

Recreation Advisory Board
Tuesday, February 25, 2020
Senior Citizen Center
7:00 PM
Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Courtney Marshall, Dan Provost, Stephanie Papakonstantis, Brinn Sullivan, and Val Castonguay; and Melissa Roy, David Tovey and Greg Bisson of Parks and Rec.

Members Absent: Mike Wissler, Jen Harrington, Steve Geiger, and Molly Cowan, Select Board rep;

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

2. Public Comment

Ms. Papakonstantis opened a question and answer session for the residents of Acadia Lane (one person was present).

Gwen Sneed of Acadia Lane said the residents' biggest concern is about safety. Ms. Papakonstantis said safety is the biggest issue they're trying to rectify. Kids have to cross a parking lot to get to the camp. People park on the street, or at 1 Hampton Road and cross the road, and they had a kid get hit last year. Ms. Sneed said she'd like to see sidewalks go in for safety. Ms. Sullivan said that's not a Rec thing, but they'd like to see that too. Mr. Bisson said Hampton Road is a state road. Ms. Papakonstantis said they plan to advocate for sidewalks connecting the park to the middle school. Ms. Sullivan said the big issue is people crossing Hampton Road. With an additional 100 spots of on-site parking, they shouldn't have to use the Access Medicine parking lot. They're also redesigning the parking flow. Mr. Bisson added that Public Works is putting in a blinking light at that Hampton Road crosswalk.

Ms. Sneed asked about the potential view and light issues at Acadia Lane. Mr. Provost said he understands residents' concerns about the road coming through their backyard, but this is just an access road. Ms. Papakonstantis said that they will plant Arborvitae trees to shield the view and give as much privacy as possible, as well as a wooden fence border to prevent people from cutting through into the traffic lane. Mr. Bisson said the lights would be on a timer and mostly off when the park is closed. No lights would be aimed at the neighbors. The lighting is a safety issue, as the lot needs to be well-lit for safety. Ms. Papakonstantis said her goal was to make sure that they minimize disruption in that neighborhood.

Ms. Sneed said there are cool rocks in this area, and Ms. Papakonstantis said they can try to move and repurpose the rocks. Regarding trees, 7 acres will be removed, but another 7 acres will be preserved. There will be a 50 foot barrier of trees along 101. Ms. Papakonstantis said they have an endorsement from Exeter Rises and Eileen Flockhart of the Tree Committee. Mr. Bisson added that there will be up to 654 solar panels, which will provide power for the Rec building, the pool, and other town buildings.

Ms. Sneed asked why the Facilities Committee was opposed to the project. Ms. Papakonstantis responded that the Facilities Committee report was based on the opinion of five people on their perception of the town's priorities. It did not address the need-based situation. The 2015 Facilities Report said the Court Street Facilities should not be renovated, but the department should acquire new spaces. This report wasn't looked at by the current committee. There were other things in town the committee felt were more important than the Rec project, but these are projects which aren't even ready to go. In planning the Rec Park project, they used the town Master Plan and 2015 study, done by the Turner Group, an outside company with no financial interest in the town. Ms. Sullivan pointed out that the residents put the Rec project on the docket by voting for the study last year. Ms. Papakonstantis said costs only go up. They were quoted a rate of 1.46% for the bond, and if they wait it will go up.

Ms. Sneed asked how they would work with the neighbors during the construction if the article passes. Ms. Papakonstantis said they want to stay engaged, listen, and eliminate as much disruption as they can. The next Rec Advisory Board meeting is March 5th for questions and answers.

3. Minute Approval

a. February 12, 2020

MOTION: Mr. Provost moved to table the minutes. Ms. Sullivan seconded. All were in favor.

4. New Business

a. Parks Update

Mr. Bisson said regarding Kids Park, they're working with the contractor to schedule a time at the end of March to move all equipment, to build a new playground in mid-April. He should have a picture next week. The swings will be repurposed. There will be a new treehouse there. There's a possible future splash pad. If the article with water fountains passes in March, there will be a new water fountain there.

At Gilman Pavilion, at the end of March they'll pour the slab, and begin construction in April. Ms. Papakonstantis asked if SST is doing that project, and Mr. Bisson said no, there's a contractor, because the pavilion is designed to withstand 150 MPH winds.

Gale Park would be renovated if the article passes, and our landscaper will clear it for free. They'd like to make it more formal.

They're redoing the landscaping at the Public Safety building; the Women's Club may support it financially.

b. Rec Park Project

Ms. Papakonstantis outlined the meetings they'd had regarding the Rec Park project with the Lacrosse League, EJBL, EJBSL, Rotary, The Y, RiverWoods, Exeter Democrats, and Exeter Rises. Ms. Sullivan said that in the future projects, they should engage groups earlier in the process and be more inclusive.

The March 5th meeting will be 7:30 - 9 PM. It's technically a Rec Advisory meeting but mainly a question and answer session. The goal is to ensure that everyone makes decisions based on the facts.

Ms. Papakonstantis discussed the signs they're printing in support of Article 4, and asked the members to think of people who live on prominent locations to ask them to post signs. She asked them to also encourage everyone in support of the project to show up for the polls.

She discussed the unsigned flyer arguing against the project which has been posted around. Rec is sending out their own trifold with information. They're looking for postage donations and volunteers.

5. Old Business

6. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Castonguay moved to adjourn. Ms. Sullivan seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary