

Recreation Advisory Board

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Exeter Parks and Recreation Office, 32 Court St.

7:00 PM

Draft Minutes

David Tovey, Assistant Rec. Dir., Greg Bisson, Rec. Dir, Tara Barker, Rec. Comm
Rec. Commissioners:, Dan Provost, Jen Harrington, Dick Matthews, Steph Papakonstantis,
Brinn Sullivan, Mike Wissler
Julie Gilman- Selectboard Rep

7:05 pm Steph called the meeting to order

September 28th meeting minutes

Steph asked for a motion to approve the minutes of September 28th, 2021. Dick Matthews made the motion to approve the minutes. Dan Provost seconded. All In Favor, 5-0. Minutes approved

Rockingham Planning - Senior Survey

David Tovey provided updates to the board. Rockingham Planning Commission has commitments from Exeter, Portsmouth, Stratham, Seabrook and is waiting on Hampstead and another community to confirm. Exeter's local steering committee includes Julie Gilman, Hope Godino, David Tovey, Betty Hennerbetty, Susan Raycraft. Melissa Roy will be the region rep for Exeter. There is no limit on the number of steering committee members. The town is looking for more members. The committee will convene in January. The regional committee meeting starts soon to decide on a survey tool and means to deliver. January -June 2022.

Stephanie Papakonstantis asked what is the commitment to serve on this committee. David explained it would only be 12-20 hours for the total, including three meetings and a community forum where the survey results will be shared.

Julie Gilman asked if David had reached out to Exeter Adult Ed. He has sent an email to them and is waiting to hear back. David would like to reach their former head of Adult Ed, Leslie Hasslam but does not have her email. Dan will bring the information to Adult Ed as he teaches there on Mondays.

Fall/Winter Programming Update

Halloween Recap: David explained we had to pivot from our typical Halloween Parade activity due to the weather. The parade was canceled due to weather, but the downtown trick or treat did go on. We launched a virtual costume contest and a new Swasey Scream contest. There was a lot of participation with a video on Facebook.

Flag Football & Soccer

The season is now over, and it went well. David would like support from the RC to send out a survey to gain information from the participants. RC is supportive. Please include a comment section. Jen Harrington asked to keep it short but generic so that it could be used for multiple programs. Dan said there may be things we instituted due to covid that people may want to see moving forward.

Winter Planning

Basketball registration is wrapping up for grades 3-8. Pre K through 1-2 has another month left. Stephanie asked how we will address the confusion over the competing basketball program emailed to participants before our registration opening?

Letters to Santa will be launched in the next week or two, with the Mailbox being placed in front of the town hall the week of Thanksgiving.

David explained Tara Barker is planning a Winter Break Camp M-Th, 8 a - 4 p. Plans are being finalized. It will be located at Lincoln St School, where we would be outside as much as possible with possibly a Field Trip to Exeter Bowling.

Tennis Court Conversion:

Don Cloutier is one of our pickleball coordinators, along with Dick Matthews, would like to propose converting the 3 Top Tennis courts into 8 permanent pickleball courts. They would like to fundraise in conjunction with the Friends Of Recreation to raise \$32,000. Additional fencing to create separate pickleball courts would be an additional fencing is \$13,000, which is a great amenity but will wait. Dick Said end goal is to have as many tournaments as possible as we hosted 1 last year, and will be adding a 2nd in August with the NH senior games. If we want to have professional tournaments, facilities have to have 12 permanent courts. There is no site available currently on the property but possibly more courts at 10 Hampton Rd if it is acquired. In Converting, We would have 8 Permanent courts, which would bring the total courts to 18, giving us the most lined courts in the state at one location. With hopes of becoming a sanctioned event. Don Cloutier believes this would separate us from other tournaments bringing in more spectators. We would need to have sanctioned refs. Exeter would hold their tournament in late May or early June, not overlapping with other tournaments. This proposal would still keep the 5 Tennis Courts intact. On any given pickleball day, there would be a minimum of 30 people playing while the tennis courts have a few people coming and going.

Brinn Sullivan wanted to clarify the group's intention and end goal to have tournaments or benefit the rec? Greg explained it would help the department as fees are associated with the tournaments while allowing additional access to pickleball courts. Brinn: "Is it tournaments or public accessibility"? Brinn: will tournament raised funds be put through the Recreation Commission? Greg answered Yes. Brynn: Thought on Parking? Greg: we are planning to expand the parking lot at 4 Hampton in the future, but Access Sports did sponsor these past events and allowed parking for now. Brinn: Will the money be donated through the Friends Group? Greg: yes. Brynn: Any tournament or group would book through the Rec, Dept, correct? Drop-ins still happening? Greg: Yes, yes, Brynn: why not think big? Why not do it all now since Pickleball is sweeping the nation? Don: Walk before we run. Brynn: Have we had any complaints from the neighbors? Greg: No. What is the ask of the Rec? Commission A motion to allow fundraising and a signed contract. Don has one more caveat: what insurances do we have that it won't be abandoned. Greg explained since it was LWCF, it can not

be abandoned due to falling under the National Park Service, and it needs to remain in recreation. Brynn: The only concern is designated courts and people. Alienation of typical users. The goal is inclusion. Motion: Dan made the motions to move forward to work with the Friends of Recreation to fundraise towards converting the upper three tennis courts to eight pickleball courts. Motion Failed. Motion withdrawn. To remove three tennis courts and make them into 8 pickleball courts. Jen Harrington made the motion. Dick seconded it. No further discussion. All in favor.

Powder Keg

Thank you to all who volunteered. Two sessions were appreciated. Participants really enjoyed themselves. Waiting for one more check however our revenue for the program is \$21,652.84. We are already discussing the 2022 Powder Keg and what improvements or additions we would like to add. We definitely want to bring back chili. The beer vendors like the 1 hour break. Cleaning up was a lot easier. People liked the composing cups. The Trustee's are getting their \$2,000 donation. 2022 Powder Keg is potentially October 1. We could go up to 2,000 per session. Having the cattle pen was such a great idea but will need to be expanded and porta potties placed inside. Bringing kids back is being discussed and still a possibility for 2022. .

Santa's Block Party

Greg explained we are now collaborating with the Chamber. The goal is to eventually take over the event in the future. The Rec. will evaluate and make changes as necessary. The Children's fund will manage the Festival of Trees and the gingerbread house contest.

Park St. Commons Playground Designs

Greg asked the board to please look at the 6 different designs that are posted on the wall. Neighbors are split; some want color some want muted colors. Eileen Folkheart called Steph and voiced that being a teacher she would prefer colors for sensory purposes. Group got up and spoke about playground structures. Mike Wissler made the motion to recommend options 1 (Play & park structure) or option 3 (Landscape Structures). Brynn seconded. All in favor. The neighbors will be invited to attend on November 30th to get their final decision so we can start the process. Greg explained the time is ticking since covid has delayed the production with playground 6-8 month out.

Fit Courts Discussion

Steve Singular and Greg have had a few conversations with companies about outside fitness equipment. Are most likely going to place it on the back burner. Too much on the plate right now.

10 Hampton Rd.

The Facility Committee is writing a letter to BRC in support of the project. The abutters/informational session will be held in the Novak room or via zoom on October 30. Rec. board will be held at 6 pm prior. Steph asked if it was going to be moved in case a lot of people attend. Greg explained that unfortunately, it can not be if it will be on Zoom.

Parks Master Plan

A gentleman in the parks st neighborhood came forward to help create a template of a master plan. This person was at the public session at the park. Draft is currently 46 pages. Dave Sharples is looking at the draft. The draft is also being looked at by Greg's mentor who is a consultant.

Old Business

None

New Business

October 29, Greg announced that the parks staff will be fully staffed. Andrew Clawson will be joining our team. Degree in Natural Resources Management from Umass Amherst. Andrew is moving from vermont. Currently works for the US Forest Service. Certified in GIS, hazardous trees, extensive work on trails, certified to teach chainsaw safety. In college he managed the waterville valley nordic trail system so he has experience with grooming trails.

Mike Wissler asked if the department considered a ice rink for the winter, Greg mentioned it's about \$6,000 for a liner system. Mike said nevermind it is too expensive.

Mike did pass on from the baseball league that they would like to hold a Gilman Park Pavilion ribbon cutting in coordination with opening day.

Brynn, with 10 Hampton is there work with the city to connect the frontage with sidewalks?

Dave Sharples submitted multiple studies for the CIP and with BRC supported Complete Streets. Pedestrian & bikes study on the warrant for 2022 . Greg did explain that our consultant did an analysis and did suggest to continue the sidewalk that is already within the park.

Motion to adjourn, 9:10 pm, Mike Wissler made the motion. Second Brinn Sullivan. All in favor.