

Recreation Advisory Board
Tuesday, March 30, 2021
Remote via Zoom
7:00 PM
Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

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

Members Absent: Courtney Marshall

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. The usual rules of conduct and decorum will apply.

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. January 26, 2021

MOTION: Ms. Castonguay moved to approve the minutes of January 26, 2021 as presented.

Ms. Sullivan seconded. In a roll call vote, all were in favor and the minutes were approved 7-0.

4. Program updates

- a. Field Time-Seasonal Priorities

Mr. Bisson said they have had to limit the soccer schedule, as softball has most of the time. It could be an argument for more fields. The grass is just coming out of dormancy and needs a few weeks to rest before soccer starts.

- b. Summer Programs

- i. Camps Update (Summer Adventure Camp, Soccer, flag football, golf)

Mr. Bisson said there's still space available in summer camp. Staff has been lined up. Mr. Tovey said there are about 80 spots left, as there are 140 registered right now. If they don't get more participants, they could run smaller groups. There are a lot of returning camp staffers, including senior staff. They decided to take field trips off the table for now. Ms. Harrington asked why people aren't signing up. Mr. Tovey said he believes it's due to cost and people working from home. He's not hearing that it's the regulations such as mask wearing. Mr. Barry asked about a scholarship fund. Mr. Bisson said there's no funding for that currently. He's working to get Friends of Rec going again for fundraising. They will be reducing the price next year for everyone. Ms. Sullivan said Diversity, Equity and Inclusion should be a priority in everything. A scholarship fund is part of that, but they should go further.
- ii. Pool Update

Ms. Roy said they have a very limited number of lifeguard staff returning. When they shut the pool down, many of the lifeguards found other positions. She's running lifeguard interviews this week. They have to decide whether to go to a reservation system or set a max number of people. The guidelines are to have six foot distancing in the pool and on the deck, which will be a little tricky. They're considering not running swim lessons, since the guidelines make them challenging. They will close for two hours in the afternoons to let summer camp kids use the pool. Without swim lessons, they won't be able to cover the pool costs, so they may have to dip into the Rec Revolving Fund. Ms. Sullivan said her town started with a reservation system but dropped it and made it first come first serve. Could they rent out the pool as a fundraiser? Ms. Roy said they already offer pool rentals Saturday and Sunday nights. One concern is that residents pay for season passes, so if they start blocking off times when passholders can't go, it may be an issue. Ms. Harrington asked if they can rent it out to swim teams. Ms. Roy said they do rent it out in the early mornings, but the pool isn't heated so it's challenging. They don't want to give the swim teams prime times.
- c. Sports programs (tennis, pickleball, soccer, field hockey, track and field, softball/baseball)

Mr. Bisson said that they will be offering soccer through Challenger Sports, and Flag Football with Coach Cutting in July. All will be following Covid protocols. Golf camp was popular last year, so they added another session.

Mr. Bisson said that after 35 years Kyle Littlefield has retired as a tennis coach. They're trying to get new programming lined up. The "Net Generation" program filled up within 5 minutes. They're working with a coach from PEA to do a parent/toddler tennis class. There's been a large demand for pickleball lessons, so they will look at offering them. Ms.

Sullivan said she expects pickleball to only get more popular, so they may have to make more accommodations for it in the future.

Mr. Tovey said there are 20 teams of soccer, with 190 players. They could use more coaches. T-Ball has 8 teams with 76 players. Rec is now allowed to use the track at EHS since the vaccination clinic has moved. Field Hockey has 15 players, and Lacrosse 21. The Covid guidelines were updated recently, and face masks are still required for everyone except players when they're playing the sport.

d. Virtual (e-sports, virtual 10 k)

Mr. Tovey said the spring E-Sports numbers weren't as good as the winter session. He coordinated with the league which did a survey that received good feedback, so they're not sure why. They will be sending an email to previous participants for more info. Some games had to be forfeited because the other player didn't show up, but anyone that that happened to more than twice was offered a free registration for the spring season. They're planning a Virtual 10K run walk or ride challenge, "Exeter Moves," in the month of June. Participants can do it in one day or over the whole month of June to make it inclusive. Sponsors have donated prizes, including Las Olas and Planet Fitness. Runsignup.com is the site to use.

e. Outdoor Fitness classes

They contracted with BAR Fitness, run by Barbara Durand, for a 6:30 AM class. They're talking with one yoga company to do yoga at Gilman park. There's a new class of Stand Up Paddleboard yoga; participants can rent a paddleboard or bring one. The registration fees include a life vest and anchor. This is for ages 13+ and they can have a group of up to 12 people.

5. Project updates:

a. Gilman Park guard rail

Mr. Bisson said the guard rail at Gilman Park needs repair, as it's becoming a safety hazard. It will be a staggered guard rail with some trees that will eventually give more shade.

b. Recreation Park pavilion renovation

They got permission from the Select Board to replace the roof of the pavilion at the Rec Park, which was built in 1999. The shingles were peeling off and there was a lot of rot. The next step is painting.

c. Brickyard Park shed replacement

This is a metal storage box which is in rough shape and is rusting. They will be replacing it.

d. ADA Chair pool lift

The \$7500 pool lift was approved to be installed. They purchased it today.

e. Recreation Park Mini playground renovation

This is the playground next to the pavilion, and they're looking for quotes for equipment in need of repair. They use it a lot with the summer camp. They're looking to excavate the entire site and put in woodchips, as well as remove poison ivy.

- f. Tennis Infrastructure replacement (Nets and Poles)
The poles needed replacement and the nets were tattered. They upgraded the infrastructure with new poles and nets of higher quality, polyester rather than vinyl, should last longer.
 - g. Park St Common
The Park Street Common playground is the next to be addressed, as it is not compliant. They may have to do a Zoom public meeting. Mr. Provost said he's in favor of having the meeting at the park so attendees can see it firsthand. Ms. Harrington asked if there were plans to add a guardrail around the park. Mr. Bisson said he's already heard from several residents who don't want to see a fence. They'll have to discuss it at a public meeting. There used to be bushes but they were an invasive species and thorny so they were removed.
6. Events update:
- a. Concerts
They were approved by the Select Board to hold summer concerts on Swasey Park. They have invited back a lot of the bands who couldn't play last year. These are mainly local groups.
 - b. Movies
They're only looking to do 2-3 movies in the summer, not weekly movies. Mr. Provost said the Senior class is looking to do movie nights, could they rent the screen? Mr. Bisson said Tim Cremmin of SAU has already reached out, and they're going to borrow the inflatable screen.
7. Old Business
- a. Mr. Bisson said that Melissa Roy has been filling in as Town Manager, and is doing an excellent job. He thanked Julie Gilman for looking out for the town's needs in Concord. He is concerned about HB111, which takes protections away from municipal employees and volunteers. The Rec Association is opposing that. Ms. Gilman said it looks like that bill will fail in April. She's also concerned about CACR9, which is a Concurrent Resolution regarding 2% tax cap, not on tax rate, but on the tax bill, which would create even more of a funding crunch.
 - b. Ms. Roy said they're planning a Family Campout for this summer, possibly at the end of July/beginning of August. Ms. Papakonstantis asked if the summer camp kids could have a campout where they just stay after camp. Ms. Roy said she'd like to do that but they'd have to budget for the summer camp staff to stay overnight. The family camp is probably all for this year.
 - c. Ms. Papakonstantis asked if Powderkeg could be a possibility this year. Mr. Bisson said they and Chamber are interested in running something, but not the 4,000 person festival. There's a "test" beerfest coming in Hampton June 26, and

he has been working with the organizers to see how they're doing it. The Head of Chamber is on the Governor's task force. Ms. Roy said it's important where the mask mandate stands, as this would make or break the event. Ms. Sullivan said Covid numbers are on the rise, so it's important to remain vigilant.

- d. They got the green light from the Select Board to put out an RFP for a fireworks display. They can come back in June and discuss the numbers. They could push it from July to an alternative, later date, perhaps September or October.
 - e. Mr. Bisson said all staff will be vaccinated prior to summer camp, although due to privacy issues it will not be required.
 - f. Ms. Sullivan asked if Exeter will be receiving any other Covid relief funds. Ms. Roy said they don't have anything official, but the town will be receiving some funds. They don't yet have the requirements and stipulations on what it can be used for.
 - g. Ms. Sullivan if the Rec Board could support a sidewalk plan for the town, which would help walkability and bikeability. Ms. Gilman said there's a sidewalk replacement plan that prioritizes repairs, and the Town Planner is looking at the extensions of sidewalks. The Board discussed various sidewalk projects. Ms. Roy said they could put this on a future agenda if they want the Board to be more involved. Ms. Sullivan said she'd like to do that, and have the Town Planner update the Rec Staff on these projects. Ms. Sullivan asked if they've applied for "Walkable City" status, and Ms. Gilman said it would likely have to go through the Planning Board. Ms. Roy said that walkability and "Complete Streets" was a big priority in the latest Master Plan.
8. New Business
- a. Mr. Wissler asked if they can participate in the MLB "Pitch Hit and Run" event. This is a field event/contest for younger kids. He suggested a date of May 15 so that he can get more info from MLB.

9. Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary