

Peterborough Recreation Committee (PRC) Meeting
Roland "Beaver" Jutras Recreation Building
Minutes of July 6, 2016, 6:30 PM
Approved

Attendees: Andrew Dunbar, Chair; Heather McClusky, Vice Chair;
Howard Russell; Chris Kotula; Ed Juengst, Select Board Liaison;
Jeffrey M. King, Recreation Director; Lisa Koziell-Betz, Program Coordinator;
Lauren Martin, Minute Taker

I) Meeting called to order: Andy called the meeting to order at 6:31pm and thanked Selectman Ed Juengst for joining the meeting.

II) Approval of Minutes:

- a. Heather motioned to approve the June 1, 2016 minutes as written. Howard seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- b. Andy questioned whether any PRC member had brought a list of topics they want to be sure the Committee addresses. Jeff remarked to Heather that he still has her list from the last PRC meeting, and now that we have entered a new fiscal year he will take another look at those concerns. Chris commented that he agrees with Andy's goals to encourage healthier families, and that he also would like to make sure the PRD is offering appropriate programs for youth and for residents of all ages. Chris will submit his goals to Andy in written form.
- c. Andy reaffirmed his three main goals for the PRC, which he had described in an email to the PRC on July 1st: 1) encourage Peterborough residents to achieve better health through recreation; 2) provide safe facilities and programs; and 3) control the costs to the Peterborough residents. Andy commented that he had recently happened upon a brochure explaining how physical exercise thwarts 13 types of cancer, and another article about breaking free from addiction with exercise. Andy thanked Jeff for a binder containing the RSAs, by-laws and a report of the PRC master planning session in 2008. Jeff noted that this kind of master planning has not been done since then. Ed remarked that the Select Board holds retreats two or three times a year.
- d. Andy referred again to his July 1st email, where he outlined how he would like each PRC member to be a liaison for either a PRD activity or facility. Andy will serve as the liaison for the Peterborough Community Center (PCC). Howard will serve as the liaison for senior programming. Chris, Heather and Stacey all have family involvement in Adams Pool, Cunningham Pond, and Adams Playground (including Playground Program and Summer Teen Challenge), so they will share responsibility for all three. Jeff commented that he likes this idea since the PRC members are our eyes and ears. He thinks people might talk to them when they wouldn't talk to the PRD staff, and they may overhear conversations that could give us important feedback, whether positive or negative. Jeff added that there are things we could do to promote the health benefits of recreation that are not necessarily related to specific programs, such as sharing the "Benefits of Parks and Recreation" program from NRPA which outlines the tangible benefits to be gained from physical activity. Jeff said a retreat would help give the PRC focus, stating that if PRC members identify what is important to them and to our community it will give us a road map and help us choose our direction, rather than guessing at what people might like. Andy agreed, stating that the PRC should support the PRD and give us feedback, criticism and compliments.

III) Restaurant Olympics Idea Presentation:

- a. Jeff explained that after holding a couple of successful events (the Halloween "Boo Night"

and the Easter Egg Hunt) in conjunction with the Depot Square businesses, he wants to build on that. He would like to be sure people do not just see the PRD as fun and games, but also as an economic engine for our community, affirming that it is a good thing if people enjoy our activities *and* spend more money in our community. Lisa introduced the concept that she and Jeff have been brainstorming with Pelagia Vincent, who does marketing for Depot Square. They are considering holding an event where local restaurant owners and staff would form teams identified by different countries and compete in Olympic-themed games. It would be fun for the restaurant workers to get out into the community and fun for families to watch the competition. If the event were to include some liquor vendors we would need PRC approval. The event would be targeted for September, in between the busy times of summer and fall foliage.

- b. When questioned what the public would do at the event, Lisa responded that they would watch and possibly be involved in judging. When questioned what the motivation would be for the restaurants to participate, Lisa responded that it would be fun to get out into the community. The benefit to the PRD is that teams would pay \$50 to register and that money would go toward recreation scholarships. Jeff added that winning teams would have bragging rights to any games they won. They would put a twist on the challenges so they would relate to restaurants, such as a pizza-making relay or challenges related to making dishes, drinks or creative place settings. Jeff said we used all our scholarship money this year and he is interested in finding ways to keep that fund healthy, as well as have fun with restaurants and turn this into a community event. Jeff described how the Town of Exeter has hosted a very successful beer tasting event in conjunction with their Chamber of Commerce. While we are not looking at this direction, we might be interested in exploring something similar. Jeff thought maybe we could have bands appear in the performance area at Depot Park, possibly by working with the organizers of The Thing in the Spring. When Heather expressed having trouble understanding why the public would want to watch this, it was suggested that the public might be involved in tasting and voting for their favorites in different categories, and that perhaps the bartenders could be encouraged to perform a playful “show” while mixing drinks. Lisa clarified that this does not have to follow an Olympics theme but that theme came up since this event would closely follow the summer Olympics.
- c. Andy pointed out that some of us do and some do not have a problem with alcohol. He would not like to imply to young people that drinking is a form of recreation, and he would not like to expose an adult to a situation that might stir up a personal battle with alcohol. Heather countered that she does not see this as a parallel example if this event has a main goal of observing a competition and not drinking. Andy thought a beer tent would be implying that drinking is a way to have fun, but Heather disagreed, saying that adults can demonstrate responsible drinking. Jeff remarked that we are not married to the idea of a beer tent, and that they will not spend a lot of time on this if the PRC does not like the idea. Lisa noted that Pelagia has organized this type of event for other towns in the past and they have been successful at bringing the community together. Andy commented that if the event might include alcohol Jeff should start by getting Select Board approval, and Jeff stated that it is actually the Town Administrator who needs to give approval for alcohol.

IV) Director’s Report:

- a. Budget: Jeff commented that FY2016 has concluded, but we are still sorting through the bills from the final few weeks. The Revolving Fund usually takes a little longer to sort out. Jeff did journal entries for the end of the year, and Town Administrator, Rodney Bartlett, wants department heads to meet soon to see where we are with the budget. Jeff noted that he had held off on some projects so as not to overspend at the end of the year, but he now feels free to start

some new projects.

b. Adams Playground North:

i. Adams Pool:

- a) Jeff said the pool opening went well. We missed a lot of calls due to the scheduled Town network outage in mid-June, but people were understanding. The outage was supposed to be two days long but it took over a week before our phones and internet were back.
- b) Our pool consultant, Guarino's, is sending someone on Friday to address the carbon dioxide and auto-fill issues the pool has been having.

ii. Vandalism:

- a) Over the July 4th weekend we experienced a great deal of graffiti and vandalism at the PRD property, including the skate park, sheds, signs, and basketball court. Peterborough Police are investigating and Jeff will review footage from our security cameras to see if there is any indication who was around the night of the fireworks, when the damage occurred. Our maintenance workers were able to remove most of the graffiti except on the basketball court, but Jeff says that is all right since the court will be repainted when it is repaired later this summer.
- b) Jeff was concerned that the graffiti included a number of images of a crown, which he learned at a seminar might be the Latin Kings gang symbol. Jeff wants to know if the symbol appearing on our property has any significance or not. Police have informed Jeff that they are having issues with heroin that they were not having to this degree a few months ago. Jeff summarized that we have been having a number of vandalism issues but they have been getting progressively worse the past few summers. Ed asked how many security cameras we now have, and Jeff replied that there are four at the PRD office building and four at the PCC. The cameras provide a fixed view and do not pan. Camera images can be accessed from a computer or from Jeff's phone.
- c) Jeff pointed out that the vandalism is irritating and costs the department money as we use labor and resources to correct problems, so he asked the PRC if they see anything going on in our facilities that is suspicious to please call the police and let us know. Heather remarked that she saw in the newspaper police log that a boy threw something into the playground and almost injured another boy. Jeff explained that he has told a father who lives nearby that banning the apparent instigator from being in the playground is hard to enforce, because that boy also lives nearby and we do not have staff supervising our property at night. Jeff affirmed that this youth is known to the local authorities and that nothing has happened up to this point that would require banning someone completely from PRD property.

iii. Youth Baseball: Town Administrator, Rodney Bartlett, has followed up with the Cal Ripken coordinator to state that they need a plan to pay off the money they owe us, and that without a plan they cannot use the fields next year. Jeff thinks our first step in enforcing this will be to remove the advertising signs on the ball field fencing. Cal Ripken still owes us \$2,200, which includes new charges for this year.

iv. Personnel: Jeff remarked that we just hired another bathhouse attendant, and that the personnel issues we are having are fairly typical for a year where we hired 17 new people.

When asked if lifeguards and attendants work at both the pool and pond, Jeff and Lisa responded that they are cross trained to do both but there may be a tendency for some individuals to work more in one location over the other.

V) Program Report:

- a. Summer Teen Challenge: Lisa reported that Summer Teen is off with a bang. They began with a full roster of 22 but two transferred to the second session so they now have twenty kids, which is the largest group we have ever had. They had a rocky start but seem to have coalesced now at their half-way mark. Chris asked if community service is a regular part of the program. Jeff affirmed that the point of the program is to get young people to think about things in a different way, and community service is an integral part of that plan. Yesterday they did a lot of work for us around the PRD properties so that they will appreciate the facilities here that they are using all the time. They cleaned the vans, sorted our recycling, and weeded the stone dust pathways. Jeff feels this instills a sense of ownership in our facilities and that they will better appreciate what our maintenance staff does picking up after the public.
- b. Playground Program: Lisa announced that we need to hire another counselor due to high enrollment. Jeff pointed out that we used to have people sign up for the whole summer in advance, but now we have allowed weekly sign-ups and some people will sign up at the last minute. Jeff acknowledged that it is good they are participating, but it gives us logistical challenges. Heather questioned whether we would consider capping the program. Jeff responded that with a declining school population we want to capture the youth when we can and we do not want to turn anyone away if we do not have to. Ideally, we try for a 10:1 staff to camper ratio but we are over that now. Chris expressed concern for how that affects families who signed up in March, wondering if we are not delivering what we had said we would. Lisa said that last year we did end up placing a cap on some weeks. This year she is watching the numbers and she is close to capping the last couple of weeks. We are actively pursuing another counselor. For today's field trip to Lake Sunapee, they sent three counselors to the lake with 21 kids and kept two counselors at the playground with the remaining 29 kids, with Lisa on call to the playground if needed. Jeff further explained that mornings are the hardest, when the program is all up to the counselors. The afternoon is spent largely at the pool, when lifeguards assist with supervising children. Heather felt it would be reasonable to give parents a deadline to sign up by the Monday of the preceding week. Lisa replied that she has tried this for field trips but parents cannot seem to commit. Registrations for Playground Program start high, then dip for a few weeks, then are high again in the final weeks. Andy questioned whether we could offer an incentive for early signups, and Jeff said that we do, since it is less expensive to sign up for all eight weeks than to pay for individual weeks. Lisa responded that we used to discount \$40 for early bird registrations but people did not seem to care enough to sign up early. Heather asked if we could charge a penalty or late fee for people who sign up once a program has begun. Jeff explained that we have to try to balance how we market that because we have received negative feedback in the past when we used to charge late fees. Heather noted that tons of summer camps have early registration fees. Jeff countered that some people seem to feel the Recreation Department should be here to serve the public by offering as much as possible for low fees. Chris thought it was within reason to have a cutoff date of the previous Monday so we can plan enough counselors. Chris summarized that it appears we will have to scramble for the rest of this summer but next year we should try having different boundaries. Lisa mentioned that she had to cancel the circus field trip because enough parents had not registered in

- advance and she felt it would send an important message to uphold that deadline. Jeff explained that he almost always hates to cancel an advertised program because of how people will lose faith in what we offer, but this time he agreed with Lisa's decision to cancel the circus field trip.
- c. Pickleball: Lisa described how the regular participants have continued their outdoor program successfully, and mentioned that the tournament originally planned for July has been postponed to the fall.
 - d. Adult Co-Ed Softball: Lisa said this program continues to go well with eight teams playing. Jeff commented that if anyone sees the lights on before 8:00pm, to let him know. There is no reason they should turn on lights before 8:00pm.
 - e. Swimming: Lisa noted that swimming lessons are going okay but not great. The water is definitely getting warmer so we expect more families to register for lessons.
 - f. Bobcat Soccer: This program for 5 – 9 year olds is sold out.
 - g. Week of August 22nd: Our Playground Program ends on August 12th, so Lisa is planning a week of special field trips for the final week before school begins.
 - h. Tennis: We did not have an instructor this year. We only received a couple of inquiries about tennis lessons and we directed those families to the indoor tennis club.
 - i. Drumming: This program is continuing even though the instructor, Abou Sylla, is currently in Africa.
 - j. Senior Programs:
 - i. Andy remarked that Gloria Schultz is doing a great job with senior programs.
 - ii. Peterborough Players received a grant to offer free tickets for seniors to their production of "Driving Miss Daisy." Gloria was given the tickets and close to 100 seniors enjoyed the free show. Gloria gave flowers to the person who obtained the grant. Ed remarked that he and his wife attended the show and it was great.
 - iii. Andy stated that he has encouraged Gloria to get speakers for the Senior Lunch. Attendance for a speaker can run close to 50, though on other weeks it is closer to twelve. Jeff commented that Gloria should speak with members of Kiwanis or Rotary for speaker ideas and he also wants to encourage her to serve as a speaker for those clubs.
 - iv. Jeff feels our biggest challenge with senior programs is transportation. Our market is people who live in their own homes but may be becoming socially marginalized because of transportation. He thinks we would probably be more popular if we could offer transportation to our programs. Jeff and Andy agreed that many people do not think of themselves as "seniors" so we have to be careful how we market our programs. Lisa said that by defining "senior" as age 50 and over, many people laugh and this makes younger mature adults feel welcome.
 - k. Scouting: Jeff explained that on Saturday the Cub Scouts will be doing a turtle habitat project at MacDowell Dam, and Saturday afternoon is an Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Marc Edscorn, the son of the former Scoutmaster. In two weeks, members of Troop 8 will be going to the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia. Daniel Webster Council contacted Troop 8 because they had been extraordinarily successful in fundraising for the Friends of Scouting campaign this year. Someone nationally had donated money for Scouts across the nation to attend the Summit high adventure camp for free, and Daniel Webster Council offered this opportunity to Troop 8. Thirteen boys and a few leaders will be going with all expenses paid, including travel. The Summit is a relatively new facility and is the new location of national jamborees. Jeff's son, Aidan, and another Troop 8 Scout are already signed up to attend the next national jamboree in 2017. The World Jamboree will also be held at the Summit in 2019.

VI) Revolving Fund Report: Jeff stated that the Revolving Fund Reports are usually about two months behind, and the one in the agenda packet is from April. This is, therefore, not very reflective of where we are right now. For example, on page two it shows Summer Teen Challenge with a negative balance just over \$3,800, but he just transferred \$15,000 into that account. Andy suggested we table the review to the August meeting. Jeff offered to go over the Revolving Fund Report individually with Chris, the newest PRC member.

VII) Outstanding Balances Report:

- a. Lauren reviewed the handout showing \$970.00 collected since last month's report, and a total of over \$10,000 collected since concerted efforts began in November 2015. The new amount people have charged for this summer's programs is \$6,885.11. In the past, we allowed parents to determine the amount they could pay and their own schedule of payment. This year Jeff has divided up balances into equal payments that will conclude by the end of each program. Families have signed contracts agreeing to make weekly payments at the start of each week. This ensures that we will touch base with payment plan families each week, so slow payers will become immediately evident. Today Lauren called three families to state that if they did not bring in payment their children could not participate the following week. All three families called back immediately and promised to come in to resume payments.
- b. Andy asked how we determine eligibility for scholarship assistance. Jeff explained that he reviews the applications with the Town's Human Services Director. Chris asked if participation in free school lunch was a benchmark. Jeff replied that although that was a measure used in the past, we are now often serving a group that is just over the poverty threshold but who are barely getting by. Jeff said that this year we gave out over \$4,000 in scholarships. Lisa recalled that this assistance went to 12 children in the Playground Program and two in Summer Teen Challenge. Heather asked if we always give full scholarships and Jeff replied that we *never* give full scholarships- everyone has to pay something. Jeff felt that breaking their amount due into weekly payments made it feel more manageable to those families. Ed agreed, stating that it is probably helping people budget by being strict about the weekly cost.

VIII) Other:

- a. Andy thanked everyone for attending and asked PRC members to email their goals and motivation to him ahead of the next meeting.
- b. Jeff and Chris will both be away when the next PRC meeting would usually be scheduled. The next meeting was rescheduled to the second week of August on Wed. August 10th at 6:30pm. There was discussion about possibly meeting at Cunningham Pond, but the location was not finalized and will be announced later.
- c. Andy asked what the PRC should be thinking about in the near future. Jeff replied that in September and October we will begin discussing in broad strokes our ideas for capital projects (\$10,000 or more). Jeff has been thinking about the lighting for the ball fields, which is old and inefficient. Bishop Field does not have lights but installing them would be very expensive. Jeff suggested PRC members think about program expansion, like the paddleboards. He wonders if we might like to consider installing a cabin at Cunningham Pond for winter camping. Jeff would like the PRC to think about special events and activities we should be involved in. Jeff also mentioned that we are in the market to purchase a dual axle landscaping trailer if anyone happens upon one for sale. Andy

suggested we focus on budgeting and what will appear for voting next year.

IX) Adjournment: Howard motioned to adjourn. Chris seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Next meeting: Wed. August 10th at 6:30pm; location to be determined

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Martin,
Minute Taker
