

Peterborough Recreation Committee (PRC) Meeting  
Roland "Beaver" Jutras Recreation Building  
Minutes of July 10, 2019  
Approved

Attendees: Andrew Dunbar, Chair; Kate Coon, Vice-Chair; Ryan Griffiths, Secretary; Andrew Brescia; Michael Strand; Jeffrey M. King, Recreation Director; Bill Taylor, Peterborough Selectman; Peterborough residents Elizabeth Thomas, Tim Selby, Roz Hanchett and Brian Zimmer; and Lauren Martin, Administrative Assistant and Minute Taker

- I. Call to Order: Andy D. called the meeting to order at 6:28p.m.
- II. Approval of Minutes: Kate motioned to approve the June 5<sup>th</sup> minutes as written. Ryan seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
- III. Beach Sticker Discussion: Andy D. passed out copies of his draft of an email response he plans to send to resident Herb Turner, who had expressed concern about having to pay for a second Cunningham Pond sticker. Unless the PRC has edits to propose, Andy D. said he will send his response this Friday. He commented that it is important to respond to people and, if possible, to respond in writing so that there is documentation.
- IV. FOOT's Program Discussion:
  - A. Jeff explained that he would not usually bring up a new program idea to the PRC but he wanted to share this with them since it will take place at Cunningham Pond. One of the lifeguard instructors from Crotched Mountain Rehab Center, Michael Kraskouskas, approached Lisa about offering triathlon training called FOOT's (Fitness, Open Water Swimmers, or Triathletes). With the closing of the pool at Crotched Mountain, this program would like to find a new home with the PRD. Michael K. is a certified lifeguard instructor and has passed his criminal background check. He will place buoys in the pond and monitor swimmers' progress. If some participants are non-residents, we will need to issue temporary non-resident guest passes valid only for the specific days and times of the class. Jeff wanted the PRC to be aware and to approve the plan.
  - B. Jeff explained that we do outside programs on a contractual basis and the PRD will receive a portion of the program fee. This program will be limited to eight people. Kate felt that the potential for eight non-resident cars to park at the pond at 6:00pm would not have a significant impact. Andrew B. asked if we can keep the buoys out there for the benefit of others not in this class, which Jeff agreed to request. Jeff affirmed that we will advertise this opportunity to the public and that it is not planned for simply a select, closed group. Michael motioned to allow this program as described. Kate seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
- V. Request to Fundraise at Marshall-Thomas Recreation Area at Cunningham Pond:
  - A. Resident Liz Thomas explained that a large tract of land at Cunningham Pond is for sale, and the Save Cunningham Pond group is trying to purchase the land to prevent it from being developed. They need to raise \$1,250,000 and the Monadnock Conservancy will then own the land. They have raised a great deal already but must raise the balance of \$250,000 by the end of 2019. So far, fundraising has been primarily done through one-to-one approaches and people have been very generous. The group applied for a grant but was not selected. They have tried setting up a table on Saturdays at the Peterborough Recycling Center, but after a few weeks it was clear the

same people were being targeted each week. They are now thinking that they should reach out to people at the pond who are enjoying the facility the most.

- B. Liz described how the group proposes using the same tactic they had at the Recycling Center by setting up a table to sell t-shirts, as well as taking outright donations. Jeff had advised them that there is no parking on Cunningham Pond Road and that positioning themselves at the entrance to the parking lot would back up traffic, so he has suggested having them set up their table in the grassy area just before where people walk downhill to the beach. They will keep track of donors' names and the amount of their donations, since funds will be returned if the group does not meet its overall goal. It is Liz's understanding that the Petersons Real Estate will only sell the parcel to one buyer, but that person could potentially sell it to multiple others. If multiple new homes all had septic tanks, that might adversely affect the quality of the water. The Conservation Commission has given a sizable donation.
- C. Andy D. motioned to approve Liz's request to raise funds at Cunningham Pond, thanking her for her family's generous donation of the property to the Town. Michael seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.
- D. When it was commented that any other group should receive similar permission if they wanted to fundraise at a PRD facility, it was agreed to save that conversation for another time. Liz felt their fundraising at the pond would likely begin around July 20<sup>th</sup>. She will let Jeff know the exact date when that is determined so he can inform our staff at the pond. Liz then departed the meeting.

VI. Pump Track Discussion:

- A. Resident Tim Selby asked how the PRC visit to the Amherst pump track went. Jeff, Andy and Ryan visited on June 26<sup>th</sup>, while Kate visited earlier on her own. Positive comments included the observation that Amherst had more of a skills-building course. The track in Amherst covers a small area but was spread out, allowing lots of kids with different skill levels to be using it safely at the same time. Tim remarked that we could set up a beginner level as well as a more advanced course. There was agreement that we should follow Tim's initial track design and allow room for possible expansion in the future. Jeff noted that we own the woods on the western side of where the track is being proposed. He has asked Sharon Monahan to mark out the wetlands for us. Amherst had a bridge in the middle of their track. A smaller version of that would work for us and allow us to add on more in the wooded area in the future.
- B. Tim asked if the other biking enthusiasts in attendance had any comments to make. Resident Roz Hanchett stated that her six-year-old son is really into biking and skateboarding, and they visited two tracks in California last week. One had three different levels of course, including a BMX bowl for doing tricks. She likes the idea of a six-year-old and a fourteen-year-old doing different things on different tracks at the same time, which Ryan confirmed seeing in Amherst. Roz mentioned that one of the California tracks held a community work day for upkeep maintenance, though she is unsure if that kind of plan would continue to be effective long-term. That track also had an air compressor and all the bike tools one might want for tune-ups.
- C. Ryan expressed concern that we do not push something else down the line by choosing to do this pump track now. Jeff responded that we are not talking about enough funding that this would make a difference for other projects. Since we want to take advantage of warmer weather, time is an issue for the construction of the track. Jeff stated that this is our busiest season for the PRD so he will need to lean heavily on Tim and others to support the track going forward. When the specific concern of addressing improvements to the PCC was voiced, Jeff replied that the PCC gym floor is in the budget this year. He believes we will have enough left over to do the track, as well. Jeff needs to come up with specs for the PCC and get it out to bid, which is fairly time consuming. His goal is to have the work at the PCC done in the fall.

- D. Jeff affirmed that the track would be available to use for free. When building the skatepark, we learned that if it was fenced in and only open certain hours, and if we posted required rules for its use, our standard of care and our liability would be much higher. Similarly, if the pump track is unfenced and uncontrolled, allowing patrons to bike at their own risk with our safety *recommendations* posted instead of rules, our level of responsibility is much more limited.
- E. Jeff is working on determining if there is enough space for dump trucks to pass behind the current tennis bang board. Sharon Monahan has marked the wetlands and our maintenance staff were cutting some appropriate trees today. When asked if the old sledding hill behind the proposed track area could also be incorporated into its design, Jeff said yes but he would not recommend clear cutting. Other ideas that have been mentioned for that hill include placing solar panels that could power the lights to the fields and installing a zipline. Kate noted that Amherst had some places with erosion. Jeff responded that their site is hilly and our proposed site is flat, so he is not concerned. Amherst Recreation Director Craig Fraley mentioned to Jeff that drainage is important to address. The old ice rink area where our track is being proposed currently slopes toward the street, directing run-off from the hill to the street. We would still probably want to send drainage west, as Tim had proposed last month, but Jeff pointed out that because the area is not flat, there should not be ponding. When questioned if cutting trees was being done prematurely, Jeff replied that we are only cutting a small stretch to allow for the gator or dump trucks to drive through. This area has become over grown so we took the opportunity to do needed clean-up.
- F. Andrew B. described that he shares other PRC members' enthusiasm for the project, but he wants to carefully consider safety concerns of bikers potentially hitting trees, and he thinks it is premature to make decisions about this proposal before we review the results of the strategic planning survey and determine what other projects people would like to see. Ryan acknowledged that there were a lot of comments in the survey about the PCC, but if we still plan to address the improvements to that facility this fall, he thinks it would be all right to pursue the track, as well. If Tim's group of bike enthusiasts in town spearhead this, it won't affect our other plans. Michael stated that the survey identified actionable items that seemed programmatic, and that what was proposed for facilities was largely long-term items like a teen center. Ryan affirmed that HVAC, flooring, lights and windows at the PCC have been on our list of action items for a long time, so he does not want to put those off. Michael continued that he would ordinarily want to gather data on whether a facility would be used adequately in order to justify the project, but the labor for creating and maintaining the pump track is guaranteed to be low. His criteria for this project are: is it a good deal, do we need/want it, and will there be no impact on other items from the survey? Andrew B. questioned that even if we know the PCC needs will be addressed this fall, how will the public perceive it if they see construction underway at Adams Park? Tim felt confident we can build a group of area residents who will assist with maintenance, proposing that we might consider holding an evening to educate the public on the PRD's plans. Michael wondered if we could have a sign-up at the track where kids who use it could volunteer to assist with bi-weekly or monthly maintenance for community service hours. Ryan remarked that in Amherst they were told that if people are riding the track, it kind of takes care of itself. Jeff agreed, adding that our infield groomer can also be used if the track is wide enough. Ryan stated that Amherst had to install an irrigation system to sprinkle water, because the dust got so bad. Jeff said that we have a pipe from the filter room running underground to the old ice rink, so if that pipe is still intact, the infrastructure is already there. The pump track would not impact ice skating, since we now install a rink each year in the parking lot. Michael asked for a ceiling cost of ongoing dirt and labor for the track, to which Jeff and Tim agreed that \$500 would be a high estimate. Jeff commented that our maintenance crew only works 28 hours each week, so he would not have been on board with this idea if it would strain our crew. Since

a group has been interested in helping design this from the get-go, this project feels like “low hanging fruit” and will add another facility to what we offer the public. When questioned how we can involve students in the design, Tim responded that the pump track does not require a large design. We have space for two to three different levels of skills. We could get kids involved in building trails and in future expansion into the woods. Kate stated that she has been envisioning a “Friends of the Pump Track” group to do fundraising and get kids involved. Ryan acknowledged that the survey revealed there is interest in group rides or club rides. Jeff has a good relationship with Vittoria, a mountain biking tire company, who might sponsor a professional rider to appear at the opening of our track. There was agreement that having kids and adults with a range of biking skills enjoy the track at the same time is appealing and would be following our strategic plan.

- G. Ryan summarized that we now have it on record that yearly maintenance should not cost over \$500. Jeff agreed to fine-tune the support the Town can offer with digging. Jeff feels fairly confident that the Highway Department could give us a few hours of time. Michael asked if we can ask for a concrete plan to partner with ConVal, and if we can allocate time to educate the public that this will not impact the budget or other potential projects. Ryan suggested that if Tim remains in the forefront of this project, it will not look like the PRD dropped the ball on other projects in order to be able to do this. Michael stated that it would be a low time investment to put out something in advance to prevent any misunderstandings, to which Jeff responded that he could probably arrange for a newspaper interview. Bill Taylor suggested that the scope of the project should be decided, and then a committee should be formed that can include members of the PRD to cover maintenance. He added that we should set up an agreement between everybody that Recreation will donate a certain amount and then Tim’s group will take on the rest of the cost. Discussion ensued about having details of the agreement in writing.
- H. Andy D. motioned the following: Providing that Jeff has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Tim’s group by July 24<sup>th</sup> that he finds acceptable, then the PRC approves the use of up to \$5,000 from Isabelle Miller Funds towards the construction of a pump track on the site of the old ice rink. Ryan seconded the motion, which received unanimous approval. Tim, Roz and Brian Zimmer then departed the meeting.

## VII. Strategic Planning

- A. Andrew B. suggested writing a press release about all the progress being made with other things that people are asking for first, and then submitting a press release regarding the pump track later. He noted that a number of survey responders had expressed interest in improvements to the PCC, a dog park, and an indoor pool, and only two people expressed interest in a pump track.
- B. Kate began to discuss long-term issues she identified from the survey data. Lots of people find it reasonable to have a dog park in our town, which she thought would probably be similar in cost to the pump track. She proposed inviting dog park proponent Beth Brown to come to the September PRC meeting. Kate could explain that we are strategically planning how we deal with this citizen request, suggesting that Beth gather a group of four or five people to form a committee similar to the one Tim Selby had organized regarding the pump track. The group could suggest a MOU for gathering donations and assist with upkeep. Noting that the swap shop at the Recycling Center is an absolute mess, Ryan stated that we need a MOU if a committee will help clean up and take care of a dog park. Bill remarked that we have to have people who want these things done take charge or else we will have too much to do. Kate confirmed that she will invite Beth Brown to get a group together and ask to be added to a PRC meeting agenda.

- C. Kate added that someone approached her about installing playground equipment elsewhere in town, such as in the grassy sandwich of land between the new downtown parking lot and the river. A fair process would be to invite people to gather a group and then bring their specific interest forward.
- D. Another longer-term idea identified from the survey is the PCC upgrade, which is urgent. It was agreed we cannot kick this can down the road any longer.
- E. For short-term ideas, Kate said that one survey responder requested a five-point harness on the high-backed swing at Adams Playground for her child with special needs who cannot hold himself up. Jeff responded that we already have that type of harness, but we did not put it out so that it does not get stolen. Our intention was to allow parents to check it out whenever needed. It was agreed we should install a sign inviting patrons to come to the office or bathhouse for the five-point harness. Ryan identified an Action Item to find this restraint and set up a placard or simply install the harness. Jeff stated that we will have to find or order the harness and order a sign, and we could strive to achieve this Action Item by the next PRC meeting. Andrew B. asked if it is possible to inform the survey responder who requested the harness, and Kate responded that it is possible we might be able to find her email.
- F. Another short-term issue Kate mentioned is that some survey responders complained that the bathrooms at the pool and pond are not clean. Ryan added that the PCC bathrooms were mentioned, as well. Jeff explained that the bathroom flooring is designed so it can be hosed or pressure washed. The area in front of the bathhouse counter gets slippery and it is a constant maintenance battle to keep it dry. Kate questioned whether this was a valid complaint or not and whether we have a cleaning schedule. Jeff said he teaches Bathroom Cleaning 101 every year and has the staff watch him demonstrate what he wants, then he watches them and critiques them on how to do it. There are sheets on the bathroom doors on which staff indicate every hour that the bathrooms have been checked and are being kept clean. Jeff reviews with staff that a family can have a great day at the beach yet leave with a bad feeling from unclean bathrooms. At the pond, Jeff noted that we schedule one bathhouse attendant to check for stickers at the gate, rent boats, and maintain the bathrooms. If it is a busy day, the bathrooms get dirty. If it is a slow day, the bathrooms should be spotless. Andrew B. proposed posting a sign stating, "Please help keep our community bathrooms clean."
- G. Kate relayed that there were a number of comments about the length of the aquatics season and about staffing at the pool and pond. Michael noted that discussing programmatic changes could bog us down, though there is merit in evaluating programs that aren't being used. He suggested that perhaps for a fixed amount of time we evaluate one programmatic change each month. Andy D. responded that it may be more beneficial to evaluate what has to be done now and what can wait. It was questioned whether a plaque asking people to keep our community bathrooms clean will really help. Bill suggested the PRC focus on issues that are not already under Jeff's purview. Andy D. suggested prioritizing by focusing on 1) safety and liability issues, 2) cost saving issues, and 3) issues regarding improving what we already have. Regarding pool hours, Jeff responded that the Peterborough Wave Swim Club has early morning and evening practice hours, and swim lessons are scheduled in the morning so that the pool can be open to the public for the afternoon and early evening. There is no other time available to move lessons. The season starts as soon as school gets out and goes on as long as the weather holds and we have enough lifeguards available to operate the pool safely. The pond is open all the time as a "swim at your own risk" facility, even if we do not have lifeguards to staff it in the late summer. Michael summarized that if this is a simple operational fix, Jeff is already dealing with it.
- H. In the interest of time, it was agreed to pause on the discussion of strategic planning until the next PRC meeting, when 30 minutes would be devoted to it. Kate will reach out to each PRC member for individual conversations to learn their impressions of the survey data, and she will

compile everyone's thoughts. Jeff clarified that only two PRC members at a time can converse outside of meetings. Since three members would constitute a quorum, if there are three or more talking business, under the Right to Know Law that is considered a meeting. Jeff also cautioned that the committee should avoid have a group email conversation.

VIII. The Program Report, Senior Program Report and Scoutmaster's Troop 8 Report were accepted as written.

IX. Director's Report:

A. Budget:

- a. Referencing the attached Expenditure and Revenue Report, Jeff announced that we have exceeded revenue figures and are just a hair over on expenses. These numbers are not exactly final, so Jeff thinks we will come in under budget. The Revolving Fund exceeded revenue and came in under budget, as well.
- b. Jeff explained that the Revolving Fund is not tax supported. We retain this balance for recreation program purposes. In the General Fund, any left over money goes back into Town operations. If any PRC members have specific questions, Jeff invited them to come discuss with him. Jeff acknowledged that he likes the new format of these reports, which list revenue and expenses on the same report.
- c. On Page 2/2, Jeff summarized that the Peterborough Community Center (PCC) revenues Year To Date are \$30,060.93 and expenses are \$22,985.62. These are part of the Revolving Fund.
- d. The Revolving Fund as a whole is \$24,480.73 to the black. Bill commented that there are a lot of numbers in these reports that Jeff completely nailed, which is very impressive. This history of nailing the budget is positive for the budget process in the future. Jeff acknowledged that we also did not give back a bunch of money because of not getting something done.
- e. Jeff invited the PRC to be our eyes and ears, noting that people may tell them things they would not tell the staff. He asked them to please relay this information to us. Nine times out of ten, if people with concerns voice them to us, we give them information and they then understand the situation more accurately. Andrew B. commented that people in the survey mentioned marketing and communication, which is help he can provide. Kate thanked Andrew B. for offering his communication expertise and said that Michael also has social media expertise. Michael noted that a main positive function of the survey was getting the word out to the public about all that we do.

B. Facilities:

- a. Jeff remarked that the pool has had constant maintenance issues just about seven days a week, but he is glad people have been thoroughly enjoying the pool. There still seems to be a common perception of the pool being cold, stemming from leaks it had since 1960 which necessitated a constant flow of fresh (cold) water. For the seventh summer now since the pool renovation, however, the pool is *not* cold. The average water temperature this summer has been 76 to 79 degrees, and it got up to 82 degrees during one hot spell. We post the daily water temperature on the pool bulletin board.
- b. Advantage Tennis just sealed the tennis courts and repaired the basketball court. The sealant is currently a little tacky, but this will wear off. We are trying to keep water out of the cracks. The company felt the tennis courts were in good shape, but the basketball court gets heavy use and takes a beating.
- c. We have sold 111 non-resident parking stickers for Cunningham Pond thus far and have given over 1260 stickers to residents, which is typical for a good summer. When it was

commented that the pond seems more crowded this year, Jeff pointed out that last summer was cool and rainy and this summer has been hot and sunny.

- d. There is a leak in one of the new water fountains due to people slamming the buttons to turn on the fountain, which broke the spring mechanism inside. We have ordered parts for the repair. When questioned if security cameras could offer valuable information, Jeff stated that we have four cameras on the Recreation office building and a camera on the bathhouse overlooking the pool. The problem in the park is the expense of running conduit across the park and weighing the benefit that might be gained from that significant expense. This is the same reason we have a camera at the pond that does not extend up to the parking lot.

X. Action Items:

- A. **Two action items were added: the five-point harness for the swing at the playground (and placard) to be completed by August, and establishing a capital reserve fund for maintenance at the pool.**
- B. Ryan reviewed that we are also trying to discuss having PCC operations incorporated into the Town budget.
- C. Regarding the issue that the ConVal school district still owes us \$6,000, Ryan stated that the school seems to be confused about funding between the Town and the Community Center. Jeff reviewed that the \$6,000 is for the school's use of the softball field and tennis courts. He explained that he and Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett had worked on this with School Board member Dick Dunning, hashing out the details of the schools' use of our facilities. They agreed for the district to give us \$6,000 but it took three years for them to place these funds in the school budget. Jeff sent an invoice to the SAU months ago. The last thing he knew is that the school superintendent had a conversation with Rodney, and she was not happy with the PRD. Jeff has not heard anything more and he does not like being stuck in the middle. It was proposed that Andy D. and Bill will arrange to meet with Rodney to clarify what is going on. Jeff provided the following history: In 2003, he sat down with school personnel. They were charging us \$8,500 for custodial support for our youth basketball program. They ended up with a handshake agreement that we would not charge the schools for using our softball and tennis facilities and the schools would not charge us for custodians. This arrangement continued through three different superintendents, until the school district began pushing back on our charging non-residents higher fees for PRD youth programs. Jeff pulled all our programs out of the school facilities except for adult volleyball. Cougar Youth Sports took youth soccer and basketball away from us, anyway. Jeff described that a lot of our programs are increasing in capacity, so we are asking the schools to use their facilities again. It was agreed that the PRC will serve as liaisons with the ConVal district, to take Jeff out of the middle. The action item was further defined that Andy D. will arrange a meeting with Rodney and Bill, also inviting Dick Dunning to attend.
- D. It was agreed that PRC members will read the special events policy proposal that Jeff shared in the June PRC agenda packet, and that time will be spent on this at the next PRC meeting.
- E. There was consensus that Action Items should be pushed to the front of the meeting next month. Ryan expressed appreciation for the updates Jeff had added to the Action Items list.
- F. When asked about the status of the PCC improvements, Jeff explained that he needs to talk with Rodney about the process for requests for proposals and putting it out to bid. Jeff wants to have this done soon because he hopes to do the project in September or October. One of our biggest renters, Dublin Christian Academy, uses the PCC gym for volleyball in the early fall. Jeff thinks we might want to wait until after their season to do the work at the PCC.

G. It was mentioned that while driving to the Amherst pump track, the suggestion was made for the PRC to hold a retreat, which has not happened since 2007. Kate affirmed that groups often plan a retreat for developing their strategic plan.

XI. Adjournment: Andrew B. motioned to adjourn the meeting and Kate seconded. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

The next PRC meeting is scheduled for 6:30pm on August 7, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Martin  
July 17, 2019

Attachment: Action Items List 7/16/19