

Peterborough Recreation Committee (PRC) Meeting  
Roland "Beaver" Jutras Recreation Building  
Minutes of December 8, 2016  
Approved

Attendees: Andrew Dunbar, Chair; Heather McClusky, Vice Chair;  
Stacey Howarth, Secretary; Chris Kotula;  
Jeffrey M. King, Recreation Director; Lisa Koziell-Betz, Program Coordinator;  
guests Francie Von Mertens and Karen Fitzgerald; Lauren Martin, Minute Taker

I) Meeting called to order: Andy called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

II) Approval of Minutes:

- a. Andy asked Jeff to clarify section VIII) Budget Workshop, B. Salaries, which states, "Jeff remarked...(that) we have three facilities now which need to be cleaned on a year-round basis, and other custodial needs arise all the time." Jeff responded that custodial needs are not limited to our busy summer season nor to the interior of buildings. Trash constantly accumulates at the playground and ball fields. While Buildings and Grounds plows our driveway, a custodian is needed to shovel walkways. Off season, the pool and Cunningham Pond need to be checked periodically to be sure no one has broken in or damage has occurred. Jeff feels our three facilities- Adams Park (including the Recreation Department office and playground), Cunningham Pond and the Peterborough Community Center (PCC) all operate in some capacity on a year-round basis. It is a maintenance/custodial function to check and maintain facilities, but we do not have maintenance/custodial support throughout the year. Bob Kruger is a winter seasonal employee scheduled for five hours a week, primarily to work on the ice rink.
- b. Andy motioned that the minutes from November 9, 2016 be approved as written. Stacey seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

III) Peterborough Community Center Landscape Project:

- a. Andy invited special guests Francie Von Mertens and Karen Fitzgerald to present their concept for landscaping ideas for the PCC front lawn. Francie began by explaining the history of this project. About ten years ago, former Town Administrator Pam Brenner and former Selectman Joe Byk asked Francie to do landscaping at the PCC. Francie agreed to work on this, but then the project felt overwhelming and her progress stalled. When Francie met Karen Fitzgerald, a professional landscape designer, they began working together and moving forward with ideas.
- b. Francie explained that the early concept for this garden would be to honor Jim Grant, who had done so much for Peterborough and was particularly instrumental in developing the concept of the food pantry. Recognizing that the PCC belongs to the Recreation Department, Francie and Karen met with Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett and Jeff, to discuss their preliminary ideas. Chris Mann, the director of the Peterborough Food Pantry, has expressed to Francie her gratitude for Jim's guidance and fully supports the idea of honoring Jim with this garden.
- c. Karen described how she, Francie and Chris Mann met to discuss landscaping the front lawn at the PCC, and Karen thought they should look at the whole site because it is a great green space. Francie had the idea to introduce people to edible landscaping and landscape design. By planting native berries and herbs they would create a teaching garden. They would like to see this be a four season garden including winter elements. The space could be all about food and families- a real piece of community for Peterborough. Karen and Francie wanted to present their preliminary ideas to the PRC to get their feedback before going any further.
- d. When questioned about funding for the project, Karen and Francie responded that they are counting on a lot of in-kind volunteering to help reduce the cost. They will be looking at funding

through the NH Charitable Trust, tying in with the food pantry and Cornucopia Project. Francie mentioned that she has raised money in town in the past and Peterborough is a generous town. People had such a connection with Jim Grant that she thinks they will be very interested in supporting this garden. Noting that many people still consider that building “the Armory,” their overall goal is to help create a welcoming Community Center that people will use.

- e. Francie and Karen appreciate that the plantings will need to be low maintenance. Karen said she would like to see outdoor seating and that she loves the Adirondack chairs and granite tables in Putnam Park. Lisa asked if the area would be taken care of by a formal group of volunteers similar to those who maintain the flower boxes on the bridge by the library. Francie explained her original idea was that the edibles would fit in with the food pantry, but she recognizes that the garden will need volunteers. It is not currently the plan to have a formal group maintain this space. Andy questioned whether Roland Patten, PRD’s seasonal maintenance foreman, has seen the preliminary designs and how he felt about the prospect of maintaining this garden. Andy expressed thanks to Roland for keeping PRD facility lawns beautiful, and he stated that we always appreciate receiving things but we also need to be ready to maintain them. Andy mentioned concern about leaf maintenance, and Francie responded that the new trees *will* require more work hours to maintain, but Karen added that with 30-something beds behind the PCC building, Cornucopia will be able to use the leaves. Karen designed the Cornucopia gardens and said they always wanted more berries, which this new design will provide.
- f. Andy remarked that he thinks this is a wonderful effort, to which the rest of the PRC agreed. When asked whether Francie and Karen needed any formal response from the PRC at this time, they replied that they thought it was the right procedure to talk to the right groups of people. Jeff stated that the PCC is under the PRC’s auspices, budgetarily, so at some point they will see this in ongoing maintenance. In reality, he said, they need to be in favor of this before it goes forward. Francie agreed, stating that they would not go to the Select Board until the PRC approved the current concept. Heather mentioned that she is glad to see that the new design removes the semicircular driveway. Karen said they have spoken with Chris Mann about food pantry deliveries and the need for customer parking. Karen priced out the design assuming the new drive would be paved, since that surface is easier to plow and maintain over the long term than gravel. The area where the Farmers’ Market would park vehicles will be reinforced to allow vehicles to drive there without leaving tire tracks, while still allowing grass to grow and water to drain. Jeff noted that if this area is developed as proposed, it will provide a spot for passive recreation. Jeff thinks there is a lot of potential for this entire area. The PCC is currently pretty active indoors but this new garden design would draw people to outdoor activities. The fruit trees will draw people to stroll and pick fruit. Chris K. mentioned that he liked the idea of lining Elm Street with elm trees, and Karen mentioned that there are now many varieties of elm that are disease resistant. She would also like to plant chestnut trees. Francie agreed that there is good traffic at the PCC now and that it will only improve with the addition of outdoor gardens, adding that the Town House is beautiful but difficult for people with mobility challenges. Andy asked about plans for the south side of the lawn, and Jeff responded that we will be developing a bocce court there in the spring and that this area needs to remain open for events when large tents are needed. Jeff believes the concept for developing this natural area at the PCC could become the cornerstone for redevelopment of the Route 101/Elm Street corner, adding that if we ever get money to renovate the PCC gym, we might see larger events taking place there. With an attractive front lawn like this, he can imagine people taking prom or wedding photos there, like they do now at Putnam Park.
- g. Regarding the timing of the project, Karen said the ideal time for planting is in the spring. Work on the road, parking and walkway, however, can happen anytime except when the ground is frozen. Jeff thought the construction of Adirondack chairs might be a project where Summer Teen Challenge could join our summer maintenance crew.
- h. Andy motioned to approve the conceptual design as presented. Heather seconded. The motion

was approved unanimously. Andy invited Francie and Karen to come back again to update the PRC as the project moves forward. Andy questioned whether Francie might like to solicit input from the public, and Francie responded that they will start first with the Parks Committee and then they will plan to involve the community. Francie added that she tends to dislike naming all the elements of a design in honor of various donors, and that Jim Grant did most of what he did for the Town behind the scenes. Francie and Karen exited the meeting at 7:18pm.

III) Director's Report:

- a. Because Heather would have to leave early, Jeff offered to save time by having his written Director's Report serve as his report for the evening.
- b. Andy asked to clarify a comment in Jeff's Director's Report. Regarding bringing an article to Town Meeting to talk about the possibility of allowing a certain number of non-resident beach stickers to be sold at a premium price, the report states that Andy is not in favor of this idea. Andy clarified that it is not just that he, personally, is not in favor of this, but that the Town is not in favor of this based on a vote. Heather further clarified that this was a vote taken some time ago, but that Andy is apparently not in favor of bringing this matter back up to the Town for another vote.

IV) Program Report: Lisa offered to have her Program Report stand as written. She pointed out it covers changes to the ski program. Her one additional comment was to highlight that the Holiday Trees in Peterborough tree festival is coming up this weekend and she encouraged PRC members to attend. Andy thanked Lauren for helping organize the tree festival, which brings in significant money toward PCC operations.

V) Senior Report: Gloria's written report was accepted as read.

VI) Revolving Fund Report: Jeff said there was nothing to add to the written report, noting that we are about where he would expect us to be at this time of year. He mentioned that the new Finance Director, Brenda Fox-Howard, has begun working in transition with Nancie Vaihinger, who is about to retire.

VII) Outstanding Balances Update:

- a. Lauren reviewed the printed report on outstanding balances, showing that \$10,832.50 has been collected on old balances (up to and including 2015) since concerted efforts began in November 2015. Lauren noted that the amount collected this past month was small, and that she recognizes we are at a point of needing to push harder with the families who are neglecting their regular payments. The total old outstanding balances remaining due are \$4,115.50.
- b. The remaining balances due from summer 2016 is \$964.87. Four families are responsible for that total amount. The two families with the largest amounts due have both recently affirmed with Lisa and Lauren that they will be paid in full by the end of December. Andy thanked the PRD staff for efforts to collect overdue monies.

VIII) Cal Ripken Baseball:

- a. Jeff gave an update on the status with Cal Ripken's overdue balance. Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett wants to get together again with Cal Ripken representative Rich Scheinblum, but Rich says he does not think that is necessary. Rich stated that they will pay the money that is due in April after they have collected new registrations. Jeff remarked that this is the same thing they told us last year, so he is unimpressed with that promise. Rich said in an email received today that their current representatives were unaware of the agreement to pay the PRD \$10 per participant with a cap of \$1000 per season. Jeff pointed out, however, that the PRC meeting minutes from 2009 show that the Cal Ripken treasurer was present when that agreement was formed. The same person has continued serving as treasurer and has signed all the checks we have received from their

organization. The excuse that Cal Ripken representatives did not know about the agreement sounds disingenuous. Cal Ripken claims the Peterborough division has no money. Jeff believes there are management issues with the Cal Ripken League since there is no excuse for having no money when they receive registration revenue in addition to outfield fence advertising sign revenue. He believes their registration fees are too low in comparison with other leagues, and he thinks they also do a poor job inventorying their equipment. Heather pointed out that in April they would conceivably owe another \$1000, so she questioned how they can assume they will have enough money then to resolve their debts. Jeff stated that Cal Ripken has already been notified that if they do not pay us they will not be able to use our fields. He remarked that when this agreement was first developed in 2009, Cal Ripken enrolled upwards of 400 kids overall. We never increased their fee, but they are now claiming they are unsure they even had 100 kids in Peterborough. They have not shown Jeff any numbers so he cannot confirm this. Jeff explained that Rodney's point is that since a lack of communication had led to the current situation, we should meet in person to discuss. Jeff warned that, although he understands the position of the PRC and Administration and agrees with it, everyone needs to realize that being at war with youth baseball will be a public relations nightmare for both sides where no one truly wins. Chris remarked that ten dollars per player per season is not a lot to ask. Jeff added that youth and adult softball programs pay to use the fields. Jeff will keep everyone up to date as the situation unfolds. Cal Ripken will need to start taking registrations by February or March so they do not have much time to figure this out. Chris stated that he is involved with soccer clubs and field usage fees are a given. Andy expressed disbelief that an organization can choose to not honor an agreement. Cal Ripken, until recently, has had no fundraising expectations for participants to try to raise money for the league. They are one of the only organizations that doesn't raise any money. They don't sell anything, they don't have a "tag day" – nothing. By contrast, the Boy Scouts sell popcorn, Dunkin' Donuts discount booklets, camp cards, etc. The Girl Scouts sell cookies. ConVal High School Hockey sells Christmas trees. Jeff notes that we have worked very hard over the years to take our fields from being considered sub-par and laughed at to receiving compliments from the district commissioner of Cal Ripken while standing on the Bishop Field mound after a district tournament saying it was one of the best fields in the State.

- b. A discussion ensued about having the money for advertising signage go to the Town instead of to Cal Ripken, and Jeff acknowledged that this might be a good first step. If we pursue this, the PRD would have to solicit businesses, have the signs made, follow-up for payment, etc. Jeff believes we are in the right on this issue and he is feeling more inclined to head into battle given the defiant attitude of Cal Ripken representatives, but he said it could get ugly. Heather departed the meeting at 7:48pm. Andy pointed out that the PRC represents the taxpayers and it is appropriate to hold Cal Ripken accountable for paying their bills. Jeff contacted Cal Ripken headquarters in New Jersey and obtained a list of the current ConVal Cal Ripken officers listed on their charter.
- c. Andy motioned to approve the plan that Cal Ripken may not use our fields unless their past due amount is paid in full by April 1, 2017. Stacey seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The decision was made to table the idea of the PRD retaining signage money as an option to consider in the future, without making a formal motion to that effect. Jeff stated that we may have to come up with some parameters about the signs because some are very old in appearance and last year Cal Ripken put up signs for inactive businesses.

IX) Adjournment:

- a. Andy wished everyone a happy Christmas, Hanukah, and new year. Andy motioned to adjourn the meeting. Stacey seconded. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

Next meeting: Wed. January 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Martin,  
Minute Taker  
December 15, 2016

December 9, 2016

