

Recreation Advisory Board
Tuesday, November 24, 2020
Remote via Zoom
7:00 PM
Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Courtney Marshall, Dan Provost, Stephanie Papakonstantis, Mike Wissler, Brinn Sullivan, and Connor Barry; Molly Cowan, Select Board rep; and Melissa Roy, David Tovey and Greg Bisson of Parks and Rec.

Members Absent: Val Castonguay, Steve Geiger, Jenn Harrington

Ms. Papakonstantis called the meeting to order at 7 PM, and read a statement:

As Chair of the Rec Advisory Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Public notice of this meeting was posted on the town website and on the bulletin board of the town offices at 10 Front Street. As provided in that public notice, the public may access the meeting online and via phone.

Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting and who that person is (son, daughter, spouse, etc...), which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

2. Public Comment

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

3. Minute Approval

- a. October 27, 2020

MOTION: Mr. Provost moved to approve the minutes of October 27, 2020 as presented. Mr. Wissler seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

4. New Business

- a. Basketball Update

Mr. Bisson said that they put out registration for the basketball program, but the school notified them that the program needs to be approved by the Exeter School Board. They put out a preliminary registration, but without collecting fees. In January registrants will need to pay. They may not go forward with a 7th and 8th grade basketball program, since CMS is offering a program. Only 8 - 10 people are signed up, so not a lot of people.

Ms. Sullivan asked what rate of community transmission they would look at for closing programs. Mr. Bisson said he reached out to Dr. Ryan, who said they benchmarked a 5% community transmission rate for returning to remote learning. Ms. Sullivan said she feels that 5% is a high number. Mr. Wissler asked if LSS would be the venue, and Mr. Bisson said MSS and LSS, with most at LSS. Mr. Wissler said he doesn't feel savvy enough to weigh in on community transition rates. He doesn't think they should go forward with basketball due to the issues with ventilation and entrance/exit from the LSS gym. The risk outweighs the reward. Mr. Provost said if the opportunity exists at the middle school, they wouldn't be eliminating the opportunity.

Mr. Barry asked if participating students would be getting tests. Mr. Bisson said that he checked with legal, and they can require the kids get testing done, but testing sites have been overrun lately by people wanting to travel. Rapid tests can be inaccurate without symptoms. At the December meeting, they can look at the county numbers and decide whether to pull the plug on the program. Ms. Roy said if they did testing, it would just be a snapshot of that day; they'd have to continue testing each week if they wanted to protect the kids.

Ms. Cowan said she can't support indoor sports, both as a parent and a Select Board member. Mr. Wissler said taking another look in a month can't hurt. Ms. Roy said they have to plan on having a quorum at the next meeting, which is just after Christmas, so they can vote to cancel the program if necessary. Ms. Sullivan asked if there are any other close contact sports planned besides basketball, and Mr. Bisson said no.

MOTION: Mr. Provost moved to cancel 7th and 8th grade basketball because it will be offered at CMS. Mr. Wissler seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

b. Letters to Santa Program

Mr. Bisson said they will be putting out the mailbox for Santa on the Monday after Thanksgiving at Town Hall. They ask parents to proofread the letter to make sure the name and address are clearly written so Santa's elves can respond; more than half of the letters last year had no contact information. They are looking for volunteer elves to respond to letters, provided they can follow the guidelines. The deadline is December 11th for kids to get the letters in.

c. Gale Park walkway

Mr. Bisson said they completed the Gale Park renovation, and it came out outstanding. It will be a big improvement to the park. They had to do one change order which will be going to the Select Board, at a cost of \$875.

d. Summer Camp Planning

Mr. Bisson said DHHS has reached out to NH Camp Directors Association to talk about summer 2021. Rec is using the guidelines of 2020 as a baseline; they wanted feedback on what worked and didn't. They're hoping to have less stringent regulations. They made the promise that everyone who

preregistered had a spot, but that would be over 300 kids, or 19 groups, which is enormous. They haven't sent out communications to parents yet. They're confident that they could take 220 kids. The groups of 20 can't get near each other. They could have some groups at an alternate location. The Rec Park is an LWCF facility, so they can't shut it down to the public. There's also a concern of where to put kids on rain days. It's Rec's goal to provide summer camp to everyone if they can. If they can't, the challenge is deciding how the 370 gets down to 225; he suggested a lottery for the spots.

Ms. Cowan left at this time.

5. New Business

Mr. Bisson said a Parks and Rec staff member tested positive for Covid. He and Ms. Roy were not exposed. They cancelled and refunded any in-person classes remaining. The classes won't start up again until mid-January, if then. The employee is recovering.

At the Select Board meeting, a Board member wanted them to consider an ice rink on Swasey Parkway. They used to flood Park Street Common to create a rink but didn't do it the correct way, with a liner, which is expensive and difficult to maintain. Ms. Roy said they talked about this about a year ago, and considered putting a rink on the basketball courts. On Swasey Parkway, the Swasey Trustees would need to get involved; the rink would be open to everyone, and the ice may get stepped on when it's too warm and be ruined. It requires daily maintenance. It can be done, but would be very challenging. Mr. Provost suggested tabling this because the hockey coach is trying to put something together at the High School and they may be able to partner with them. Ms. Sullivan asked if there were a possibility of Exeter having a more permanent outdoor rink, which could also serve as a roller derby venue in the summer. Ms. Papakonstantis suggested tabling this for Parks and Rec to look into options and costs. Mr. Bisson said that if they were going to go forward with a rink, now is the time they should be putting boards out and getting it ready. It would cost a lot of money. Ms. Roy said it takes more planning than they can do right now. The Rec Advisory Board members generally agreed not to pursue it this year.

6. Old Business

Ms. Roy thanked everyone involved with the Halloween Parade, which was a success.

7. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Sullivan moved to adjourn. Ms. Marshall seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary