp

Mr. Bisson discussed the recommendations by the Governor's task force to reopen, such as meeting in reduced numbers, increased cleaning schedules, keeping one group of kids with one counselor, preventing groups of campers from intermingling,

and limiting or eliminating food service. They may need to have a staggered drop off and close the playground and pool. They're still waiting to hear if the Governor will allow it to go forward at all.

Ms. Castonguay said Kingston cancelled their summer camp because the town Select Board voted against it. Ms. Roy said she can't comment on the Exeter Select Board making a decision, but opening will depend on the Health Officer of the town, and on Parks and Rec making a case that they're meeting the requirements. She put a survey together that will go out to parents of registered campers, asking specific questions about what restrictions parents would be comfortable with. She'd like to prompt parents to prepare kids now to what the camp will be like with the restrictions. Ms. Cowan commented that the Select Board doesn't need to make a decision on this yet, as so much is changing weekly.

Mr. Wissler said one measure construction companies are doing to address Covid-19 is using an inexpensive propane-generated hot water sink.

Ms. Papakonstantis said there are options that may make camp more viable, such as a later start date. Mr. Bisson said if it's a consolidated camp, they would look at a partial reimbursement. Having no field trips would save money, but they may want to bring in entertainers to the camp instead, which would be a cost. They could place siblings together in a group to limit exposure. Ms. Roy mentioned the idea of splitting the day in half, so half the students would come in the AM and half in the PM, also reducing exposure. They will likely no longer have free time in the afternoon.

Mr. Tovey said if the camp has to go virtual, they could create weekly activity boxes that could be delivered to houses. He also suggested remote "mini camps" at parks. Another potential restriction is screening kids for fevers as they come in. Each group of campers could have its own bag of sports equipment, arts and crafts supplies, etc, so that those items aren't being mixed between groups.

Mr. Wissler said they should completely forget about field trips, and think about not doing food service. Ms. Cowan said if the campers stay with their cohort, she could see taking a bus to somewhere outdoors. Mr. Bisson agreed he wanted to get the kids off-campus, because they will go stir crazy. Ms. Sullivan said they should prepare parents for changing plans. Ms. Castonguay asked what they will do in inclement weather, with no indoor space. Mr. Bisson said the schools won't currently let them in, so they may have to cancel camp on rainy days. Ms. Roy said they need to avoid the campers all being in the bathroom unless there is an imminent danger. She added that they may consider restricting the camp to residents only. The staff will likely be required to wear masks, and possibly the campers as well, which would be very difficult on a hot day.

Ms. Roy said lots of other Rec Departments are closing their pools. There are other water activities they could do without the pool. Swim lessons are a substantial source of revenue. They could consider closing the park to all outsiders. They expect the CDC to comment by May 4th so they will have more information then. Ms. Papakonstantis said she feels that water activities and changing in the bathhouse poses a potential risk of infection.

Ms. Papakonstantis asked if there would be employees specifically for cleaning. She's concerned about asking the counselors to do it. Mr. Bisson said they pay professional cleaners to come in at night, at about \$6,500 for the whole summer. They could discuss staggering that, but the recommendation is cleaning every 2 - 3 hours. They're not going to decide until they know if they can go forward at all. Ms. Papakonstantis said cleaning is not just the bathrooms, it's the equipment, kids washing their hands, etc.

Ms. Roy asked what the members who are parents thought about going forward with camp, hearing these issues. Ms. Harrington said her son wants to go to camp, but her fear is that it won't look the same and the campers won't like it. She asked if there's a financial breaking point for Parks and Rec where they just wouldn't go forward. Mr. Bisson said there may be state or federal financial assistance for summer camps that they can request. He's comfortable with hiring more staff because they raised the price of summer camp. However, if the quarantine is prolonged, he could see the whole Rec Revolving Fund being wiped out.

Ms. Sullivan asked if they would require parents to disclose if their kids came down with Covid-19. Ms. Roy said yes. Ms. Sullivan asked if that's a guideline or a rule from the CDC. Ms. Papakonstantis said the disclosure may have HIPAA implications. Mr. Bisson said they could lose a third of the camp if they have to go into self-quarantine for 14 days. Ms. Papakonstantis said probably the whole camp would have to shut down at that point.

Mr. Bisson said the policy will have to be no refunds for campers simply not having fun, but with a positive case they would probably have to refund. Ms. Roy said they should have a deadline for refunds prior to camp start. Ms. Castonguay asked if there's a certain number of campers they'll need to make it worthwhile. Ms. Roy said they've started putting budgets together with changes to the program and what that would look like, which will help them figure it out. They're waiting for the Governor to tell them what the requirements will be to determine what the true costs are. The pool typically loses some money. If the camp lost money, they would have to lay off 10 - 12 staff members, based on seniority.

Ms. Papakonstantis asked by what date they'd have to make a go/no go decision. Mr. Bisson said June 1. The camp was supposed to start June 15, but likely won't start until the end of June. Ms. Papakonstantis said May 28 is the next scheduled Rec Advisory meeting, so they could consider the options then.

Mr. Tovey said if they do visits to outdoor locations, in order to reduce the numbers, they could do one each day with a small subset of campers rather than only two days of field trips. Ms. Papakonstantis suggested parents could drop off campers at the destination rather than at the Rec Park.

Ms. Roy asked for feedback on a potential pool closure. Mr. Wissler said opening it adds a degree of difficulty to summer camp. Ms. Harrington asked how they could keep it closed to campers but open to the public and not have the public using the park and mingling with the campers. Ms. Roy said if they couldn't use it with the camp or do swim lessons they would likely just shut it down for the summer. They're expecting the CDC to release pool-related guidelines May 1 or 4. She added that if they cancelled

camp in late May, they would have to pay for the staff training anyway. With HS kids not in school, they could potentially do more trainings for staff mid-week via Zoom. Ms. Papakonstantis suggested moving the training later, and Mr. Bisson agreed.

Mr. Wissler asked about having a half term of camp later in the summer. Mr. Bisson said they would refund the portion to those that paid for that part. Most families pay for the entire summer.

c. Powderkeg Festival

Mr. Bisson said as of right now, they've decided to keep the Powderkeg Festival as is. Chamber is treading lightly with the sponsorship because a lot of members are shut down. The festival's underwriter, Foy, is still doing business as usual. They may not have as much chili, if any, depending on how many restaurants can come back. The brewery side is probably more secure. They're looking into pandemic insurance, but it's unlikely they could get that now. Chamber has moved their Food Truck Festival to August. He thinks they're safe with October, but they can discuss it again in June or July. They may have to take a year off or move it to the spring. Ms. Sullivan was worried that if they cancel it once, they may lose sponsors permanently.

Mr. Wissler said they could have local residents contribute chili, rather than restaurants. Mr. Bisson said he'd have to speak to the Health Officer, but he likes the idea of having some chili. Ms. Papakonstantis asked about the liability, and Mr. Bisson said they could work on getting chili cook-off insurance through Primex. Ms. Harrington said they should wait as long as possible to make decisions about cancellations. Ms. Papakonstantis said there are aspects like the braceleting or congregation points like the pub tables that they'll have to rethink.

Mr. Tovey said there was a question from a town resident watching the meeting via video: if a family were to leave money in their camp account, can they use for next year? Mr. Bisson said yes.

d. Parks Update

- i. Mr. Bisson said the new playground for Kids Park was supposed to be delivered the second week of April, but now they expect it in May. The playground manufacturer shut down two weeks before completion, since it was not an essential business. The playground had to be snow-fenced out because they're bringing in 40 yards of playground mulch to level it up.
- ii. At Gilman Park, they had to expend more money for the pavilion than previously anticipated. It apparently used to be a dumping site, so they had to dig deeper to get a firm footing. The workers should be setting the slab tomorrow.

e. Other Business

- i. Ms. Papakonstantis said they could potentially set up a drive-in movie. Parks and Rec has the huge screen already. There would have to be strict guidelines of staying in your car. Ms. Roy said the license to show a

movie is \$250, but that changes if you charge a fee. They found a company that will transmit the sound via FM for \$500. The logical place to have the event would be the High School parking lot, but they've been nixed from the High School while it's closed, so they're looking for help with a venue.

- ii. Mr. Bisson said they've been hosting virtual classes, including an urban dance class and art lessons. They have a few more planned, with musicians and other events
- iii. Ms. Papakonstantis said Ms. Castonguay was reappointed to the Board. Ms. Cowan will continue to be the rep from the Select Board. There's an open alternate spot available.
- iv. Mr. Wissler thanked Melissa, Dave and Greg for their leadership in these times. He gave an update on his earlier suggestion in saying the delivered price of a propane sink is \$950, or it's about \$400 in parts to build.

5. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Castonguay moved to adjourn. Mr. Provost seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary