

Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes

April 19, 2007

Present: John Parry, Jane Crooks, George Lamb, Ken Andersen, Denny Byrne, Cathy Leach.

Chair Parry called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

The minutes from the meeting of March 15 were approved with changes.

Public comment: None.

Chair Parry reported on recent correspondence:

- Grant announcement from HNH. Durham does not fall into the two categories of town's that are given priority. Parry did forward the information to ORYA, MPCA, and the school system.
- A report from DPW regarding the Mill Pond Center building assessment (from November, 2006).
- An inquiry from Brian Eibert of a martial arts academy in Lee wanting the P & R committee to sponsor classes. There was generally positive discussion on this, but lack of a facility was cited as an issue.
- Cynthia Belowski, Lamprey River Advisory Committee, sent the group's management plan, and will present it at the May meeting.

Committee Vacancies:

- Cathy Leach reported that seven citizens had applied for the three regular member and one alternate member seats currently vacant on the committee. The council will make the appointments at its April 23 meeting.

Recreational survey update:

- Denny Byrne reported that after sending out a second survey mailing, almost 800 residents completed and returned the survey, a 60% response rate. With only 300 of the surveys tabulated, preliminary responses include support for recreation, but concern on spending especially if raising the tax rate, and support for improving recreational facilities. The committee discussed how the final information would be disseminated, including possible council presentation and public hearing.

Easter Egg Hunt report:

- All committee members thanked Jane Crooks for her work in organizing this event. All felt it went very well, with suggestions for improvement next year including a sound system, prizes, a morning time, and planning more events for the same time/place.

Report on Joint Meeting with the Conservation Committee:

- Parry distributed an inventory done by Cynthia Belowski with town properties and which group is responsible for each. At this point, the P & R committee is listed as overseeing four areas: Longmarsh, Doe Farm, Wagon Hill woods, and Stolworthy.
- The Adopt-a-Trail program was discussed, and there is general confusion regarding what town committee will be responsible for this in the future. This will be a topic for discussion with Cynthia at the May meeting.

Town Programming:

- Parry posed the question: if the P & R committee wanted to offer programming, what could or should it offer? General discussion centered around the following:
 - programs at the various parks in town to increase awareness (i.e. kayaking classes at Jackson's Landing)
 - more involvement or sponsorship in community events such as those previously done by the Main St. program
 - having an activity for kids at Durham Day. One suggestion was a Safe House in conjunction with the fire department
 - picking up the slack for adult programming
- George Lamb brought up the idea of establishing a volunteer base in order to help the committee do more; possibly a "Friends of P & R" group. Cathy Leach offered to contact a faculty at UNH's Thompson School leadership program to see if a student could assist us in this effort.

Ongoing Projects Update:

- Jackson's Landing Grant: Parry announced that the town received a \$20,000 grant to install a universal access trail and footpath at Jackson's Landing.
- Website update: Parry is meeting with Luke Vincent, the town's CS director, to work on an update and to pursue the idea of the recreational activity directory, and welcomes committee input.
- Crooks reported that the Longmarsh trail project still has \$3,400 to spend from the grant. The plan is to install two kiosks and trail markers.
- Time ran out to discuss moving forward on a strategic plan, so that item will be included on the May agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.