

Durham Parks and Recreation Committee
Minutes March 23, 2006

Attending: Ken Andersen, Denny Byrne, George Lamb, Neil Niman, John Parry, Frank Pilar, Julian Smith

The meeting was called to order at 1904. Denny Byrne introduced a number of visitors from UNH. There were no public comments.

1. George Lamb introduced Gary Bannon, Dover Recreation Superintendent, who presented an overview of Dover's Parks and Recreation Program. Bannon reported that as of late senior citizens are now included in their program. He then passed out copies of their next year's budget. Dover has available two swimming pools (an outdoor and an indoor), the latter available all year round. Swimming instruction is the most popular program and one of the few that is only partially town subsidized. Several brochures were passed out for inspection. The committee has a great need to decide what programs to support, how to fund them, what clientele to serve, etc. The commission has 11 full time staff and about 80 to 90 seasonal staff. Grants are used mainly for facilities construction with the city assuming overhead costs of facilities. Bannon commented that the UNH community (students, etc.) are of great value to their programs.

2. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved unanimously.

3. Bob Barcelona, Assoc. Prof. of Recreation Management and Policy, spoke on the Town Parks and Recreation Public Survey to be carried out shortly. The UNH Organization and Administration class will carry out the survey. They need to know the public attitudes on recreation, what they want, at what cost, etc. It is felt that Durham citizens are not fully aware of what recreational programs can do for them and, consequently, need to be made aware of the Dover and Newmarket programs. Barcelona passed out forms used by Peterborough to determine their recreational needs. It was pointed out that any public survey must utilize not only e-mail responses but also other means for non-users of computers.

3. Jane Crooks could not be in attendance to report on various aspects of the Longmarsh Trail Grant, but conveyed to Chair Parry that it has been necessary to complete and file a more extensive Wetlands Permit. This will be discussed more fully in the next meeting.

4. Neil Niman reported on needs of additional space for future recreational activities. Some wetlands next to Woodridge are in question and P&R needs to know what their probable status is. Niman opined that we need a minimum of 5 additional acres and he emphasized the necessity of having these centrally located if they are to be regarded as accessible by the citizenry. He also mentioned the need to obtain cooperation from Lee and Madbury and plans to discuss such issues with them. Niman reported on discussions with the Evangelical Church about their search for more space. They indicated their hope that the town would purchase their present property. It was guessed that their asking price may be in the \$2M to \$4M range. The most important problem now is space for the new library and this may preclude any other town plans. The most likely site appears to be opposite the ice rink and other areas adjoining the Rte 4 entrance ramp.

4. Chair Parry provided an update of the current status of the P&R future plans. There is need to specify means of implementation and this will require considerable deliberation, perhaps a special meeting. Several concerns were voiced: are there needs we haven't thought of yet, can the Mill Pond Center serve as a town resource, could Spruce Woods give us some good ideas? Chair Parry then gave a brief report on the Jackson's Landing Improvement Committee and presented

a summary and ranking of approximately 70 items of importance along with rankings on a 5 to 1 scale.

5. Chair Parry reported that property signs for town trails are on order and that DPW will assist in their installation.

6. Dick Dewing will no longer be able to be in charge of the annual Easter Egg Hunt. P&R will discuss this at our next meeting to decide if this should be continued and by whom. Spruce Woods was mentioned as a possible sponsor.

7. Miscellaneous Items.

a. Senior Leisure Programs? Newmarket has such a program and Mel Bobick used to do this for Durham but the ARA (Active Retirement Association) now handles this.

b. Tom Merrick has provided a conservation easement on his property located along Canney Road. It is suggested that we organize volunteers to help this spring with opening up some trails. It is expected that personnel from P&R and DCC can provide assistance.

c. The Audubon Society will not be able to use Wagon Hill Farm for a planned activity due to lack of sanitary facilities. It was mentioned that the Moharimet School will handle this.

d. Chair Parry mentioned that the P&R website needs updating. Members are asked to look at this and suggest changes.

The meeting was adjourned at 2114.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Pilar, Secretary