

Minutes of Durham Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

Thursday, July 20, 2006

7:00 PM

Durham Police Department Building

Attending: P&R Members Ken Andersen, Jane Crooks, George Lamb, Cathy Leach, John Parry, Frank Pilar, David Proulx and Guests from the Mill Pond Center (MPC): Dan Miner, Katie Muth, and Richard Gsottschneider.

The meeting was called to order at 1903. All members were asked to introduce themselves. New Town Council Representative Cathy Leach was welcomed. Chair Parry presented an introduction to the committee as to its purpose, activities, etc.

Town Council Chair Neil Niman introduced the Mill Pond Center guests. Dan Miner, President of the Board of Directors gave an introductory talk, followed by Katie Muth, and Richard Gsottschneider. Katie presented a historical background of MPC, what it does now as a non-profit organization, support of Arts, Nature camps, etc. Dan Miner pointed out that MPC is a focal point for the town as is UNH. He expressed the hope that the town eventually purchases MPC and manages it. Richard Gsottschneider reported the current needs of MPC, viz., leaking roof of the barn, need of insulation, wiring upgrade, A/C for the upper level, foundation work, and house renovation. He pointed out that if the town acquires a Recreation Director, his/her office could be housed in the MPC.

David Proulx presented an overview of ORYA and mentioned that its office is located on Schoolhouse Lane. ORYA's biggest problem is finances. It was established in 1979 to provide activities for Lee, Madbury and Durham not supplied by the schools. ORYA also supports Jackson Rink, a major cost to the organization. ORYA now has 2700 participants involved in over 100 programs. Programs run all four seasons for the age groups from 3 to 18. Other surrounding towns also involve adults. A Program Director (a UNH grad) has been hired recently. The majority of personnel are volunteers. An overview document of ORYA was passed out to P&R members; copies are available from David Proulx. Proulx pointed out that the Jackson Rink uses a 30 year old Zamboni with NO BRAKES! He also mentioned that ORYA operates on a deficit basis--\$130 K is expected for this year. Compared to neighboring towns, ORYA spends much less for recreation. Proulx mentioned that ORYA needs a reliable financial audit in order to be competitive for outside funding. Richard Gsottschneider remarked that MPC has storage space that ORYA is welcome to use.

Neil Niman added some remarks on MPC and ORYA and opined that the community has been using a failed model for operation and support. Too much of a burden is placed on volunteers. He also pointed out that the activities should support the activities that the schools now perform. He posed the rhetorical question: Do the towns realize what they would lose if MPC and ORYA were to

be unable to function? He suggested that P&R should come up with a Master Plan on what the towns need to do and present this to the Town Council.

Jane Crooks reported that the Longmarsh Trail project now has the approval to proceed. Plans for the bypasses have been formulated and installation will begin shortly and will involve assistance from the Scouts and others.

Chair Parry reported on the Jackson's Landing Committee. A master plan will be presented to the Town Council and will involve grant applications. The committee will be considering how Jackson's Landing fits in with other waterfront areas now operated by the town.

Playing fields were discussed briefly and it was noted that planning is in progress to develop an overall plan. The artificial turf issue was considered.. The subcommittee plans to meet every month. George Lamb suggested that we need a master plan for a number of other facilities.

The long-delayed Master Plan for Parks and Recreation has not been formulated to date and it was stated that a date and time to begin the planning needs to be set. A definite date and agenda is to be discussed at our next meeting.

Chair Parry briefly mentioned a Recreation Activity Directory and the posting of trail signs which is to be completed at an early date.

The minutes of the June 13 minutes were approved. The meeting was adjourned at 2115.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank L. Pilar, Secretary