



MINUTES
DURHAM PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
Tuesday September 22, 2020
Hybrid Zoom/Town Council Chambers
7:00-9:00pm



Call to Order (7:05pm)

- Rachel Gasowski starts the DPR meeting and plays the preamble

Roll call attendance as follows:

- Allan (Al) Howland (present in Town Council Chambers)
- Rachel Gasowski (present in Town Council Chambers)
- Mike Mullaney (present in Town Council Chambers)
- David Leach (present in Town Council Chambers)
- Mike Drooker (remote with no one else present in room)
- Bill Page (remote with no one else present in room)
- Nate Fitch (remote with no one else present in room)
- Amy Hull (remote with no one else present in room)

Approval of Agenda

Roll call approval of the agenda as follows:

- Mike Mullaney motioned to approve the agenda
- Mike Drooker seconded the motion to approve the agenda
- Nate Fitch voted to approve the agenda
- Amy Hull voted to approve the agenda
- David Leach voted to approve the agenda
- Al Howland voted to approve the agenda
- Rachel Gasowski voted to approve the agenda

Agenda approved by the committee

Approval of Minutes

Roll call approval of the minutes from 5/19/2020 and 6/23/2020 (including the following revisions below) as follows:

- Mike Mullaney motioned to approve the 5/19/2020 & 6/23/2020 minutes with the following revisions.
- Dave Leach seconded the motion to approve.
- Mike Drooker voted to approve.
- Nate Fitch voted to approve.
- Amy Hull voted to approve.
- Al Howland abstained due to not being present in the meetings.
- Rachel Gasowski voted to approve with the following revisions.

May 19, 2020 DPR Minutes:

- Correct the typo in the 2nd sentence under “Update from the Parks & Recreation Director” - “it took long of time” should be “it took a lot of time”.
- Correct the typo in the Rink Update - “surface window” should be “service window”.

June 23, 2020 Minutes:

- Correct the typo in the middle of page five - “too ate” should be “too late”.

Public Comments

- None

Update from the Parks & Recreation Director

- **Summer Programming update**
 - 2 Onsite Camps happened at the end of August. The Outdoor Adventure Camp saw minor adjustments since they couldn’t use the van. The Adventure Paddle Camp had different activities (paddle boarding out to Adam’s Point, a day surfing at Jenness Beach, etc.). Both camps had maxed out on enrollment and ran successfully.
 - Camp boxes in partnership with REACH had a waitlist each week. 35 boxes were sent out each week with at least 7 different activities (crafts, cooking programs, etc.) that had all materials included. There was a goal to have a virtual component that couldn’t be worked out in time; however, it was a great experience and opportunity to provide to the community.
 - Tuesday ½ Day Program (5-week program). 1 of the days was cancelled due to weather. Families were great about transporting their kids to different locations (about 5-6 kids participated). This was a great way to ease into in-person programming.
 - Two community events happened: Concert at Wagon Hill Farm and Movie at the Baseball Field. Both events were kind of poorly attended; with about 40 people coming out for each event. Lessons learned for next year.
- **Fall/Winter Updates**
 - School year after school program planning
 - 3 Afterschool programs. One of the instructors had a daughter with a slight fever and the program that was supposed to start yesterday was delayed, pending covid testing.
 - Anticipating setbacks like this one, but we’re taking it week by week and always air on the side of safety and caution.
 - Partnership with the Oyster River Cycle and Sport to have a Youth Advanced Skills cycling with biking that started today.
 - Trying to get *rec-tivity* bags off the ground. They will be interactive; like the camp boxes, but on a smaller level. Thinking this will be a good thing to put in place as the season changes and there may be a need to be more virtual.
 - Woodridge is busy with requests. Middle School is the facilities for field hockey, ORYA for tennis, and Maximum Velocity (MV) is also using the fields.
 - The DPR building floor in the multi-purpose room is going to be replaced. There is asbestos tile under the carpeting in there.

- Parks & Rec was partnered with Public Works and the Integrated Waste Management Committee to host a compost challenge starting on 10/5. 17 families are currently registered for the 20 spots available. Looking for the ratio of compostable material to non-compostable material. This will help inform how a community composting program will run.

Roundtable

- Nate Fitch asked if the fields are being rented to MV and ORYA, and generally how that works. Committee discussion on the use of fields continued.
 - Rachel said there was discussion on this a while ago and at the time, ORYA was the only one using the fields. This year has been a little different. The programs are growing with Maximum Velocity this year and the Middle School is currently in need of rec space with the construction of their new building. DPR would typically have priority, then the school, then it would go in order of the requests from there.
 - Al added that, in the past, the town gave ORYA a subsidy for their administrative costs, but it was decided that, instead of the subsidy, we would provide them with the field space for free.
 - Discussion on the use of the fields and the cost to maintain them continued, with questions about what to consider, given the subsidy is going away, and how to determine a price for fair use of the fields. This is something the committee plans to keep in mind for further discussion.
 - Rachel mentioned that MV offered to donate to DPR for the use of the fields. The challenge though is, if we accept the donation, it doesn't necessarily go back into the maintenance of the Woodridge field.

Business

DPR pauses in a moment of remembrance for Kenny.

- (Al Howland, member of the Town Council and School Board has stepped into the position.)

DPR Committee Community Survey

- Mike M. offered to spearhead the DPR survey and collaborating with the UNH Survey Center.
 - The committee decided it would be best to table this for now, since DPR activities and events slow down in the winter and the survey may not engage a reflection on typical DPR programming at this time.

DPR/Rink 2021 Budget Update: Bill Page provided an update on the Churchill Rink.

- **2021 Challenges:** Winter space for programming is up in the air. The School Board will reevaluate the models we're working on 10/21. One of the ongoing questions is: can programming adapt and have outdoor activities in the winter. Otherwise the DPR budget is flat to what we asked for, reducing some things that we just aren't going to be able to do. Field trips after school and teacher workshop days are not likely to happen. Health care costs went up a little.
 - Rachel anticipates the winter to be kind of slow. We may not have quite the numbers that we've had in the past but expecting to reach a normal point. Revenue has gone down a bit, but nothing crazy changing. There's not a drastic cut in the budget.

- Rachel said DPR is hopeful we can continue our winter programming, we're just anticipating changes, in case instructors get sick, etc.
- **Rink Project updates;** problem solving and adapting to the changing environment in lieu of COVID-19. Bill worked on the east end of the building to have it used as an entrance (finishing up today and tomorrow), and structured that whole end to make it a safe, flat walkway to keep people from getting hurt.
 - **Additional Rink Improvements.** A new heat source was installed to service the restrooms and office. There are now exhaust fans installed for all restrooms and locker rooms, which is a big improvement. The section of dasher boards at the end of the rink was badly damaged, and needed to be restored, so Bill is finishing them now.
 - **Bill anticipates reopening sometime on 10/18-20.** Bill said there was success in extending the life of the slab long enough to build the client base to a 12-month basis.
 - **Proceeding with Caution.** Bill said the rink is now going to be able to get athletes to utilize that space safely to get to the players bench. On the West end, there was 40 ft of walkway that had aluminum bleachers removed. Players can use that space to take off their skates and be socially distant. Players will go through at a scheduled time and take all their stuff out of the locker room with them.
 - Bill is typing up a document to formalize distancing protocols and explain how to safely use the space at the rink.
 - In terms of open public use of the rink, Bill reported that they're continue to exercise caution, and rink may not consider public sessions until November.
 - Since Maine and Massachusetts both have state restrictions affecting their teams being able to compete, Bill has been contacted about leasing the rink and has respectfully declined their offers at this time.
 - **Committee discussion.** The committee supports the work Bill has been doing and notes the remarkable job he's been able to do at planning and adapting to changes in lieu of covid-19. Nate and Bill plan to connect to discuss further what they've seen as covid-19 precautions in other rinks in the area. Al mentioned it is likely that Oyster River will continue to have winter sports. Oyster River is practicing exclusively at Churchill Rink, given current UNH restrictions at the Whittemore center.

Community Events Update

- **Durham Day (revamped).** Durham Day would have been this past weekend, an event that typically draws 300-500 people at a given time. Rachel said there has been discussion about maybe some plans throughout October. There is a good schedule of events for the month that people can participate in; guided bird walks, food drive, cake decorating with Sweetened Memories, a scavenger hunt, a bee keeping tour, a few kayaking tours, etc. If the group likes it tomorrow, then we'll move forward with that.
- **Trot in the Trees (rescheduled).** Rachel reported that, due to covid-19 challenges with programming, the Trot in the Trees will be either postponed (until probably May 2021) or not happen until next year.

- Al and Mike M. suggested next not holding it until next October. UNH students are helpful in hosting this event, and it's a nice highlight event for the Fall.
- **Downtown Trick or Treat and Community Trick or Treating.** DPR does not expect these two events to run as normal this year and there are two parts to this:
 - One is whether the Durham community can participate in Trick or Treating. The committee should try make a recommendation. The governor's task force has not provided guidance yet on trick or treating, so this is still up in the air.
 - Rachel asked the committee to make some recommendations on safe practices for trick or treating. Mike M suggested people be set up outside, like a designated masked/glove-d/shield-ed "candy distributor", for the hours of trick-or-treating, so there's fewer touching of doors and candy. Rachel suggested asking residents to trick or treat within their own neighborhood. Dave suggested recommending parents to stay with their kids.
 - The other part is how the Downtown Trick or Treat event can be replicated.
 - Rachel said there could be some other event, i.e. a drive-in Halloween-themed movie (Barn-Z's charges \$250 to host a private event).
 - Rachel also brought the idea to the committee of a drive-in disguised car parade, and the committee liked this idea. Car decorating contest, distributing bags of candies to cars, photography on site, and other ideas to incorporate into the car parade. A good route may start the line of people at the high school.
- **Frost Fest**
 - Rachel said, at this point, there are no ideas on how to safely hold this event. The committee brainstormed alternative ideas/locations for the event, including the use of Mill Plaza as a possible area big enough for a gathering, or a virtual event. With the event having so many individual activities, each activity presents its own social distancing challenges.
 - Mike D. suggested a virtual celebration/fest. There is plenty to celebrate and there are activities that can be done virtually (the raffle, virtual choir, storytelling).
 - Mike M. recommended a competition of house-lighting where people could take a driving tour of the houses.
 - The committee overall supported the idea of host this event in a hybrid/virtual way.

Reestablishing the DPR Committee

- **Recruiting DPR members to fill vacancies.** There are 2 vacancies on the committee currently: 1 regular, 1 alternate. It would be helpful to get the word out and fill these vacancies so the committee can keep the ball rolling with these meetings.
 - Al suggested adding something in the Friday updates to get the word out there.
 - Prospective members should email Rachel directly at rgasowski@ci.durham.nh.us. New members meet with the director (Rachel) and the committee chair (TBD) and discuss expectations. After meeting, they would request an application from Jennie Berry. Once received, the director and chair provide their recommendation to the council for final vote.

- **Roles & expectations of committee and its members.** As it is, Rachel does a lot to organize and facilitate committee meetings. While the committee has been supportive of DPR events and programming, there are areas that could use more initiative from the committee members.
 - DPR Committee attendance was not strong before covid-19. The committee members can step up a bit by continuing to regularly commit to meetings.
 - Al suggested cycling the responsibility of taking minutes, so it doesn't always fall to one person.
 - Al also suggested everyone ask the question: what are our goals for next year?
 - The committee can start by mulling over their goals for next month's meeting and by seeing how we can recruit members.
 - Further discussion on Chair & Vice Chair nominations is needed to define these roles on the committee.

Adjourn (9PM)

Roll call approval to adjourn Durham Parks and Recreation Meeting at 9:00pm on Tuesday, 9/22/2020, as follows:

- Al Howland motioned to adjourn the meeting,
- Dave Leach seconded the motion to adjourn,
- Mike Drooker voted to adjourn.
- Amy Hull voted to adjourn.
- Nate Fitch voted to adjourn.
- Mike Mullaney voted to adjourn.
- Rachel Gasowski voted to adjourn.

Committee adjourned the meeting at 9:00pm.