

Peterborough Recreation Committee (PRC) Meeting
Roland "Beaver" Jutras Recreation Building
Minutes of August 24, 2017
Approved

Attendees: Andrew Dunbar, Chair; Heather McClusky, Vice Chair; Chris Kotula, Secretary;
Kate Coon, Guest Francie Von Mertens,
Jeffrey M. King, Recreation Director; Lauren Martin, Minute Taker

- I. Call to Order:
 - a. Andy called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.
 - b. Kate mentioned that Ryan Griffiths is interested in filling the open spot on the PRC but he was unable to attend tonight's meeting. The decision was made to allow Ryan to observe a PRC meeting before inviting him to join. Kate remarked that she will be unable to attend the September meeting but she offered her full support of Ryan.

- II. Approval of Minutes: Chris moved to approve the July 5, 2017 minutes as written. Heather seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

- III. PCC Landscaping Project:
 - a. Francie Von Mertens remarked that her partner on this project, Karen Fitzgerald, was unable to be here tonight.
 - b. Referencing the revised concept plan included in the agenda packets, Francie pointed out the addition of the bocce court that the PRD intends to build. After a site visit with the food pantry people and John Kaufhold, the plan was further revised to include more parking spaces for food pantry clients and grass pavers to accommodate delivery vehicles. Landscaping screening has been incorporated to give privacy to food pantry clients. The southwest corner of the building is where people hosting a large event might erect a tent, so Francie explained that it is best to leave that patch open.
 - c. Jeff commented that he responded to an insurance claim today by a resident whose truck was allegedly hit and damaged by a rock thrown from our mower at the PCC. Jeff will have to ask Public Works to not plow onto our lawn. Francie remarked that she understands the Select Board is concerned about the maintenance of the proposed garden. She stated that for maintenance and mowing this is not going to be finicky stuff. They will have industrial strength plantings that are pleasing to look at and have clear edges for mowing. Francie acknowledged that Elm Street is busy already, but will be even busier when the downtown bridge is being renovated. It was mentioned that Selectman Ed Juengst is concerned about project construction costs and maintenance costs. Francie responded that she is raising money for this project and has been clear from the beginning that no Town monies will be requested. Jeff added that he, the PRC and Roland Patten, the head of the PRD maintenance crew, all share Ed's concern about long-term maintenance costs. Heather questioned if the fruit trees mentioned in the initial proposal have been removed. Francie explained that Cornucopia was initially excited about fruit trees but they now feel it is not realistic that they could keep up with them. Francie would like to have blueberry

shrubs and hopes to find someone who knows how to care for them. Francie pointed out that they never intended to plant an orchard, despite what was portrayed in newspaper coverage. When asked about the material for the walkways, Francie replied that it will be pervious pavement that looks like black pavement but is mottled. She believes we will not get run off issues with a walkway. Francie summarized that what they are trying to create is progress toward looking like a real community center, as opposed to an armory.

- d. It was affirmed that we have to be realistic about how this will be maintained, and Jeff remarked that we are continually being asked to do more and more and we cannot keep up. Our ongoing dilemma is that we are asked to cut our budget back further and further while also being asked to take on more. The PRD maintenance crew works only from April through October. Roland works 25 hours a week, and Bob and Ray work 28 hours a week. We have two college students help with maintenance in the summer only. When it was remarked that this area would become a park so perhaps the Town Buildings and Grounds could maintain it, Jeff noted that Buildings and Grounds is already stretched tight as it is. Jeff added that he has no idea how much additional time it will take to maintain the proposed design, but we already have our guys there to mow and if the new design has mulch around the trees and shrubs it may be easy to mow. Jeff also remarked that there is money being raised for an artist to paint a huge bee mural on the south side of the building, which would not cost us anything. Francie expressed feeling like a billiard ball between Recreation and the Select Board. At some point, she said she needs to know if the PRC will endorse their concept. Heather expressed concern that with trees planted this close to the building we will need knowledgeable tree maintenance. Jeff expressed that the concept itself is great and the PRC agreed. Chris pointed out that if the trees that are planted are small saplings, professional pruning will not become an issue for many years.
- e. Andy moved to approve the general concept if we get a professional estimate on the hours and costs needed to maintain this. Francie affirmed that Cornucopia would love to get leaves for leaf mulch. Jeff wondered if the tree industry has general numbers about maintenance costs for particular trees. Heather pointed out that since Buildings & Grounds takes care of Putnam Park, perhaps they could advise us. Jeff agreed and said he could talk to David Croumie, Building and Grounds Supervisor. Francie did not think the trees will need a lot of care. Jeff commented that we were not able to mulch this spring because the Town was on a spending freeze. Last week we spent over \$500 to mulch around Adams and we have not done the Union Street island yet. He does not feel these concerns are great enough for him to ask not to move forward with the plan, however.
- f. Andy revised his motion to approve the concept as presented provided we receive an estimate from one to three people on the expected cost of maintaining these trees on a yearly-to-three-year basis. Heather amended the motion to say the estimates can come from any knowledgeable source and they must include estimates for upkeep hours and potential costs. Jeff affirmed that the Select Board will want to know costs. Chris seconded Heather's revised motion. There was unanimous approval.

- g. Jeff affirmed that he will check with David Croumie and that he knows other landscapers, too. Kate suggested that asking Buildings and Grounds will get their buy-in. On behalf of the PRC, Andy thanked Francie and Karen for all the hard work they put into our town.

IV. Director's Report:

a. Budget:

- i. Jeff reported that he does not have the final audited number yet, but the PRD is clearly under expenditures. Referring to the Revolving Fund Report in the agenda packets, Jeff pointed out that the PCC was in the black for the first time in six years, with \$1,151.68 in the black. In terms of programs, this year we were over \$19,500 in the black. The Revolving Fund has a healthy balance right around \$100,000, which is just where Jeff likes to keep it. Jeff explained that it is up to us to spend appropriately and offset the operating budget where we can. When asked if Recreation gets the interest back on this money in the bank, Jeff responded that he thinks so but he can find out.
- ii. The only thing Jeff is concerned about with the spending freeze in the spring is that he heard through the grapevine that the Town came in under budget overall. Jeff noted that there were a lot of things we did not do in the spring, like spring facilities maintenance, because we could not buy anything. Jeff hopes the public did not notice a difference in the quality of our facilities. When asked if we are out of the drought, Jeff responded that we are and we only had to use the water cannon once. Jeff explained that given the nature of what we do, we spend money in the spring. He is interested to see how this plays out and what the strategies are. Jeff hopes we do not get into a spending freeze every spring.

b. Facilities:

- i. The field lighting project was well received. There is a little more work to do but it will not require a lift. This is the first time all the lights have worked properly since Jeff began working here.
- ii. The Ga-Ga Pit was completed and our maintenance workers were so glad to see loads of kids using it all the time. We are looking to build another. Jeff does not have the figures on the total project yet. Many of the materials were purchased over multiple trips to Belletete's so Jeff will have to add them up. He will also ask Roland for the number of man-hours used. Chris cautioned that the novelty of a new item makes it appealing but the initial interest may not continue, so he thinks we should pump the brakes on a second pit. Jeff responded that a number of kids already knew how to play and have been teaching others. Now that school is about to begin we will not see the pits used as much during the day, but Jeff expects that next summer it will be popular again. Human foosball is also being planned for that area of the playground.
- iii. Our 12-and-under and 14-and-under softball divisions have disappeared and their softballs were just taking up space, so we made back some money and opened up some storage by selling the balls.

- iv. Cable access was supposed to be installed at Cunningham Pond today for internet and phone. We will change from Fairpoint to Comcast. Having internet will enable us to install cameras at the pond. In July, two paddleboards were stolen after hours. We had installed cable loops on the paddleboards, through which a big cable was threaded and locked. The loops were ripped out of the paddleboards that were stolen. Acknowledging that there will be a cost involved to installing cameras, it was pointed out that cameras will discourage further theft and vandalism. Jeff stated that we will also be installing cameras at the pool. Kate asked if our insurance covered the loss of the paddleboards. Jeff responded that we have a \$1,000 deductible per incident. We replaced the two stolen boards and purchased one additional board to create a total of six, filling up the storage rack. Paddles were not stolen. Jeff filed claims for both the stolen paddleboards and pool vandalism. The Town has already been reimbursed for the paddleboards. Regarding the purchase of the new paddleboard, Jeff asked if we can fund the new board through the Isabelle Miller Fund, since it is an expansion of the program. Chris commented that he sees a ton of paddleboard rentals even on weekday afternoons. Jeff remarked that we were over our revenue projections for paddleboard rentals and that paddleboards are a relatively easy way to bring in money. We have etched the serial numbers onto the new paddleboards and the Town Clerk is keeping the numbers in her safe. The police have a theft report but Jeff does not think we will catch the paddleboard thieves. Also on one night in July, vandals threw benches into the pool, slashed the shade shelter, placed bike racks and trash cans across the Union Street speed barrier, and dropped the lid of a storm drain grate in the driveway up to the pool right into the drain. Police did find the culprits of that vandalism and all are permanently banned from all our facilities because of the nature of what happened. There was not only damage, but the potential for serious injury. The culprits were local kids around 13 years old and they are now going through the court system.
- c. Personnel:
- i. Jeff announced that today is the last day Adams Pool is open for the season. Cunningham Pond will be open this weekend and then not staffed again until Labor Day weekend because our staff will be back in school. The pond will not be staffed after Labor Day weekend. Jeff has most of the seasonal employee evaluations finished.
 - ii. When asked about the status of the erosion problem at the pond, Jeff responded that the problem remains and it was hard to do anything about it in the middle of the busy season, but that we have money in the budget to do something.
 - iii. Seventy-five non-resident pond stickers have been sold and Jeff thinks that being able to sell them next year starting in May we will sell more during the preseason rush. He acknowledged that it was a cool and somewhat rainy summer with temperatures in the 90's only one week. Jeff advised that we do not raise the fee for non-resident stickers since we did not hit capacity.

He feels that if we hit capacity by selling 100 stickers, we could raise the number of available stickers without having an adverse effect on pond attendance.

- d. Scouting: Jeff suggested that the Scouting reports from the troop Scoutmaster and Venture Crew advisor, which were included in agenda packets, can be read outside of the PRC meeting.
- e. Facebook: Jeff encouraged PRC members to do whatever they can to promote our PRD Facebook page. If they “like” and “share” Recreation stuff, their friends will all see that content. Kate offered to send Jeff the photos she took of Farm Fresh 5K runners.

V. Program Report:

- a. Lisa’s program report was accepted as written. Heather commented that when comparing the fees for Playground Program (PP) and Summer Teen Challenge (STC), she realizes that STC seems more expensive per week but all the exciting field trips are already included. Heather did not send her children on PP trips because they were too expensive. Jeff explained that the issue is the cost of using a school bus for transportation, as opposed to STC using the two Recreation vans. A PP trip to Hampton Beach cost \$600 just for the bus. This is a concern for Jeff and Lisa because less expensive alternative trips are not very interesting. Jeff pointed out that the PP net is \$77,000, when five or six years ago we were in the hole. A lot of that was due to collections and we have fixed that problem. Jeff thinks we may be in a place now where we can start subsidizing PP trips to keep them around \$25. If we subsidize the cost of the bus we could charge simply the admission fee to the park. Jeff noted that we cannot rent large vehicles for field trips because by and large, rental companies want drivers to be 25 years old and older, and our camp counselors are younger than that. Heather added that parents probably would not want young counselors driving their children in large vehicles, anyway. STC counselors are paid for out of the operating budget. For PP, most of the cost of the program is payroll because counselors are paid out of the Revolving Fund and only one counselor is subsidized by the budget. Jeff acknowledged that next year, to some degree, we will have to bring down the cost of field trips. Jeff said it kills him that we base the cost of a trip on having a bus filled with 40 kids, but that expense is thrown off completely when we cannot even fill half the bus for a trip. We have looked at closer locations to try to keep the cost down, but all the cool places to visit are further away.
- b. Senior Program Report: To save time, Andy suggested we accept the Senior Program Report as written.
- c. Jeff had nothing else to highlight except to urge the PRC to enjoy looking at the Scouting reports and photos. It has been an incredibly busy summer for our Scouting units. The troop, pack and Venture Crew 3165 all went to summer camp, and some members of the troop and Venture Crew 808 went to the national Jamboree. The Boy Scout troop is at Cunningham Pond tonight for their Riff Raff Regatta, where boys build floating vessels out of recycled materials and race them around a point in the water. Jeff pointed out that between our four Scouting units, Scouting is the PRD’s second biggest program after lacrosse. He added that there has been no

decision made yet, but the national organization of the Boy Scouts of America is currently discussing whether to begin including girls at the Cub Scout level. Lots of families bring siblings to Cub Scout meetings, but the girls cannot fully participate or receive awards since they are not technically part of the program. Kate wondered about the impact this might have on Girl Scouting. Heather affirmed that we have active Girl Scout troops in Peterborough. Jeff added that we also have a new American Heritage Girl troop at Divine Mercy Parish with 20 girls signed up so far. Jeff hopes to have a youth officer from Venture Crew 3165 provide a verbal report and slide show of their activities at the next PRC meeting.

- VI. Revolving Fund Report: The discussion on the Revolving Fund Report took place during the Director's Report. No additional discussion was needed.

- VII. Outstanding Balances Report:
 - a. Lauren pointed out that \$85.25 has been collected on old balances (through 2016) since the last report, leading to a total of \$12,658.07 since our concerted efforts began in November of 2015. Just over two thousand dollars remains due on old balances. Three families are actively paying small, regular amounts on their payment plans and are slowly whittling down their balances. Two families with a combined balance of \$970.37 have reneged on their payment plans. We have already filed a small claims court case on one of them, and the other has been sent the final letter threatening court if we do not receive payment by September 1st.
 - b. In the July report on Summer 2017 balances, it was explained that we had thirteen families with payment plans totaling \$6,981.02. Nine of these families have paid their fees in full as agreed. Four families have balances remaining which should all be paid in full by the end of October. Of the remaining monies still due for summer programs, much of that is for extended care PP fees which were only billed recently. Invoices have been sent and are being followed up on. Andy thanked the staff for their hard work.

- VIII. Other:
 - a. When questioned whether there was anything the PRC needs to focus on for the fall, particularly regarding the budget, Jeff responded that he has not received materials about the budget yet. There are a few large projects on the Town's horizon and Jeff will be interested to see how these effect the operating budget. The capital process starts in earnest in October and the budget process starts shortly after that. Last year, Town Administrator, Rodney Bartlett, pushed the timing of the whole process up so they could get a good sense of the overall picture earlier than in the past. Jeff will keep the PRC posted on developments.
 - b. Kate mentioned that she had weeded the Union Street traffic islands outside the PRD. Andy and Jeff thanked her, and Jeff remarked that he had checked on the islands with Rodney this morning. Technically, the islands are under Public Works, probably Buildings and Grounds, but Rodney said they will probably look better if the Recreation maintenance crew maintains them. We purposely had not done more than mow because that area is not under our purview and we were dealing with the

spending freeze this summer. Now Jeff acknowledged that we will formally take on the upkeep of the islands. Jeff may look to bring on a student maintenance worker in the fall, just to do the weed whacking that is hard on our mature maintenance workers.

- c. Chris asked where the revenue from the Farm Fresh 5K goes, and Jeff responded that there is a line item for Adult Exercise in the Revolving Fund. Meghan Gould is an event sponsor and gets advertising for her business in exchange for all her work on the races. At the end of the series, if we have made a little money, Jeff may throw in a stipend for Meghan. The remaining races will be September 13th and October 11th. Jeff would like to add a “touch a truck” element to the September or October race, as an added attraction. Andy pointed out that we have had good participation from the PRC in the race series. Jeff noted that we will not have the STC kids to help with the last two races, so he will ask the Scouting units if they can help.

IX. Adjournment:

Andy motioned to adjourn the meeting and Heather seconded. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

The next PRC meeting will be held on Wednesday September 6th at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Martin,

Minute Taker

August 30, 2017