



## DURHAM PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, October 25, 2022**

7:00 pm

Town Council Chambers



**Call to Order:** Cathy Leach called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. In attendance: Joe Friedman, Rachel Gasowski, Cathy Leach and Tracy Schroeder, with Michael Drooker on Zoom.

**Approval of Agenda:** Tracy made a motion to approve the agenda, Joe seconded. Agenda approved, 5-0.

**Approval of Minutes -** Meeting minutes from August 30, 2022. Cathy had a question regarding Rachel's comment about staff pay. Clarification will be made to the minutes to clarify the comment was that summer camp staff in Durham do not earn competitive pay. Cathy made a motion to approve the minutes of August 30, Tracy seconded. Minutes approved, 5-0.

**Public Comments** (limit to 5 minutes per person): No public comments

### Roundtable

Cathy noted that we still have a vacancy for a regular member and three alternates on the committee. Joe asked if the committee would consider a UNH student. There was no objection although there may need to be clarification about residency. Cathy will provide a call for members to run in Friday Updates.

Cathy spoke about the September update to the Town Council – limited input and positive comments about the work of the department. Rachel felt that it was a great summary and well received by the council.

Joe, at the most recent Town Council meeting, requested Council support for the DPR CIP item for a parks & playground community needs assessment and master plan (\$30,000 request). Joe outlined the budget process which begins on November 14 with a public hearing at the Council meeting. Rachel and other department heads will attend that meeting.

Michael's report from the Land stewardship subcommittee: states that

- Tom Brightman, the town's Land Stewardship coordinator, will be leaving his position.
- Preliminary results from the Wagon Hill questionnaire: good response both online (150) and in person (64) with constructive suggestions. Most people would like to see some improvements, ADA access, particularly bridging the wet spots. Working group will meet on Nov 9 to discuss the results and make recommendations to the Land Stewardship Subcommittee. There was interest in using the barn, and Michael said that suggestions were welcome.
- Michael was at Wagon Hill last week and noted the wagon looked really good and wondered if had been replaced.
- Two weeks ago, there was a notice in the Friday Updates that the old sewer pump station at the Town Landing has not been in use for some time and there are questions as to what should be done with it. The Historic District Commission is thinking of ways to repurpose it and encourage

any and all ideas to be sent to Town Planner **Michael Behrendt**. The pump station is in a flood plain, which may constrain what can be done with it.

Joe brought up the trails around Jackson Landing that are in need of trimming and there is poison ivy. He asked Michael if the Land Stewardship Subcommittee monitors and does trail work, and if so, can it be brought to their attention? Michael indicated that the town's Land Stewardship coordinator organizes trail maintenance. Michael thinks the Jackson's Landing trails are good trails to introduce young people to walking in the woods, with its wide variety of vegetation and terrain. Maintenance of properties is divided among public works and volunteers coordinated through land stewardship. There are volunteers assigned to trails that monitor them monthly and make recommendations. Michael will bring this up at the next subcommittee meeting on Nov. 10. Rachel is planning to attend that meeting.

#### **Update from the Parks & Recreation Director**

- Fall program update: several after school programs. The first session is finishing; next sessions are full. Programs include Off the Beaten Path, Get on Board, secret agent lab, kayaking, fishing, mountain biking
- Adult programs: first session of pickle ball finishing; they were full. Numbers limited by available space. Waiting for space availability before scheduling next session. Waiting for the school response, as there are many winter gym activities.
- 2 teacher workshop day field trips. Sold out all spaces. One more on November 8.
- 3 adult field trips offered but no registrations. Adult fitness programs: Tai Chi, strength and stretch, etc. Some programs are still running through zoom, which are difficult to manage. People are very interested in in person classes. Rachel would like to increase adult programming.
- Rachel will have participation by residency data for the next meeting.
- Community events: Have been nonstop!
  - Trot in the Trees race in partnership with ORYA in its 3rd year. Developed a new course using more of the Powder Major Forest with better defined trails. Took more prep work, but went very well. Pre registration numbers: 97 for 5K, and 54 for the fun run. Total registration around 170. Rachel thanked the sponsors: Pro-Am Pack, the Ultimate Bath Store, and Carriage Hill Assisted Living. She also recognized others that provided donations of items or time: Hannaford, Dick's Sporting Goods, Womenade, High School National Honor Society, Oyster River Cycle and Sport, UNH service fraternity, Live and Learn, Lenk Orthodontics, Clark's Bistro, and Rise and Grind.
- Downtown trick or treat held the Sunday previous, due to conflict with UNH football and parents weekend on Saturday. Great event – estimated to be the largest crowd ever for that event. Lots of participation from businesses and UNH students.

#### **Upcoming Events**

- Feather Fest: Thanksgiving morning at Wagon Hill Farm.
- Frost Fest: Saturday, Dec. 3 6-8 pm - last big event of the year.
- Outreach ski and ride program with Gunstock: Limitations on lesson spots from Gunstock – 65 in a lesson this year compared to 240 last year. Families are only able to register for one of the sessions in order to give more kids an opportunity. Families also have the option to purchase just the family pass -- 86 of 180 available spots are filled. Deadlines are firm - by December 4 the planning and registration will be completed.

## **Business**

### **DPR Budget/CIP Update**

Rachel met with Administrator Selig and Business Manager Jablonski re. the department's proposed budget, Cathy and Joe also attended. DPR request is a 10% increase - biggest change is the contracted services line, due to increase in participation. Department is also in need of new computers. Spoke about increasing wages for summer staff to be more competitive as it's becoming more difficult to hire.

Rachel also put in a CIP request for \$30,000 for a consultant to manage a community needs assessment and master planning for Jackson's Landing and Woodridge Fields & Park. This work will provide the department with a potential maintenance plan and a vision for the two parks.

Rachel took this approach upon the advice of Administrator Selig provided during the budget meeting to start with the parks & playground master planning and potentially broadening it out in subsequent years.

### **2022 Goals Review & Planning**

*Community Needs Assessment/Strategic Planning:* Rachel and Cathy met with representatives from the UNH Department of Recreation & Policy to talk about community needs assessments and master planning. They are interested in being involved - Rachel will follow up soon. Rachel created a really good visual that clearly illustrates what the department and committee wants to do moving forward. Park and Playground masterplan goal to be done in 2023.

*End of Year Data & Reports:* Cathy mentioned year-end is a good time to report numbers and stats from the department. The committee and the department's year-end report is due on December 1. Cathy will create a draft for the committee to review.

*Lee and Madbury P & R Communication:* Cathy put together a draft email to send out. Rachel is hoping that we might be able to meet quarterly to plan and coordinate events. Another idea is to have a master calendar of P&R events for all 3 towns.

### **Upcoming Meetings - Review Nov/Dec meeting dates**

Current meeting dates scheduled for Tuesdays, Nov. 22 & Dec. 27.  
The committee agreed to move the November meeting to the 29<sup>th</sup>.  
At the Nov. meeting, we'll discuss the December meeting date.

**Adjourn:** Tracy made a motion to adjourn; Joe seconded. Motion passed, 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, Nov. 29.