



DURHAM PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes  
**Tuesday, March 26, 2024**  
7:00 pm  
Town Council Chambers



**Call to Order:** Cathy Leach called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. In attendance: Matt Swiesz, Rachel Gasowski, Cathy Leach, Tracy Schroeder, Myrta Janosz, Genevieve Brown, Al Howland, and Michael Drooker on Zoom. Matt and Myrta were voting members this evening.

**Approval of Agenda:** Gen made a motion to approve the agenda, Al seconded. Approval by roll call vote, 7-0.

**Approval of Minutes** – Matt made a motion to approve the minutes from February, 2024, Tracy seconded. Cathy noted that the minutes had some information missing and needed to be amended. Matt withdrew the motion.

**Public Comments:** No public comments

**Roundtable:**

- Cathy received clarification from Sara Callaghan that the trail map she mentioned is called Trail Finder.
- Cathy mentioned that Mike is not renewing his committee membership. Tracy is renewing, Matt is requesting to go from alternate to regular member, and Erin is renewing as an alternate. This leaves an opening for an alternate member. A resident expressed interest; Cathy reached out but has not heard back. If anyone is interested, they can reach out to Karen Edwards at Town Hall, Cathy, or Rachel.

**Update from the Parks & Recreation Director & Upcoming Events:**

- February vacation week programs: 3 field trips; all filled to capacity at 12 each day. During April vacation DPR will offer drop-in activities. There are 6 teacher workshop days and DPR has offered field trips on each day.
- The annual Egg Hunt is Saturday. UNH Hamel Scholars were a great help – stuffing approx. 4000 eggs. This year there will be a 2 and under hunt zone.
- Started a pound fitness class Mondays, 6 pm at the Middle School.
- Colette travel trips - 2 people have signed up for the first one in May to Canyon Country.
- Last pickle ball indoor session sold out quickly. Currently held at the Middle school. Setting up temporary courts at Woodridge this summer.
- Churchill rink is closed for the season. Season ended with the annual Slush Cup of 32 teams. Bill Page, rink manager, will give a season recap at our April meeting.
- Summer camp update - 540 DPR camp registrations over 23 camp opportunities. Summer staff hired, a strong returning staff and a few new hires. Counselor In Training (CIT) program had 20 applications.
- Memorial Day ceremony - May 27
- Durham Day - June 22
- Durham Day Dash - June 23 (5k)

## **Business**

### **Trails Subgroup Update:**

- Rachel talked about a past program called Discover Durham Trails and thought this might be a good activity for this subgroup to re-establish. The former town Land Stewardship Coordinator led these walks, talks, and tours on trails and it was well received. The Town of Exeter is doing something similar with their Conservation Commission.
- Mike and Myrta and the committee members agreed that this would be a worthwhile project.

### **Fees Subgroup Update:**

- Group did not meet this past month, but Tracy and Erin are going to gather more information regarding P & R revenue and expenses in our comparative towns. Also may look at facilities.
- Subgroup is meeting via zoom on April 4.
- Rachel mentioned that most town P&R departments have a revolving fund.

### **UNH ARRC Update – Focus Groups:**

- Rachel indicated she is putting together the focus groups and it's been a bit challenging. Three groups are:
  - Woodridge families - those living directly in the vicinity of the park.
  - Parent group of those who use the park but don't live in the vicinity.
  - Active adult group- don't have young kids but have an interest in the park. May not use it but would if there were certain facilities/upgrades.
- Focus groups are Monday, April 1 and Wednesday, April 3 at the Library. Committee members are welcome to attend as observers.
- For Jackson's Landing ARRC will do pop-up surveys.

### **Review Committee Goals:**

- Cathy provided updated list of goals with changes from last meeting.
- Gen, Cathy, and Rachel are working on the data gathering and infographic for both DPR & the rink.

### **Land Stewardship Committee Representative:**

- Mike Drooker is leaving P & R and the LSSC so we need a new P & R committee representative to the LSSC. Mike provided the committee with a summary of the LSSC and the responsibility of the P&R rep, who is a voting member.
- Myrta volunteered to be the committee rep.

### **Future Meeting Guests:**

- Bill Page, Churchill Rink Manager, will attend the April meeting and with an annual report.
- Cathy asked for other ideas on future guest speakers.
  - Rachel suggested someone who could give insight into some of our subcommittee work.
  - Al suggested inviting another town's P & R director. Rachel thought the Exeter director would be a good guest and will be in touch.
  - Cathy mentioned Mike Ferguson from UNH to discuss broader outdoor recreation issues/trends.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, April 23; 7 pm.

**Adjourn:** Matt made a motion to adjourn; Tracy seconded. Roll call vote, 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm.