



DURHAM PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes  
**Tuesday, June 25, 2024**  
7:00 pm  
Town Council Chambers



**Call to Order:** Cathy Leach called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. In attendance: Rachel Gasowski, Cathy Leach, Joe Friedman, Al Howland, Myrta Janosz; Erin Guyotte joined via Zoom.

**Approval of Agenda:** Cathy amended the agenda to include a discussion of the Town Council Goals and a purchase request from Rachel in the Business portion of the meeting. Al made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, Myrta seconded. Approved by roll call vote 5-0.

**Approval of Minutes** – April 23, 2024: Joe proposed two minor corrections to the minutes. Al made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, Myrta seconded. Roll call vote to approve the minutes, 5-0.

**Public Comments:** No public comments

**Roundtable:**

- Joe thanked Rachel and her staff for all the work for Durham Day.
- Cathy mentioned the email we all received from Karen Edwards re. committee appointments. A permanent section will be on the Town website for openings. DPR committee has one alternate member opening – feel free to recruit candidates!
- Selection of Officers: Joe nominated Cathy as Chair, Erin seconded. Roll call vote, 5-0. Myrta nominated Al for Vice Chair, Cathy seconded. Roll call vote, 5-0.
- Cathy mentioned that there was a tentative meeting date of 6/26 for some members of our committee to meet with members of the Lee Recreation Commission. That meeting has been postponed as Lee could only send one member.

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

- After School programs completed at end of school year; enrollment for 2024-25 After School programs will open on 8/7.
- Reach summer camps start July 8; DPR is in second week of camps. First week was full, second week was nearly full. Reach will run for four weeks.
- Durham Day & 5k Dash: both went well, despite the Dash being run in a downpour. Dash was provided in partnership with Growing Places; Rachel indicated there was not a lot of collaboration.
- Some discussion around Durham Day:
  - Can groups on 66 Main be more integrated into the event Downtown? Rachel thinks this may be doable in the future by perhaps lengthening the amount of Main St. to be utilized.
  - Is later in June the best timeframe for the event? Earlier dates can have conflicts with Special Olympics, end of school activities, etc. Something to be considered next year.

- Rotary event on same day – did that make sense? Rachel indicated that in conversations with Rotary, their event was going to be after Durham Day (e.g. 4 pm or later). The Rotary later changed the time so it conflicted with the last hour of Durham Day. Cathy indicated she didn't think having both events on the same day made sense in order to 'spread out' the fun for residents.
- Cathy suggested that if Rotary is planning to have their event again, that maybe DPR and Rotary alternate years of offering the program.
- Cathy mentioned the Durham Day survey we did a few years ago, and asked whether we may want to do that again this year. Rachel and committee agreed; Rachel will find previous survey.
- Parks & Rec developed four temporary pickleball courts at Woodridge. Rachel read an email from a resident thanking her for taking the lead on that.
- Myrta reported on the Discover Durham's Trails initiative of the Conservation Committee that DPR & committee will collaborate with. Sara Callaghan indicated that walks will be on Sept. 15; Oct. 6; and Nov. 10. Each walk will have a theme led by a naturalist. Myrta received input about potentially having a trail walk in Madbury that she will bring to Conservation Committee.
- Myrta also reported that the Land Stewardship Subcommittee is getting land surveys done on some properties and will work toward improving trail signage. First land is Jackson's Landing.

## **Business**

### **Town Council Goals:**

- Joe reviewed and provided the newly adopted Town Council goals for 2024-25. He indicated that Goal 5 (Quality of life and supporting Durham residents) was most directly aligned with our committee goals and work. Joe also mentioned Goal 6 (collaborative efforts with UNH) and that our work with UNH ARRC meets that goal.
- Joe concluded that he didn't think any of the committee goals need to be adjusted and that our activities are in line with the Council goals. He also indicated that Town Council members are supportive of Durham Parks & Rec.
- There was some discussion related to Council Goal 6c (on & off-campus volunteerism) and that DPR does often have UNH students volunteer. Al mentioned that it would be good to highlight those so residents can see the 'good work' of students. Further discussion was related to the various student entities at UNH that may be good to reach out to (e.g. Student Senate, Community Service organizations, Service Fraternities and Sororities).

### **UNH ARRC Update:** Cathy gave a quick recap of the ARRC research/survey project:

- Reviewed information sent via email update in early June to committee – that she and Rachel, with committee members input, provided quite a few changes/asked questions of Mike Ferguson and Matt Frye of ARRC. They were very willing to spend time with us and make changes. More major changes were:
  - Distribution will be 50% Durham and 25% each Lee & Madbury.
  - Section 4 became more centered around programming.
  - Activities available at each site (Jackson's Landing and Woodridge) were corrected.
- ARRC has drafted a survey, survey cover letter, and follow up post card. These items and additional information from Mike Ferguson were sent to committee members just yesterday.

- Cathy received the following information from Mike that morning:
  - Population Survey (Knock & Drop) was launched on June 1. UNH undergrad researcher canvassing Durham, Lee, and Madbury neighborhoods on Fri/Sat/Sun. As of 6/25, 2,230 survey kits and 1,100 reminder postcards have been distributed. 55% of distributions
  - have resulted in physical contact with homeowners, which Mike indicates is significantly above average.
  - Approximately 167 surveys are complete (110 online; 57 via paper), representing a 7% response rate. Mike indicates this is currently artificially low and is expected to increase significantly. Data collection will continue through the summer.
  - Interactions with Durham residents have been overwhelmingly positive with tremendous support for Durham Parks & Rec.

#### **Fees Project Update:**

- Cathy reported that the sub group is still gathering information related to our comparator towns facilities.
- Erin reported that she received good information from Exeter, including comparative data they gathered.
- The sub group will meet in July and decide if any recommendations will be made to Rachel as she enters budget season.

#### **Purchase Request:**

- Rachel requested the committee use \$550 of its budget to purchase a new portable speaker. Cathy moved the approve the purchase, Al seconded. Motion passed by roll call vote, 5-0.

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

**Adjourn:** Al made a motion to adjourn; Cathy seconded. Roll call vote, 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.