



DURHAM PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 28, 2023
7:00 pm
Town Council Chambers



Call to Order: Cathy Leach called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. In attendance: Erin Guyotte, Joe Friedman, Al Howland, Rachel Gasowski, Cathy Leach, Tracy Schroeder, Matt Swiesz, Brian Keegan, and Michael Drooker on Zoom

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

Approval of Minutes Al made a motion to approve the minutes from February 28, 2023, Tracy seconded. Approval by roll call 7-0.

Public Comments: Myrta Janosz has applied to become an alternate member of the committee. She and her husband moved to Durham about 2 years ago and she wants to get involved in the town and meet people.

Roundtable (10 minutes)

Joe mentioned that the Friday update still states that we are short 2 positions and an alternate. Cathy mentioned that she believes that is because she and Erin need to re-apply for another term, which they both have. Nate Fitch will not be continuing for another term. Cathy thanked him for his years of service as a committee member. Assuming Myrta is approved by the Council at its next meeting, all slots will be filled.

Michael D. responded to a question about finding the results of the Land Stewardship Committee land use surveys. They are at the Durham Public Library, and the Town's land stewardship coordinator, Sarah Callahan, will also have them. The LSSC is working on putting them online under the Conservation Commission site pages.

Michael also provided 2 updates from the LSSC meeting:

- There was UNH student project presented that is studying conflicting uses of public lands, specifically on Wagon Hill.
- The LSSC will do a land survey of two of the parcels at Jackson's Landing. Jackson's Landing has three parcels; one is well surveyed, the other 2 are needed. Rachel said it was a goal to do surveying on all town properties.

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

- Summer Camp registration opened on 3/17; within minutes multiple sessions were full. All Reach camps are full. There were 80 camps people could register for. A couple of camps went over registration because so many people registered at the same time.
- Still hiring staff with a lot of interest in the junior counselor and volunteer counselor positions. Rachel has hired a camp director.
- Offering an overnight April Break Camp in conjunction with Nature's Classroom. A 3-day 2-night camp in Old Orchard Beach, ME.
- Churchill Rink is closed for the season. A successful year: Rink Manager Bill Page will provide a report at our April meeting.
- Integrated Waste Management is organizing an Earth Day event on April 22. DPR will participate with a kids' activity.
- Annual Egg hunt is Saturday April 8.
- Memorial Day ceremony is Monday, May 29 at 10 am. DPR is organizing along with Lee Alexander.
- Durham Day Dash 5K is Friday June 2 at 6pm. Registration is open. After party and awards will be at Tideline, who are giving \$10 coupons for the first 200 race registrants.
- Durham Day is Saturday June 3 at 12:30pm
- Rachel can use help for the Earth Day Event, DD Dash, and Durham Day. Please let her know if you can help.
- After school programs are going well. Next session will wrap up the school year.

Business:

Nell Neal, Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee

- Nell spoke about Sustainable Durham – following up after also providing information at our May 2022 meeting. The committee started looking at how to reduce the amount of waste that goes into the land fill. They began to look at it more broadly to promote the idea that sustainability is a way of life. A logo was created to highlight areas they are focusing on. The committee hopes that the logo will be used by other committees, so people begin to think about sustainability as a way of life and that this is a townwide initiative.
- Nell spoke about the Global Covenant of Mayors; the largest global alliance of mayors to tackle the challenges of climate change. Durham has a partnership with that group.
- Al mentioned that DPR and the committee needs to look at how we run our programs and the waste that is generated.
- IWMAC is co-sponsoring Earth Day on April 22. Brian mentioned that recreating locally is recreating sustainably. Rachel mentioned we can provide the Town trails map.

Continued discussion of UNH-ARRC Proposal for Parks/Playground Planning

- Rachel and Cathy are meeting with ARRC directors next week to ask questions generated from the last Parks & Rec meeting.
- Cathy mentioned that after the last meeting, she began thinking more about how realistic it is for the Department and the committee to take on some of the tasks we

discussed at our Feb. meeting. Specifically, the on-site surveys and developing specific parks plan after receiving the final data and recommendations from ARRC.

- Mike D. provided some information regarding the LSSC and its experience in the on-site surveys:

To do something that has statistical validity requires many volunteers, which is hard to come by. Weather, time, bugs, number of volunteers are all barriers. The LSSC also used Survey Monkey. Clip boards, pencils, paper were needed.

- Cathy asked if there were any outstanding questions to ask Mike and Matt from ARRC:
 - Michael was wondering what sample size would be needed to be statistically significant.
 - Erin asked if we could get a cost estimate/scenario with only the focus groups removed.
 - Brian asked if using QR codes would yield similar results.
 - Joe asked how we can get youth input. The challenge getting youth involved is that it has to go through the IRB process.

- Regarding a Parks plan: Rachel will need help developing a plan after all the data is gathered. Matt mentioned that the data should be prioritized.

Al said the data will give the justification for what Parks and Rec decides to do.

Cathy concluded the discussion that she and Rachel will pose these new questions to the ARRC. The committee's job is to give Rachel a recommendation for which scenario we think is the best choice. The goal is that at our April meeting, we will vote on the scenario we recommend in order to give Rachel formal support for the project.

- 2023 Department/Committee Goals: We will review at our next meeting.

Next Meeting: Tentatively Tuesday, April 25. Decision will be made after April 10.

Adjourn: Al made a motion to adjourn at 8:32, Tracy seconded. Roll call vote agreed, 7-0.