

Recreation Advisory Board
Wednesday, May 1, 2024
Town Offices Nowak Room
7:00 PM
Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Chair Stephanie Papakonstantis, Brinn Sullivan, Mike Wissler, Dan Provost, Bob Dudra, Jenn Harrington, and Select Board Rep Nancy Belanger. Greg Bisson, David Tovey, and Caroline Neel of Parks and Rec were also present.

Members Absent: Nick Nordin, Danielle Capalbo

Ms. Papakonstantis called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

2. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this time.

3. Minute Approval

- a. March 27, 2024

MOTION: Mr. Wissler moved to approve the minutes of March 27, 2024 as presented. Ms. Sullivan seconded. The motion passed 6-0.

4. Recaps

- a. Autonomous Equipment Update

Mr. Bisson said Meryl is our painting robot. We've been busy with painting fields for EYSA and ourselves. Financing for our mowers was approved over the weekend. The contractors are coming to lay the conduit and pull the electricity to the locations we need for the charging stations. We'll be having a naming contest for kids.

Ms. Papakonstantis asked how the robots connect, and Mr. Bisson said it's a satellite signal system. Meryl doesn't have the sensors the mowing robots do, so you have to stay out of her way. Ms. Papakonstantis mentioned that RTK stands for "Real Time Kinematic" signaling.

Ms. Harrington asked how long the lines will stay once they dry. Mr. Bisson said it will last for weeks, but we're planning to paint every week.

- b. Planet Playground Subcommittee/LWCF Update

Mr. Bisson said LWCF is the Land Water Conservation Fund. We have updates to the paperwork due in a couple of weeks. These are Federal funds that will pay for half of the playground. The funds come from offshore drilling, which some people don't agree with, but it can benefit our community. The survey boundary is marked and ready to go, and we have closing documents and the deed that says we own the parcel. It takes the Park Service a few weeks to

review the projects, and then the Governor and Executive Council must accept all of the funds. If they don't accept the grants, they don't open the State Parks this year. Mr. Dudra asked about the dollar amount. Mr. Bisson said we applied for \$295,000. In future projects, we can ask for up to \$500,000.

c. Day of Caring Update

Mr. Bisson said the employees from the power plant came and did a "day of caring" at the Rec Park on April 19. It looks outstanding up there now. All we had to give them was lunch, water, and snacks. The United Way is very happy with us because we had a schedule and agenda. We expect another day of caring in September, at another park. Mr. Dudra said he and Don finished up the wind screens on the courts the other day.

d. Tennis Court Repair Update

Mr. Bisson said on Monday, our contractors were back, fixing the cracks that had reappeared over the winter. Unfortunately, it rained on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. They will be back on Friday and next week to finish the patches. We hope to have the lower courts open so we can fix and paint the upper courts. The upper courts were power washed to get the pine tar off of them. The lower courts should be open by May 6.

Mr. Bisson said should put the tennis court reconstruction into the CIP in the next couple of years. The patches can only last so long. It's LWCF eligible, so we could get \$500,000 towards it, but it will still be pricy. The fencing alone is \$110,000.

Ms. Papakonstantis asked how expensive it is to do the patches each season. Mr. Bisson said last year, it was about \$35,000. To repaint the whole surface is \$85,000 and has to happen every 5 - 7 years. When we apply for LWCF, it would have to be ADA compliant, so we may have to add additional ramping. 20 years ago when we redid the courts, the town voted two years in a row to allocate \$125,000. The courts would be down for a substantial time. When you do pavement, they can't start painting on it for 30 days. 20 years ago, we didn't have tennis courts the entire summer. Ms. Papakonstantis asked if we can do the upper and lower courts separately. Mr. Bisson said his suggestion is to do both in the late fall and let it sit for the winter. Once the temperature is back up, then you can paint it. Mr. Wissler said the drainage is also a big project.

e. Neptune Radio Update

Mr. Tovey said we've purchased equipment and sent contracts to the music agencies. We have three out of four music licenses now, and the whole town is covered by those. He has a meeting tomorrow with Neptune to go over sponsorship sales strategies. We've already sold one to Proulx Oil and Propane. The pool's name is changing to the Dan Healy Memorial Pool. We have to come up with a name for the radio station. Ms. Belanger asked if they'd thought of having a naming contest for the radio. Mr. Tovey said no but that would be fun.

f. 10 Hampton Road Update

Mr. Bisson said he, Dave, Melissa Roy, and Dave Sharples have been working on an RFP. We have a completed schematic design. We've mutually agreed to part ways with JSA to get a better product out of what we were looking for and increase the timeline. We're going to try to get approval from the Town Manager for a design-build with a Construction Manager. We're looking for a GMP (Guaranteed Max Price) because we only have \$920,000 to spend. We will interview the firms when we get through this process.

Mr. Dudra asked about the timeframe on moving into that facility. Mr. Bisson said some firms believe they can get it done in 6 - 8 months, so maybe the beginning of 2025. We want it done right and to not waste money.

g. Program Update

Ms. Neel said most programs have seen a huge increase. Pickleball is up 22% and still going strong; last year, it had 241 people registered, and this year 295. Tennis is down slightly, with only 18 registered vs 69 last summer, but registration was opened later and usually picks up in June. In youth sports, we're up 34.7% overall. Lacrosse is up 106%, from 15 last year to 31 this year. Track is up 76%, from 73 last year to 129 this year. Field hockey went down 8%, with 23 last year and 21 this year. Soccer is up 16%, with 188 last year and 219 this year. T-Ball is up 37%, with 93 last year and 128 this year. There were 392 kids in spring sports last year, vs 528 this year, so a huge increase.

Ms. Harrington asked if they're all town kids. Ms. Neel said they're all from SAU-16.

Mr. Wissler asked if they're still all playing at Park Street. Ms. Neel said at Park Street and Gilman.

Ms. Neel said camp is up 24%, with 222 kids last year and 276 this year. Swim lessons are full and we're fully staffed. There are waitlists for everything.

5. Discussion Items

a. Wait List Policy

Ms. Neel said our trips are popular and we can get long waitlists. Most of our programs are open to residents and non-residents, so there's a question of who to give a priority to in the waitlist. We propose that if a spot becomes available, priority will be given to Exeter residents in the order they join the waitlist, followed by non-residents in the order they joined the waitlist.

Ms. Sullivan asked if we want to mention in the policy that you need to be a registered user in the reservation system. Ms. Neel said we have people who don't use computers, so we'll create accounts for them over the phone to add them to the waitlist. Ms. Sullivan asked if they get a receipt or confirmation that they're on the waitlist. Ms. Neel said she thinks there's a pop-up that they've been added to the waitlist.

Ms. Sullivan asked if there is a policy that you have to be an actual resident rather than just a local business owner. Mr. Bisson said yes. You can't

just own property in Exeter if you live elsewhere. If it's a split household we look at where they're living during the summer or where they go to school. Ms. Neel said we added a \$10 non-resident fee this year because non-residents aren't paying taxes here. Ms. Belanger asked if there's communication about users having an account if it's created for them. Mr. Bisson said we could add something.

Ms. Belanger asked if there's a timeline to make a payment on a trip before it goes to the next person on the waitlist. Ms. Neel said no, we may only have 12 hours' notice of someone dropping out, so it would have to be paid for immediately, as with registration. Mr. Wissler suggested adding a line about payment being expected when the person on the waitlist is contacted.

Mr. Bisson said we'll come back with another draft of the policy for a vote.

b. New Sponsorship Package

Mr. Bisson said we had a spring intern that created a sponsorship brochure for us. It looks legit, like any non-profit. This year we've had \$17,500 in sponsorships. He will bring a copy of the brochure to a future meeting.

c. Pairpoint Park Update

Mr. Bisson said the Select Board is going through interviews for the committee. They want a member of the Rec Advisory Board to be a non-voting member. This is downtown, at 23 Water Street. It will be named Pairpoint Park after the company that donated it. He's not sure how often the committee will meet.

d. PEA Volunteer Day May 8

Mr. Bisson said this will be May 7 due to weather. Phillips Exeter has 26 volunteers signed up to repaint the pool house. It's free labor, we just have to provide paint and supplies. They're bringing in their own catering company. It will be painted gray and the green top will be replaced with blue. The Select Board approved the name change to Dan Healy. Dan Healy's mother said he was a "Danny," not a "Daniel," but "Dan" is acceptable. We have a new sign with the name and the symbol of a Navy Seal and the town logo. We'll also add the names of the other helicopter pilots added to the memorial and an explanation of what Operation Redwing was. The volunteers will not be doing the floors; we got a quote for \$12,000 to redo them. In the Facilities Assessment, that was one of the worst buildings in town and should be replaced within 8 - 10 years, so he's not sure we should be putting money into it.

Ms. Belanger asked if EXTV is aware of the updated volunteer day date, and Mr. Bisson said he'll coordinate with them.

6. New Business

- a. Ms. Sullivan asked if 10 Hampton Road will be finished enough to be the indoor camp spot. Mr. Bisson said no, we've done some demo and the walls are open. We have furniture in storage there now.
- b. Ms. Papakonstantis said we had volunteers build new dugouts at Currier Park. The kids were involved. Mr. Provost said we had a donation from Exeter Lumber to sponsor two dugout builds, and we came up with the rest of the cost. The only barrier from there was time and effort, so we got some volunteers together. Now we have nice new dugouts there. Ms. Belanger asked if there are pictures, and Ms. Papakonstantis said yes, they were posted on Facebook.
- c. Mr. Tovey said he just confirmed that the registration system sends you an email when you're added to the waitlist.
- d. Mr. Tovey said the Senior Barbeque is coming up May 31. It's being sponsored by Anthem, Newburyport Bank, and Optima Bank.
- e. Mr. Tovey said we had a Senior Counsel meeting and talked about how to improve the Senior Resource Guide. We'll be putting out an updated version.
- f. Mr. Bisson said the Select Board just appointed David Tovey to the Board of Directors at COAST. Hopefully we can improve senior transportation in town. Mr. Tovey said COAST worked with EXTV on a video on how to use the on-demand service. Ms. Papakonstantis asked if there's a link to this service on the website. Mr. Tovey said no, but we've been talking about improving the website. There is a section in the Senior Resource Guide.

7. Old Business

- a. There was no old business discussed.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Wissler moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Harrington seconded. The motion passed 6-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary