

Recreation Advisory Board
Tuesday, May 26, 2020
Remote via Zoom
7:00 PM
Draft Minutes

1. Call to Order

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

Members Absent: Steve Geiger, Dan Provost

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

2. Public Comment

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

3. Minute Approval

- a. By a unanimous roll call vote, it was agreed to table the minutes.

4. Summer update

- a. Summer Camp cancellation and CareKids

Ms. Papakonstantis said they decided to regretfully cancel Summer Camp. Mr. Bisson said they had some difficulties sending out notifications from the Rec software but he believes everyone should have been notified. Registrants will be given refunds. Ms. Cowan said the cancellation was a difficult decision for the Select Board, made following recommendations from Parks and Rec and guidelines from the state.

CareKids is a proposed alternative to summer camp which will provide child care for a small number of kids. Mr. Bisson said they're still waiting for the state guidelines to come out to finalize their plans. Ms. Roy said she felt strongly that they could safely provide a care program to 50-60 kids. They would keep groups small, and each group would have their own equipment and art supplies. They plan to use Town Hall and the Rec Center for rain dates, but they may have some flexibility to get into school facilities. There would be no aftercare. It would have staggered pick up and drop off times to minimize contact between families. Campers must wear a mask prior to temperature checks and anytime they're within six feet of others or indoors. These plans could change once the Governor releases guidelines. They are aiming to start July 6th, the Monday after the 4th of July, because they need time to process the requirements and determine whether it can reasonably go forward.

Mr. Wissler asked how much demand there was for the program. Ms. Roy said the survey had 40 - 50 families interested in care no matter what, so she's confident they can get registrants. Mr. Tovey said they want to review their refund policy. If a group needed to quarantine, Rec will still need to pay that staff member and potentially offer

refunds to camp families. The refunds could be pro-rated to the missed time.

Mr. Bisson said they should prioritize the registration of children of essential workers and those who need the care. Mr. Wissler said they should look at age to prioritize, since a 12 year kid could potentially stay home without much supervision. Ms. Harrington said she doesn't want to have to prioritize one family's situation over another. Ms. Marshall wondered how they would handle it if a family had siblings, one of whom is older and lower priority. Ms. Castonguay asked if the numbers were flexible, and Mr. Bisson said it depends on the number of staff. They've already had a few counselors bow out. Ms. Roy said the rain day capacity will limit the numbers.

Ms. Marshall asked if they would expect families to commit to limiting their exposure to others outside of the camp. Ms. Roy said they really can't. There's also the question of what staff is doing outside of camp hours. Ms. Castonguay asked if there would be liability for the town, and Mr. Bisson said once the state guidelines are out they can run them by Primex. Ms. Papakonstantis said they'd likely have the parents sign a waiver. Mr. Wissler said he thinks they would be generally protected from liability, otherwise nothing would open up and no one could go anywhere. Ms. Papakonstantis said they'd be taking temperatures, but she knows there are people with the virus who are asymptomatic. Ms. Roy said if someone had a fever, they would notify the parents of campers in that group, and they would self-monitor. It wouldn't necessarily mean they have Covid or have been exposed. She agrees that temperature is unreliable, but that's in all the guidelines.

Mr. Wissler said sending kids with a temperature home and investigating their contacts is untenable. Ms. Roy said she doesn't know if they have much of a choice. Mr. Wissler said he couldn't see a 17 year old counselor taking the temperature and history in a meaningful way. Ms. Cowan said they'd have to ask participants in camp to sign a code of conduct saying that they will take Covid-19 measures seriously. Ms. Papakonstantis said that many of the staff are seasoned and she thinks they can handle it. She does think that one counselor for 10 kids is not enough. Ms. Roy said they've looked at having more staff, but it comes down to money. They asked families about charging more for the program in the survey, and people were much less interested in attending. Ms. Sullivan asked if this program is eligible for Covid-19 relief money. Mr. Bisson said some of it, but not staffing. The town was only allocated \$360,000 for everything, so it can't cover all expenses. He, Ms. Roy, and Mr. Tovey will be present, so if a camper has a temperature they can handle it rather than the counselors.

Ms. Sullivan said the parents will have to be oriented to the new process. Ms. Roy said if these families need care, these will be the requirements wherever they go. Ms. Cowan said at daycare, families would pay whether their child could attend or not. Ms. Papakonstantis said they may want to consider not offering refunds. Mr. Wissler said with this risk and these finances, he doesn't think they can do the program at all. Ms. Papakonstantis said they should wait for the Governor's guidelines to see if they'll even be able to move forward. They should keep in mind this is not camp, this is childcare. Ms. Castonguay asked if the Y is also running a summer camp, but Ms. Papakonstantis said that they're also waiting on the guidelines.

b. Pool

Ms. Roy said there's no guideline that says they can't open the pool, but the social distancing precludes swim lessons so there's no way to recoup the cost of opening the pool. They will keep it closed this summer.

c. Fireworks

Mr. Bisson said it was a consensus at the Select Board meeting that there would be no fireworks this year. The Independence Festival was cancelled as well.

d. Rolling Rec

Mr. Bisson said they plan to bring the Rec van into neighborhoods and have events, such as a dance party or arts and crafts. If they are mobile, they won't have to worry about bathrooms or attending to kids who get hurt, as the kids can just go home. They're looking for more ideas on activities they can bring to the neighborhoods. Ms. Harrington said the Easter Bunny drive-through was a big hit, so she'd like to see something like that. Ms. Papakonstantis said they should do something mobile for July 4th.

5. Special Events

a. Drive-in Movie or Concert

Mr. Bisson said that their proposed 10% budget reduction cut the concerts, but the drive-in movie night is a go. They found a venue for 50 cars. They can charge per car, and plan to charge \$10. Ms. Roy said ticketing would be online registration with the license plate number, so that no money needs to be exchanged. Mr. Bisson said they have an agreement with New England Trucks on Epping Road for a venue and Sawbelly will do car service. The license is only for one showing, but they'd like to do it weekly. Ms. Sullivan said she'd like to see something on Swasey Parkway, but Ms. Papakonstantis said without cars it may be tough to control movement. Mr. Bisson said they could start the movies mid-June. Ms. Sullivan asked if they could try for June 11, the Thursday after school is out for the summer, so they can get the event established. Mr. Bisson said the venue said they could go ahead whenever they're ready. The Board agreed they should push for June 11th if possible.

6. Fall Outlook

a. Fall Sports

Mr. Bisson said contact sports like flag football and soccer will be cancelled. They don't want to start registrations for other fall sports until they see the guidelines.

b. Powderkeg

Mr. Bisson said they haven't made a decision yet. Other beer fests are being cancelled. Sponsorships are up in the air; breweries are losing money from beer not being sold at restaurants. They looked at moving the event to the spring, but the vendors preferred it happening at the same time each year.

7. Other Business

Mr. Wissler asked if camp parents could be asked to give a donation from their camp refund to the sponsors. Ms. Marshall said that happened with some of the races she did that were cancelled. Mr. Bisson said the refunds are already in process; money is being refunded to the credit cards, but it's going slowly because the companies are wary of fraud. Parks and Rec won't pay fees for credit card refunds so there are no concerns there.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Wissler moved to adjourn. Ms. Castonguay seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary