



DURHAM PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 27, 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: Rachel Gasowski, Cathy Leach, Matt Swiesz, Myrta Janosz, Erin Guyotte, and Brian Keegan. Genevieve Brown, Michael Drooker and Al Howland attended via zoom.

Alternate member Myrta was a voting member this evening.

Approval of Agenda: Brian made a motion to approve the agenda, Al seconded. Rachel asked to add to the agenda discussion of use of Durham Parks and Recreation Committee Budget to the agenda. Approval by roll call vote, 6-0.

Approval of Minutes Jen made a motion to approve the minutes from May 23, 2023. Myrta seconded. Cathy and Mike asked to change Page one regarding Jackson Survey to Jacksons Landing Questionnaire. Cathy also stated that she will change the spelling of Sarah Callahan's name and add her title to the minutes. Rachel clarified that C.O.R.E. and Oyster River Service Palooza were two different events.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Roundtable (10 minutes)

Erin reported the following:

- Erin presented about a donation from the Benny Fund. The Benny Fund is an organization dedicated to improving mental health and preventing suicide through advocacy and education.
- The Benny Fund is sponsoring a mental health awareness event on July 14, 2023 at the Fishercats Baseball game in Manchester.
- The Benny Fund is donating 30 tickets to the Durham Parks and Rec to give to community members for this event.

Mike reported the following:

- Mike sent an article about the benefits of being outdoors for mental health to Cathy who will forward to the committee.

Cathy reported the following:

- Cathy received an email from Administrator Selig that was forwarded from community member Benjamin Martindale. He asked about the possibility of the Town creating a playground at Oyster River Park.
- Committee discussed that this is not under our purview, but we could ask that the idea be a part of the UNH ARRC project to gather community input during the population survey.
- Matt questioned if the park was zoned for a playground and if the residents that lived near there would want the extra traffic flow. It was left that those questions could be answered further down the road, particularly if it can be part of the UNH ARRC survey.

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

Rachel provided the following updates:

- The Memorial Day ceremony at Memorial Park was a nice turnout. Oyster River Middle School band teacher Sarah Kuhn had both Middle school and High school students play two pieces.
- Unfortunately, the Durham Day Dash was cancelled due to thunderstorms. It is rescheduled for July 15th. Tideline will open at 10:30 am that day for the after party.
- Durham Day Celebration took place. It was a cold and rainy day which resulted in a lower turnout than last year. However, there was strong participation from businesses and organizations. The community members who did attend still seemed to enjoy it! Next year Rachel is going to consider another date as the Special Olympics are scheduled at UNH that same day.
- The Family CampOut was cancelled due to the weather.
- Summer Staff camp orientation took place on 6/13 and 6/15. The first day was team building and the second day was about policies. Rachel reports that she has great group of staff members for the summer.
- Summer camp has started. Last week there were 9 kids at a camp that partnered with Seven Rivers Paddling. This week is a partnership for a Lego camp.
- July 10 – August 4th is the REACH four-week camp. All sessions are full including all four field trips.
- There is a new pottery class for both adults and youth. ORMS has 10 pottery wheels that the DPR are being allowed to utilize.
- Rachel and Sara Callaghan, the Town's land stewardship coordinator, walked around the Oyster River Middle School to look over the property for summer camps. They will be clearing out some bush to make a clearer path to open land more accessible for staff and youth.
- Bill Page, Churchill Rink Manager, is continuing to form a working group for future renovation plans for the Churchill Rink.
- Rachel will start working on the Parks and Recreation budget this summer for 2024 year.
- Summer will also start Fall activity planning.

- Kellie, DPR assistant director, will be going out in the next few weeks on maternity leave.

Business:

Rachel discussed with the committee the \$1500 budget the Durham Parks and Recreation committee has. She asked if \$900 - \$1000 could be used to buy the Department an inflatable Gaga pit. This will be helpful as it can be brought indoors in rainy weather and is a very popular game with youth.

- Brian made a motion to use committee monies to purchase an Inflatable Gaga Pit. Myrta seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed, 6-0.

Rachel discussed that Administrator Selig reviewed the ARRC study proposal. He made some minor changes and approved it to move forward. Rachel let UNH ARRC director aware, and finances are now being discussed. Rachel will reach out to Mike and Matt Frye from ARRC to see if they can come to a future committee meeting to provide an update for next steps.

Cathy will start compiling an outline for the DPR committee report that will be presented to the Town Council on 9/11/23. The Committee discussed what should be included. (Cathy will need reports and graphics for the September presentation.)

- UNH ARRC update
- DPR Committee yearly goals
- Use of DPR's committee budget on an inflatable Gaga pit
- Events in the past year that the committee supported

Cathy discussed the Tri-Town Parks and Recreation meeting. The hope of this meeting is for Durham, Lee and Madbury's Recreation Committees to learn about each of their departments and potentially create a master calendar for the three towns to utilize. Cathy will reach out to the other two committees.

Cathy reviewed the Committee Goals and went through the goals we have met already. Last month we talked about the goals that the Town Council supported.

Cathy addressed the Committee and recognized that the group members are doing a lot of behind the scenes and it is appreciated.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 25; 7 pm

August Meeting: Tuesday, August 22nd (Matt will not be attending.)

Adjourn: Al made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Gen seconded the motioned. Meeting adjourned by roll call vote, 6-0 at 7:55 pm.