



DURHAM PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 25, 2023
7:00 pm
Town Council Chambers



Call to Order: Cathy Leach called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. In attendance in the Town Council Chambers: Joe Friedman, Rachel Gasowski, Cathy Leach, Matt Swiesz, Al Howland, Myrta Janosz and Genevieve Brown. Michael Drooker and Erin Guyotte attended via zoom.

Matt Swiesz and Erin Guyotte, alternate members, were voting members for the evening.

Approval of Agenda: Al made a motion to approve the agenda, Gen seconded. No discussion, Approval by roll call vote, 7-0.

Approval of Minutes Al made a motion to approve the minutes from March 28, 2023, Joe seconded. No changes, Approval by roll call vote, 7-0.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Roundtable (10 minutes)

Cathy welcome Myrta Janosz to the committee as a new alternate member.

Joe Friedman indicated the town is looking into a new pocket park by town hall near the Lafayette sign. Details are still being considered.

Michael Drooker gave an update from the Land Stewardship Subcommittee:

- Archeological study being done at Spruce Hole Bog to determine what the forest was like before the period it was chopped for farmland.
- UNH student project studying usage conflict & resolutions on public lands, using Wagon Hill Farm as an example.
- Oyster River Forest map and signage is updated.
- Invasives are being removed at the Kenny Rotner Bridge

Rachel brought up a question from Administrator Selig about possibly holding an event at Wagon Hill Farm. Rachel thinks something like a Fall picnic might be doable. It would not be as big (or costly) as the former Durham Day held there.

Update from the Parks & Recreation Director & Upcoming Events (10 minutes)

Rachel provided the following updates:

- Annual Egg hunt went well; estimate over 300 in attendance.
- The final Spring Session programs start next week

- Staff for Summer Camp, which starts 6/19/2023, is all set.

Upcoming Events:

- Memorial Day Ceremony will be 5/29/23 at 10 am
- Durham Day 5K will be Friday 6/2
- Durham Day will be Sat 6/3 from 12:30-3:00pm Downtown
- Liberty Mutual will be doing a volunteer day at the parks (Jackson's and Woodridge) helping to spread mulch

Business:

Churchill Rink Director Bill Page provided the following 2022-23 season update:

- Rink had a successful season even though it had a rough start. The rink opening was delayed due to the fact that the chiller barrel was broken. The replacement cost was \$68,000 – an unbudgeted cost. There was also lost income with the delayed opening, but even with those challenges the rink was able to profit \$5,400. No reserve money was needed to fix the chiller issue.
- Public Skating was also very popular this year. Bill gave a detailed written report of the collections and expenses broken down into each category.
- The rink will be getting a new sound system next year as UNH has updated their system and donated the old one to the Durham and Concord NH rinks.
- Planning for the rink to update to LED lighting in the off-season.

UNH-ARRC Proposal:

- The committee reviewed ARRC answers to the last set of questions presented to Mike Ferguson.
- Committee continued discussion from previous meetings about which of the proposed scenarios would be recommended to Rachel. The key tasks that the committee agreed were most important was the population survey and focus groups, or Scenario 2 (not including on-site surveys).
- Al Howland made a motion to recommend to the Parks and Rec Director and the Town Administrator to choose Scenario 2. Genevieve Brown seconded the motion. The motion was passed by roll call vote, 7-0.
- Rachel will bring the committee recommendation to Administrator Selig.
- Cathy thanked the committee for its due diligence and thoughtfulness in considering the ARRC proposal over the last several months.

2023 Committee Goals:

The committee reviewed draft current goals. Cathy suggested adding a goal of looking into potential playground grants over the next year or so for when we are ready with that next step after gathering community input. Joe cautioned against the time commitment of town staff in applying for and administering grants. Al thought it was worthwhile to consider grants. Cathy thought we could add it as a goal and see what we find.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 23; 7 pm

Adjourn: Al Howland made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 pm, seconded by Matt Swiesz. Motion was approved by roll call vote, 7-0.