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RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

In attendance: Gregg Mikolaities, Chairman, Cory Belden, Todd Cronin, Brett Mulvey, Joe Persechino, Georgina Saravia, Stephen King, Commissioners, and Lee Arthur, Recreation Director.

Guests: Kate Drago and Kate Lipman.

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

II. Compliant Statement by Gregg Mikolaities

A Checklist to Ensure Meetings are Compliant with the Right-to-Know Law During the State of Emergency

As Chair of the Recreation Commission, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

- a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Recreation Commission have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # 646-558-8656, with meeting ID# 821-1916-6276 and password 932840, or by participating via Zoom with meeting ID# 821-1916-6276 and password 932840.

- b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom. Instructions have also been provided on the Town of Rye website at www.town.rye.nh.us

- c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:

If anybody has a problem, please call (603) 964-5523 or email kdrago@town.rye.nh.us

- d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know Law.

III. Roll Call Attendance

Lee Arthur, no one else in the room; Gregg Mikolaities, no one else in the room; Cory Belden, no one else in the room; Todd Cronin, no one else in the room; Georgina Saravia, Anna and Josephine are in the room; Brett Mulvey, no one else in the room; Joe Persechino no one else in the room; and Stephen King, no one else in the room.

IV. Pledge of Allegiance

V. Approval of Minutes

The Recreation Commissioners reviewed the meeting minutes of February 10, 2020.

Motion was made by Cory Belden to approve the Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes of Monday, February 10, 2020. Seconded by Stephen King. All in favor roll call vote: Cory Belden, yes; Todd Cronin, yes; Brett Mulvey, yes; Steven King, yes; Gregg Mikolaities, yes; Joe Persechino, abstained; and Georgina Saravia, abstained. Motion carried.

VI. Correspondence

Financial Reports

Youth Recreational athletics account has a balance of \$89,334.62.

VII. Old Business

Recreation Multi-Purpose Storage Facility

Certificate of occupancy has been completed. Cory Belden did a walk through and inspected the exterior of the facility and reported to the commission that the builder did a great job. He did some extras at no cost, including the installation of a barn door window cover for the snack shack. Gregg Mikolaities asked if the commissioners could make a

list of potential future projects, specifically around the building. Cory Belden indicated that the snack shack needs to be furnished and additional landscaping including picnic tables are needed. It was discussed that a place holder for the CIP could be a parking plan. It was also mentioned that a ribbon cutting should be held in the future.

Recreation Congregational Church Space

Lee Arthur explained that Sam Hatem has painted the space at no cost to the Town and that it is almost complete. The next step is to get the carpet installed. The RFP was awarded to Sherwin-Williams Company and their proposal was \$7,695.96. The other submissions were Route One Carpet and Blinds, \$11,193 and Portsmouth Quality Flooring \$13,491.

VIII. New Business

COVID-19 Current and Future Impact on Recreation Operations and Programs

Lee Arthur reported that Rye Recreation has been significantly impacted by the State of NH Stay at Home Order, which includes closing of schools until at least September and limiting the size of gatherings. Since March 13, 2020 all Rye Recreation Programming has been suspended. With the move to remote learning for the remainder of the academic year, the After School Program has been shut down and will reopen when students return to school. However, it was explained that she does not know what that will look like as the schools are currently preparing three different options for the fall. The Recreation Department will have to see where the after school program fits within those options. There may also be adaptations that need to be done to meet CDC Guidelines.

There has been no revenue stream since March 13, 2020 and as a result 11 part-time employees, 6 contracted employees and 1 full-time employee have been laid-off. The Recreation Department is responsible for raising revenue through user fees to cover programming expenditures. Other town departments have experienced layoffs and furloughs. The Board of Selectmen have frozen spending and are very concerned about the result of the pandemic on cash flow.

The After School Program 2020-2021 Sign-up were held on May 11, 2020. It was important that it moved forward as planned because otherwise there would have been significant refunds. Many participants used the credit on their account towards the 2020-2021 After School Program deposit. Over 50% of registrants signed up online. There were 47 registrants and the daily count is as follows: Monday, 39; Tuesday, 39; Wednesday, 40; Thursday, 39; and Friday, 30. It was discussed that social distancing may require the need for more space.

Rye Art in Bloom was postponed but it most likely will be cancelled for the year. Gregg Mikolaities asked if any of the commissioners had any questions. Joe Persechino asked which position was laid off and it was noted the Program Supervisors. It was discussed that there are no funds to support the position. That from March 13 - June 22, 2020, \$51,000 was lost in revenue and it didn't look like that circumstance would be changing anytime soon. There could be even further reductions. The Recreation Director will be overseeing the After School Program in the fall with part-time staff. Gregg Mikolaities

mentioned that the number of participants that can be accommodated in each room may change. It was discussed how soon the department could gear back-up to where it was prior to COVID-19. The projected time frame was 18 months, that is with the restructuring of the department. No one could foresee a pandemic and the existing funding model doesn't work under the current circumstances. The start-up revenue for fall programs will not cover losses from winter and spring programming. Moving forward here are a lot of unknowns.

Joe Persechino asked if any federal relief dollars were available to help with these issues. Lee Arthur explained that she has been attending Emergency Management Committee Meetings as well as meeting with Recreation Directors from across the state weekly and that the federal relief funds do not cover recreation programming. The private sector (YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Seacoast Science Center) are eligible for payroll protection plan funds, however, not municipalities to date. Joe Persechino asked that she looks out for funding opportunities. Lee Arthur noted that she has been asked by the Board of Selectman to watch spending, which she has been doing. For example, lawn mowing has been cut from twice per week to once per week.

The Recreation Department is waiting for further guidance regarding summer camps, but it does not look like it will come until mid or late June. What is very clear under the current guidelines is that the Recreation Department does not have adequate facility for social distancing.

There has been vandalism at the Rye Recreation area, graffiti on a large rock, in the parking lot, and on the exterior of the new building. There has also been issues with scooters at the area. It was noted that the police will be increasing patrols and a further discussion/action on installing cameras should take place.

Lee Arthur began discussing what direction to take about holding summer camps. The CDC has published a tool to use in the decision-making process and the National Recreation and Parks Association has issued a path to recovery framework. It was noted that the contact intensity and number of contacts for summer camps was high and that the modification potential was low. It would be challenging to offer summer camps; the recreation facility is small and the number of campers that could be accommodated would be limited, because of social distancing. The ratio of staff to camper is expected to be low which would also have a negative financial impact. Under current guidelines a designated quarantine room would be needed in case anyone shows symptoms, other camps are securing an EMT to screen participants. There are many liability and insurance issues as well.

She indicated that as it stands currently the Recreation Department can't meet the recommended guidelines. She is concerned for the individuals that have signed up and reviewed the numbers of participants registered per week in the Summertime Horyezons Day Camp as well as all the other camps. It was noted that the registrations were low, and some contractors have canceled in person camps because they feel that they can't meet the recommended guidelines. Facilities were discussed, the recreation house where

camp is held is small and with social distancing only a limited number of campers could be accommodated and at least 20 plus registrants are needed to break even. The Rye schools are not available for use this summer and as a result basketball camp will need to be canceled. Facility use is also challenging because of the cleaning requirements. It was discussed that with the current guidelines most importantly a good camp experience would be compromised. The commission members acknowledged the challenge of holding the summer camp this summer due to a lack of funding, inability for the camp to meet CDC guidelines, and liability and health issues.

Todd Cronin asked whether the fields could be used by Little League for clinics or just playing on the fields. Lee Arthur explained that a more in-depth conversation about protocols, insurance and more would be needed. Currently field use is suspended and the stay at home order and gathering limits are in place. It is anticipated that the State of NH will be providing guidelines for reopening amateur sport soon. Sport organizations should follow the field application process as well as have a protocol in place that meets federal and state guidelines. A discussion ensued about the future of the Rye Recreation summer and fall programs.

Motion was made by Brett Mulvey to cancel all 2020 Summer Programs sponsored by Rye Recreation. Seconded by Georgina Saravia. All in favor roll call vote: Cory Belden, yes; Todd Cronin, yes; Brett Mulvey, yes; Joe Persechino, yes; Steven King, yes; Georgina Saravia, yes; and Gregg Mikolaities, yes. Motion carried.

The next Recreation Commission Meeting is Monday, June 1, 2020 at 6 p.m. virtually via Zoom.

Brett Mulvey mentioned the possibility of programming space becoming available at Town Hall as a result of the building swap.

IX. Adjournment

Motion was made by Gregg Mikolaities to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. seconded by Brett Mulvey. All in favor roll call vote: Cory Belden, yes; Todd Cronin, yes; Brett Mulvey, yes; Joe Persechino, yes; Steven King, yes; Georgina Saravia, yes; and Gregg Mikolaities, yes. Motion carried.

**These are draft minutes. Please refer to the minutes of the next meeting for approvals/corrections.*