



DURHAM PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes  
**Tuesday, November 29, 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, Al Howland, Cathy Leach and Tracy Schroeder, with Michael Drooker on Zoom.

**Approval of Agenda:** Al made a motion to approve the agenda, Tracy seconded. Agenda approved, 5-0, via roll call vote.

**Approval of Minutes** – October 25, 2022

There were a few non-substantive corrections.

Cathy made a motion to approve the minutes; Tracy seconded. Minutes with amendments were approved, 4-0, via roll call vote. Al abstained as he was not at the meeting.

**Public Comments** (limit to 5 minutes per person):

Interested committee members introduced themselves:

- Matt Swiesz has 4 children in the school system who participate in various sports. Saw the notice for committee members in Friday Updates and decided being a part of the committee would be his way of giving back to the community.
- Brian Keegan owns Durham Cycle and Sport, has been active with ORYA. Interested in the trails. Has 2 children in the school system.
- Gen Brown – Recently relocated to Durham from out of state. Employed as the new Communication Director at ORCSD and thought her experience in communication would benefit the committee. Also has children in the school system.

Rachel and Cathy explained the process for becoming committee members.

A UNH student was on Zoom observing the meeting.

**Roundtable**

Cathy mentioned that she had sent the committee results of a Wagon Hill Park survey from Mike Drooker that was done by the Land Stewardship subcommittee. Comments from respondents included more recreational use, dogs not under control.

Joe stated that one solution was to have a fenced off area for dogs. Mike said the NE corner is not used much and that could be a fenced off area for dogs.

Al mentioned the erosion control was noted to be an issue, and one area where stairs were very treacherous.

Joe mentioned that if the park, and particularly if the house and barn start being used more – that additional parking will need to be addressed.

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

### **Rachel provided the following updates:**

- Pickle ball runs 3x/wk and is at max participation. Challenge is space, particularly in the winter. 2 courts at the HS multi-purpose room.
- A new program – Adult Boot Camp – is starting at the MS gym and registration filled within an hour.
- In-person yoga class returning in the new year, held at DPR offices.
- Winter program registration opens on Dec. 16. Programs include hip hop dance, winter back country survival, mad science, fireside dungeons and dragons, cross country skiing, cooking and carving.
- Dept will hold a Jan. 23 Teacher Workshop program. February Vacation Week partnering with 7 Rivers Paddling.
- Partnered with the Local B, the Durham barre studio, to offer a new program for middle school tweens that teaches positive body imaging combined with fitness.

### **Rachel provided the following data for the year to date:**

- Youth Programs:
  - o 35 After School Programs
  - o 5 Teacher Workshop Days
  - o 13 Community Youth Events
  - o 2 School Year Camps
  - o 22 Summer Camps/Field Trips
- Adult Programs:
  - o 65 programs including yoga, pilates, boot camp, tai chi, Zumba, strength & stretch, pickle ball, basketball. 3 adult trips offered but no interest.
- DPR partners regularly with 11 businesses, groups or organizations
- 142 total programs offered
- Community Events:
  - o 9 offered; hope to add 3-4 more in 2023. These events are not all back to pre-COVID events. Considering a 5K on Durham Day.
- Additional Data:
  - o 3861 RecDesk Members (1845 Durham Res; 349 Madbury Res; 689 Lee Res; 984 from outside the district towns
  - o 1007 email contacts
  - o 1700 Facebook followers; 370 Instagram followers
- Participation data to date (not including community events):
  - o 1825 participant visits:
    - 1148 Durham/339 Lee/246 Madbury/92 Other
  - o Summer camps: 22 opportunities over 10 weeks 468 camper visits; total of 181 unique campers
  - o 215 enrolled in Gunstock Ski program for upcoming winter. Number down a little due to Gunstock having limitations. DPR offered two sessions to maximize participation opportunities.

Cathy suggested we develop a PR/Infographic with these stats to provide evidence of what the department offers and the interest levels, including rink data. Rachel will continue to maintain a spreadsheet of data for the sake of comparison year to year. Al suggested we consider trends – where is interest growing or waning.

- Churchill Rink is open and super busy. Chiller barrel issue/breakdown is resolved but rink is a month behind in opening which could affect revenue.
- Rink now takes credit cards for payment.
- Fun skates have been super busy.
- Website is [Churchillrink.org](http://Churchillrink.org)

Cathy suggested that all committee members receive the Department email newsletter.

### **Upcoming Winter Events**

- Sweetheart Skate, Slush Cup, and Gunstock Ski Program
- Frost Fest this Saturday from 6-8. If it rains it will be Sunday 5-7.

### **Business**

#### **Town/DPR Budget/CIP Update:**

- Joe reported the Town's 2023 budget has been presented to the Town Council. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes a DPR request for a study and community needs assessment of Jackson Landing and Woodridge Park. There is positive feedback from the Council regarding Parks & Rec. Joe said that Councilor Carden Welsh would want the study to include a plan for parks, not just a vision. Rachel will follow up with the UNH faculty about the plan proposal.

#### **Committee Annual Report:**

- Committee reviewed a draft from Cathy and provided minor adjustments. Cathy will make those changes and provide final draft by due date of 12/1.

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

- Committee reviewed an updated spreadsheet that can be a starting point for 2023 goal setting.
- Cathy updated the spreadsheet to reflect recent changes, including:
  - Recommendation from Administrator Selig that we focus on playgrounds/parks for planning and community needs assessment in 2023, instead of a more comprehensive 1-3 strategic plan.
- Cathy contacted recreation staff & P&R commission members from Lee and Madbury, and both are interested in meeting in 2023.

**Upcoming Meetings:** Committee determined that many members are not available for Dec. meeting date of 12/27, so the meeting was cancelled. **Next meeting is Tuesday, January 24.**

**Adjourn:** Al made a motion to adjourn; Tracy seconded. Motion passed, 5-0 via roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 pm.