Peterborough Recreation Committee (PRC) Meeting
Roland "Beaver" Jutras Recreation Building
Minutes of October 2, 2019
Approved

Attendees: Andrew Dunbar, Chair; Kate Coon, Secretary; Andrew Brescia;
Bill Taylor, Peterborough Selectman; Lisa Koziell-Betz, Acting Recreation Director;
resident Rob Fox; resident Annie Graves;
and Lauren Martin, Administrative Assistant and Minute Taker

I. Call to Order: Andy D. called the meeting to order at 6:34p.m.

II. Discussion about Cunningham Pond Concerns:

A. Andy D. invited resident Annie Graves to speak, as scheduled. Annie began by offering the background information that she is a Peterborough native and that the Town did not have the resource of Cunningham Pond when she was a girl. When Elizabeth Marshall-Thomas gifted property at the pond to the Town, Annie was over the moon that we finally had our own pond. Annie loves our pond, is invested in it, and feels protective of it. She swam there today! Over the last few years, Annie has been noticing changes at the pond but has not spoken about them. Since the pond was opened to residents of other towns, it feels to Annie that there is more trash, more noise issues, and more people flaunting the rules. She acknowledged that our lifeguards are young and not always comfortable being forceful. Annie has seen a couple of instances when their authority has been directly challenged. Andy D. invited Annie to address her four areas of concern one at a time.

B. Annie showed a sample of a sign asking people to not handle the salamanders. These signs were laminated at the PRD earlier this summer and she placed them in numerous locations at the pond. Annie explained that people do not realize they are harming the salamanders by handling them, adding that many people thanked them for putting up the signs. Before tonight's meeting, Lisa had already invited Annie to send her the file so the PRD can easily post the signs in the future. Regarding Annie's concern that someone had torn down the signs after the lifeguard season ended, Lisa explained that our maintenance staff removed the signs so that they would not risk blowing around off-season.

C. Regarding radio and cell phone usage at the pond, Annie described that a couple of times this summer a man had his radio cranked up high while he listened to a ballgame. No one said anything to the man, but a number of people moved over to the other beach for more peace and quiet. Annie also noted that people talking on cell phones are often not aware they are loud and that other people can hear their conversations. She feels that it would be a simple thing for people to choose to use earbuds. Conversation ensued about how it is not uncommon for people to want to listen to the radio while at a larger beach like Hampton, but that the natural beauty and smaller area at Cunningham Pond creates a tranquil environment which noise can disturb. Kate clarified that the issues with the loud radio happened twice this summer and that people moved to the other beach to escape the noise, which Annie affirmed. Kate remarked that she cannot see putting up a sign or trying to legislate this, but that one should feel empowered to speak directly to another member of the community about a concern. Andrew B. agreed with Kate, adding that most summers he "lives" at the pond and although he has not encountered anyone with a loud radio, he said we pick our battles so if it was loud he would probably swim and then leave. Despite lifeguards being young, Andrew B. has seen them enforce rules about using the platform, though he has not seen lifeguards challenge any patrons about their behavior

on the beach. Andy D. noted that cell phone use can be problematic wherever you are, but he thought we should have a policy asking people to be respectful and polite to their neighbors. There was agreement that Cunningham Pond allows us to enjoy the sights and sounds of nature in a different way than at the ocean, but that it may be challenging to enforce a noise restriction. When Bill asked if the problem was due to one person, Annie agreed. Bill questioned the odds of whether this one individual will see and choose to abide by rules restricting loud noise, stating that perhaps that one person should be addressed directly. It was then discussed how posting a rule might be easier, since it can be hard to approach someone you do not know without worrying how they will react. Rob agreed that without a posted rule it would be hard for one person to request another change their behavior. Having served as a lifeguard for many years, Rob stated that their goal is to keep people safe and focus on the water, so we should be careful how much we ask lifeguards to police the area. Lisa said if a rule is posted, people may ask the lifeguards to enforce the rule. **Andy D. moved to have a sign suggesting people please be considerate of cell phone and radio use at the pond. Kate seconded the motion. With a vote unanimously in favor, the motion passed.**

D. Regarding Annie's concern about people fishing and swimming beyond the buoys, Lisa clarified that although the state is the actual owner of the water at the Cunningham Pond facility, the buoys are a visual and physical boundary indicating the area our lifeguards supervise. Lisa is aware that there are adults who lap swim beyond the boundaries, that some kids may wander, and that boaters are obviously beyond the swimming area. Outside the lines it is "swim at your own risk," but if someone is in distress outside our boundaries, the lifeguards will respond because that is what they do. Annie explained that her question about swimming was simply a point of curiosity, but her main concern was about people fishing beyond the buoy lines. She described that there is more beach extending past the buoy lines for the first beach, and that she has seen an older man in that area casting while children are playing (within the lines) nearby. Despite witnessing a lifeguard ask the man to move further down, Annie has seen him fishing in that area more than once. Lisa remarked that perhaps we could move the buoy lines further down to remove the extra area where people might fish. Lisa also explained that the Peterborough Police have instructed our staff to call them whenever they might need support in dealing with an uncooperative member of the public.

E. Annie stated that this summer, especially, it felt like the pond was filling up and that there was more trash. She spoke to people and found that many were non-residents. Andy D. explained that Cunningham Pond was originally intended for use just by Peterborough residents and their guests. Attendance at the pond significantly decreased since the big renovation of Adams Pool, so former director Jeff King felt it was appropriate to allow non-residents to purchase pond passes. The fee structure and the number of available passes for residents and non-residents was explained. Annie said she would gladly forgo the Peterborough residents' free sticker for the first car, and she thinks others would, also. Lisa noted that this summer there was one day where we are aware that attendance at the pond was out of control, due to two families holding large parties at the same time. One family had reserved the picnic area in advance, but the other family's plans were unknown to us until they came in that Friday afternoon to obtain a large number of guest passes. Lisa stated that we have not heard any complaints from anyone else about trash or about limited parking. Kate challenged the idea that residents might not mind paying more money or paying for their first sticker per household. She remarked that we hear a lot that people are feeling pinched and we get grief from some people about paying for a sticker for a second car. Lisa summarized that this year we had been authorized to sell up to 125 stickers to non-residents, but we sold only 116. Rob suggested that a non-resident paying $125 for a sticker would be likely to be respectful of the facility by not leaving trash or being rowdy. In response to the comment that there are many out of state license plates at the pond, Lisa

explained that residents are required to show proof of their Peterborough residency. This year, we met a large number of people who had recently moved to town and showed us a bill as proof of residency, though they had not yet changed their plates. Also, residents can get guest passes for their visitors. Guest passes are not available for non-residents who have purchased pond stickers. Lisa acknowledged that we need to look at the number of guest passes that are out there and we might reel in the length of time some guest passes are issued, but she noted that we can only track so much. When questioned how the bathhouse staff stationed at the pond entrance respond to people without stickers, Lisa said that they do not forbid entry but explain that the person has a good chance of getting a parking ticket. Last summer, the bathhouse staff used clickers to keep track of the number of vehicles entering during the weekends. Even on an extremely hot Fourth of July when the beaches were crowded, however, there were still spaces in the parking lot. When Annie questioned how the number of available non-resident stickers was decided, Kate responded that it was a discussion and it could be discussed and renegotiated. The PRC could propose a change to the Select Board, who would make the final decision. Conversation ensued regarding balancing the revenue of selling non-resident stickers and being good neighbors to neighboring towns, with the potential for taking away from our resource. Andrew B. commented that he is a frequent user of the pond, but often has the beach to himself. Annie said this summer was noticeably more crowded. Andy D. noted that we cannot control the temperatures, and that this summer's sunny, hot weather must have had an impact. Annie thanked the committee for listening to her concerns and departed the meeting.

III. Approval of Minutes: Kate motioned to approve the Sept. 4th minutes as written. Andrew B. seconded the motion. With unanimous approval, the minutes were approved.

IV. Cunningham Pond Non-Resident Fees: Lisa explained that we have already received calls from non-residents wanting to purchase 2020 Cunningham Pond stickers. If we would like to see a change in the fee or the number of stickers for non-residents, Lisa believes that the PRC can make a recommendation but it would need to be approved by the Select Board. In 2018, we sold 125 stickers at $100 apiece. In 2019, we sold 116 of the available 125 at $125 apiece. Andy D. proposed raising the fee to $130. Lisa noted that if we raise the price, we may not sell as many stickers but might keep the revenue the same. Based on his experience as former innkeeper of the Little River Bed and Breakfast, Rob suggested that we cannot pick a number out of the air. If the goal is to cut back on the number sold without reducing the revenue stream, we will probably need to raise the fee higher than just a $5 increase. Andy D. asked if we can tell people they are on the list, but the price has not been determined yet. Lisa responded that we could do that, but it will create more work for the office. Lisa had thought she would suggest keeping everything the same as last year, since we did not sell out, but after tonight's discussion on perceived overcrowding she is not sure. Rob suggested that if the goal is to keep the same revenue, we can run the numbers to determine how many stickers could be sold at different prices. He thinks it is reasonable to take a waiting list and then contact people after we have had a chance to run the numbers and think about next year. Kate suggested Lisa tell people we will keep their names on a list and contact them in January after the price has been determined, to which Lisa agreed. **An Action Item was created to set the fee and number of non-resident stickers at the December PRC meeting.**

V. Pump Track Update: Rodney Bartlett was unable to attend tonight's meeting, but Lisa referenced an email with updates that he sent her today. As soon as Rodney receives the schedule from the Mathewson Companies, he will send it out. The money has been approved so we just need to start construction.

VI. Action Items:

A. Strategic Planning: Kate explained that she has kept Deputy Town Administrator Nicole MacStay posted on our process. The next step, which we need to do soon, is to think about time to schedule a retreat. Kate suggested a half-day or possibly more at the PRD meeting room. Given PRC and staff work commitments, Kate assumes we would need to look at a Saturday. Andy D. stated that we need to have a clear objective on what we want to accomplish and how we will know we have succeeded. Kate suggested engaging a facilitator who is skilled at strategic planning. She summarized that we have gathered a lot of data, did our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) assessments, and conducted a town-wide survey. Now a typical strategic plan would be to look out at three to five years to see where we want to be, then identify what we need to do in the next year to move toward that. She likened this to a "pumped up Action Items list." Kate noted that the library staff and Select Board have found retreats successful, and that out of the retreat will come our plan. Kate identified that we cannot do all of this during regular PRC meetings because our time is limited. Kate will have coffee next week with resident Jim Hassinger, who has been recommended as an appropriate group facilitator. Regarding the timing of a retreat, Kate remarked that it does not seem right to do this without a Recreation Director. Lisa offered the reminder that Rodney's email stated that advertisements for the position will be going out next week. Kate added that Rodney and Nicole generated a job description on which Michael and Kate, the PRC representatives to the search committee, offered edits. Andy D. stated that sixteen years ago the candidates were invited to meet with the PRC, who then offered their input. Bill remarked that the Town generally posts openings in a lot of places, including Indeed.com. Andrew B. offered that the PRC members visiting the Amherst pump track this summer came up with a "soft" goal to get to know each other and play a little. Perhaps the retreat does not have to be limited to all business.

B. Andy D. recommended that the PRC suggest to the Select Board that Rob Fox fulfill the remainder of Ryan Griffiths' term on the PRC. Rob affirmed that he would be interested in serving. Andy D. moved to recommend to the Select Board that Rob Fox fill the current vacancy on the PRC. Andrew B. seconded the motion. With unanimous approval, the motion passed. Bill will bring this recommendation to the Select Board. Andy D. suggested Rob visit the PRD to meet all the staff.

C. Returning to the topic of the strategic planning retreat, Kate questioned when we might get a director. Bill responded that January 1st is probably the target date. Kate suggested planning a retreat for a half day on a weekend in early January. Andrew B. stated that if we itemize the objectives, we can determine if an afternoon would be sufficient time. Kate replied that we should decide to limit our plans to what can be accomplished in an afternoon.

VII. Program Report:

A. Lisa suggested that the brief synopsis of current programs in the agenda packets be accepted as read. She remarked that with the state of staff and family members' illnesses, it is tricky for us to offer new events like a fall dance. Lisa cannot run it alone and does not want to have it come off poorly. She cautioned the PRC that if they hear we are not doing anything, please understand that there are a lot of extenuating circumstances. Kate offered to help with Trunk or Treating and said that the PRC agrees we should offer quality over quantity.

B. The pump track construction will start soon.

C. Money has been appropriated in the FY2020 budget to sandblast and paint the pool, which is anticipated for the spring. Lisa will contact other companies to check their availability.

D. Lisa discovered that replacing the sand filters in the pool is recommended every eight to ten years, so we may not need to do this yet.

E. Rodney has told Lisa that the only item for Recreation to request from the Capital Improvements Project (CIP) committee for FY2021 is a new dump truck.
F. The PRD was given $600 for our scholarship fund (part of the proceeds) from last weekend's Breast Cancer Softball Fundraising Tournament.
G. Before addressing HVAC and climate control at the Peterborough Community Center (PCC), there first needs to be a building envelope and hazardous materials survey. Rodney told Lisa that he had thought the PCC's needs were more an issue of temperature control, but he discovered after his walk-through with Tim Grossi, ConVal District Facilities Director, that for the gym floor it is more of a climate control issue. We are aware there is asbestos around the windows and are concerned about where there may be additional asbestos in the building. Bill commented that some ceiling tile and some pipes can have asbestos, so this needs to be evaluated at the PCC before we throw good money after bad. Kate asked to keep the PRC apprised of the time schedule. Lisa said that right now it is business as usual and that she will ask Rodney for a sense of timing for the process.
H. Lisa does not know details about Rodney's meeting with the ConVal District Superintendent and other personnel, but she thinks Rodney will continue these meetings to build a cooperative relationship. Bill affirmed that Rodney will work on developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the schools so that everyone is on the same page. Bill said it sounds like this relationship will drastically improve.
I. Andrew B. asked if the PCC roof leaking is enough of a problem to prevent the building from being used. Lisa responded that we have had three recent rainstorms without leaking, so she thinks it has been plugged.
J. Referring to a sheet in the agenda packet listing kayak prices, Lisa suggested that replacing some leaking kayaks might be put into the budget.
K. Employee pay rates will have to be figured into the budgeting process. Jeff King had been using 2016 pay rates for three years and much of our staff does not even meet the Town's current minimum, so pay rates will need to be increased.
L. There is a Boy Scout camporee using the whole Adams facility this weekend at no cost. Lisa thinks we will see some changes in what we charge outside organizations.
M. Lisa recounted the recent circumstances that led to a personal injury claim. In August, a little boy ran into the end of the bleachers on Ecco Field and was cut. A couple of the caps on the bleacher ends had fallen off. When the boy's mother came in the next morning to tell us what happened, our maintenance supervisor, Ray Eaton, immediately fixed the problem. Weeks later, we received word that an attorney has contacted the Town about a personal injury claim. Bill explained that this gets turned over to the Town's insurance company, Primex, who will deal with it.
N. Lisa remarked that she would love help from the PRC with the Trunk or Treat event scheduled for Sat. October 26th at Depot Square. She just learned that last year there had been a couple of near accidents with pedestrians and moving cars. She needs adults to help get people safely across Grove Street to Ava Marie's and she can supply reflective vests. Lisa described the annual Boo Night event, where Depot Square merchants hand out candy and host activities, the PRD offers games, and organizations can decorate their cars and hand out candy for Trunk or Treating. The Well School is planning a haunted house experience at their van. Ava Marie's wants to participate but is located across the street. We will also have a costume parade. Kate suggested skipping the judging of costumes and handing out prizes so that everyone will be happy. When Andrew B. asked if a citizen who is not a police officer can legally stop traffic, Bill replied that it is a law to stop for pedestrians in a crosswalk. Lisa remarked that the Depot Square businesses are still open for regular business so we cannot block off the area to vehicles,

but we will have signs at all entrances to the area identifying that Trunk or Treating is in progress.

O. Lisa had asked the Finance Department for financial reports for this meeting and was given Project Activity Reports for the Town of Peterborough. These reports are unfamiliar to us because they were generated from the new financial system to which the Town transitioned in June. Basically, Lisa was told the PRD is very solvent. Lisa will try to problem solve some of the issues for the budget discussion in November. Rodney mentioned in his email today that Leo Smith, Shannon Kelley, Seth McLean, Rodney and Lisa will do the budget together.

VIII. New Business: Andrew B. explained that one of the pickleball players put up a mesh gutter guard on the bottom of the fencing gate to keep balls from rolling out, but it disappeared and was replaced. He wondered if they had done the right thing to address the concern themselves. Lisa did not mind that they had made the change, but a safety issue arose from the gate. If Lisa had known what the pickleball players had done from their convenience standpoint, she would have asked Ray to work with that to further resolve the situation. She asked to be informed in the future if issues like this arise, so she can ask Ray to problem solve around any adjustments.

IX. Adjournment: Andy D. thanked Kate for bringing Rob to the meeting and thanked Rob for coming. He thanked everyone in the room for their service and their excellent input. Andy D. motioned to adjourn the meeting and Kate seconded. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.

The next PRC meeting is scheduled for 6:30pm on November 6, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Martin
October 8, 2019

Attachment: Action Items List 10/8/19