

Recreation Advisory Board
Tuesday, January 26, 2021
Remote via Zoom
7:00 PM
Final Minutes

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

Members Absent: Dan Provost. Steve Geiger has resigned from the Board.

1. Call to Order

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. Minute Approval

a. November 24, 2020

MOTION: Mr. Wissler moved to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Castonguay seconded. Jenn Harrington abstained, as she was not present at the previous meeting. By a roll call vote, the motion passed 6-0-1.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment at this meeting.

4. Summer Camp Update

- a. Mr. Bisson said there's a Governor's task force meeting this Thursday to discuss the 2021 Summer Camp guidelines. We are planning for the worst case scenario, but are hoping that as the vaccinations roll out some restrictions will be lifted. The draft is a little stricter than last summer, but does allow for larger groups. Mr. Tovey said they're requiring face masks both outdoors and indoors.

The draft says the limit is groups of 20. Ms. Harrington asked if there would be a snack shack, and Ms. Roy said they haven't finalized the details, but they anticipate that it will be happening in a scheduled way. Mr. Wissler asked if 8th graders would be participating, and Mr. Bisson said no, they focused on the younger children who were more in need of childcare. Ms. Roy said they've been working on this for a long time. Childcare Aware is a program with the State that gives grants for childcare, and they just got info on that today.

Mr. Tovey said the proposal is for an 8 week program starting June 21 and ending Aug 13, from 8 AM - 4 PM, with no aftercare. There can be 220 campers in 11 groups of 20. There will be two counselors and a CIT for each group, plus a head counselor. If a counselor has to quarantine, there will still be a counselor and CIT for the group. Parents will stay in the car at drop off and pickup, as with the CareKids program. They would like to use Camp docs, a paperless system which can keep all of the information current, including the pre-screening questions. Anyone who was in last year's summer camp prior to cancellation will be in a lottery for a spot. Regarding rain day locations, they were approved for the Tuck Learning Campus, and also want to use Lincoln Street School which they're waiting to hear back about. They're also waiting to hear about additional cleaning fees/overtime. For basketball, they were quoted \$75/night to use it, so they've built 10 days of that into the budget. The price range is \$140/week. For the lottery, they'll assign a random number to each child. They'll have to call each family and see how many they are looking to send. Any families that don't get in will be added to a waitlist for a spot in case the guidelines change. Ms. Papakonstantis asked if the lottery numbers would be for each child or each family. Mr. Tovey said it would be for each family, although they need to track each child.

Ms. Roy said they'll do a lot of education, they need to talk to every family about the new restrictions such as wearing masks, and see if they're still interested in attending. Because they ran a program last year with very strict guidelines, they have a good idea about what they can and can't do.

Ms. Papakonstantis asked if they could pull together a virtual public forum to get the information out and questions answered. Ms. Roy said they could pull that together in the next few weeks. Ms. Sullivan said they may only get a few people for an online presentation. Could they video themselves doing an overview or FAQ? Ms. Roy said yes. She added that a lot of counselors are coming back.

Mr. Tovey said that regarding a refund policy, if there's an exposure at camp and the Department tells the family needs to quarantine for more than two weeks, they would get a prorated refund. The budget is bare bones so they don't want to go beyond that. If an exposure happens outside of camp, it wouldn't count towards that. Ms. Roy said if they send a group home for two weeks, that's part of the deal. Beyond that, that's when they would issue a refund. Ms. Papakonstantis said she thinks they're being generous with the refund policy. Being exposed wouldn't get you a refund elsewhere.

Mr. Barry said he Chairs the Communications Advisory Committee, and he thinks they'd be happy to help put together an FAQ document or anything else that may be helpful.

Ms. Roy said they will be strict with quarantining and the timeline, but there's the potential that when they get to the camp the guidelines for quarantining will change. They're going to try to get scholarships, although she's not confident about the state of local businesses. They'll look for ways to offset the costs for families. Ms. Papakonstantis said they should look to private individuals to help with scholarships. Ms. Castonguay said they could ask families as part of the registration form if they wanted to help sponsor another family.

Ms. Castonguay asked what happens if one child is exposed and the other is in camp, and Ms. Roy said that's not against the guidelines; they would only need to quarantine the directly exposed child. They're having internal conversations about whether that makes sense.

Mr. Wissler said the costs are fine, but they should make clear how the lottery and quarantining are going to work. Ms. Roy said if they're able to increase the limit, they'll look to create a teen program. Mr. Bisson said they've written a letter to Health Trust about getting the counselors vaccinated. Mr. Tovey said they just found out today that the guidelines recommend no field trips or incoming events. They had planned to do field trips M-Thurs, not go to popular amusement parks or large crowds, more something like a large beach. The bus guidelines would allow one child per seat, so 24 people on a bus. Ms. Cowan suggested a walking field trips, such as identifying trees. Mr. Tovey said they talked about local in-town field trips. Mr. Barry asked if the guidelines are prohibiting field trips, and Mr. Tovey said no, they're only not recommending them. Ms. Roy said this is only a draft, and they will know more on Thursday.

5. Pool Update

Ms. Roy said it's important to get the pool open this summer. One issue is that new pool guidelines a few weeks ago are requiring people to stay 6 feet apart in the water. The free swim would need a reservation system. The town tax impact does not go to offset costs of pool, it's paid for with daily passes and swim lessons. If they don't have as many people, they won't need as many lifeguards, but they need the same number of chemicals due to weather and sun. Normally they have open swim times when camp is in session, but for the safety of the kids they would have to close it during camp. It's possible to open the pool and lose money. Mr. Bisson said most places were able to run their pools last year, but at a loss. Ms. Roy said other towns may be able to do that because of differences in funding, but the Exeter pool is dollar in, dollar out. This is not the year to ask for any help from the town. Mr. Barry said it's possible that vaccinations would be available, so the guidelines could change. What would they say to a parent that said their child's been vaccinated, so they don't have to follow the guidelines? Ms. Roy said the child can still be a carrier. This is the program they can provide in a safe manner, and if it doesn't work for their family they unfortunately can't attend. Ms. Sullivan asked why they're doing more than other camps, and Ms. Roy said she feels they're not

following the guidelines. Because they're part of the town, they must protect families and also protect the town from lawsuits.

6. Program Update

a. ESports

Mr. Tovey said they had 30 individuals sign up for e sports. Rocket League was the most popular, and Madden was the most popular of the sports games. Some other towns are doing Fortnite. There will be one-day tournaments on a Saturday in March. Kids are guaranteed two games, with a single elimination. The spring season will begin in April.

b. Winter Sports

Over 60 kids signed up for skiing at Gunstock, and lessons will start in February. They will be doing local hikes for youth and teens. The YMCA let them borrow 20 pairs of snowshoes. They'll be working in collaboration with the Conservation Commission.

c. Spring Sports

New guidelines came out last week, requiring players to wear masks. They may do a virtual run.

d. Valentine's Day program

On Feb 5, they will do a drivethrough "date night in a bag" with games to play and a craft. Families will drive through the Rec parking lot, and they will have an inflatable teddy bear, movie screen, and the option to take a picture in the garage for those who collect the photos. This program will cost \$25 per family.

7. Event Update

a. Easter program

Ms. Roy said they're trying to reimagine the egg hunt. They have a lot of eggs from last year. There won't be a bunny parade, but maybe a drive-through to get a bag of eggs to do at their house.

b. Senior Program

Ms. Roy said they're starting some virtual coffee talks for seniors. These are weekly Zoom calls as a way to connect. Ten people are signed up to chat. They'll be bringing in speakers like the Historical Society.

8. Project Update

Mr. Bisson said they're getting bids for renovating the pavilion at the Rec Park. They're also looking to spruce up the playground there. They'll be replacing the fence at Gilman park. The warrant article is on the ballot for another \$100,000. They're looking to renovate the Park Street Common playground and have a meet and greet for the neighborhood.

9. LWCF Update

Mr. Bisson said that last year, the Feds passed the Great American Outdoors act, but the Secretary of the Interior changed what would qualify for a grant. He may ask the Rec Advisory members to contact their representatives on this issue. It makes it very difficult for any Rec spaces to qualify for the grant. It's

more about protecting natural resources for hunting and fishing. The tax on purchasing a gun goes to this fund. He's hoping to have them overturn the new regulations. This fund also gets \$900M a year from offshore oil drilling.

10. New Business

11. Old Business

12. Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Wissler moved to adjourn. Ms. Marshall seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary