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RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, April 5, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

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

Public: Margaret Honda and Leif Honda

Zoom Coordinator: Becky Bergeron

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. Compliant Statement by Cory Belden

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# 826-7094-1180 and password 439752, or by participating via Zoom with meeting ID# 826-7094-1180 and password 439752.

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 email Becky Bergeron at bbergeron@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

Cory Belden, no one else is in the room; Gregg Mikolaities, I am alone; Georgina Saravia, I am alone; Todd Cronin, alone in the room; Joe Persechino, I am alone; Brett Mulvey, I am alone and Stephen King, I am alone.

IV. Approval of Minutes

The Recreation Commissioners reviewed the meeting minutes of Monday, March 1, 2021.

Motion was made by Gregg Mikolaities to approve the Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes of Monday, March 1, 2021. Seconded by Brett Mulvey. All in favor roll call vote: Georgina Saravia, yes; Todd Cronin, yes; Joe Persechino, yes; Gregg Mikolaities, yes; Brett Mulvey, yes; Stephen King, yes; and Cory Belden, yes. Motion carried.

V. Correspondence

Recreation Field(s) Use Applications Seacoast Lacrosse and Rye Little League

Lee Arthur indicated that Seacoast Lacrosse has withdrawn their Recreation Field Use Application. Todd Cronin asked what the reason was for their withdrawal. Lee Arthur replied that they informed her, that they were unable to secure use of the school fields because the schools were only providing use to Rye residents and they are a seacoast organization. She told them that their Rye Recreation Field(s) Use Application would most likely get approved by the Recreation Commission and they indicated that they needed the use of multi-fields and that their coaches felt that they could be

accommodated in another community. It was left that they could reapply to the Recreation Commission if needed.

Gregg Mikolaities asked if Shawn Crapo had weighed in on the condition of the fields. Stephen King said that he spoke with Shawn Crapo and it would be about three weeks before the fields could open. Lee Arthur mentioned that he had told her that 55 degree plus weather is needed to get the frost out of the ground and he wanted to see how the over seeding took. It was noted that the Flash Jenness Memorial Field is typically ready sooner. Stephen King reported that he had been in contact with Leif Honda and soccer was not requesting use until June. They want to have summer camps and their regular fall season. They were asked to submit two separate Recreation Field(s) Use Applications. It was discussed that their application would be addressed closer to when they need to utilize the fields as the insurance requirements may change by then.

Rye Little League has submitted their application, covid plan and certificate of insurance. Stephen King reported that he has been discussion with different representatives from Little League and has requested that they provide a more specific request as it pertains to the schedule. They did not provide the e-mail or letter from the insurance provider that the general liability insurance policy does not exclude claims arising from disease or pandemic, or claims occurring during a state of emergency. It was noted that they most likely would not be able to provide that but were asked if the exclusion section of their insurance policy did exclude them from such claims. Proof of NHDHHS Certification of Background Checks has not been able to be obtained. However, they did indicate that they had submitted their application to the State.

Cory Belden asked if restrictions will be lowered. It was pointed out that State Guidelines will be followed, and that Little Leagues Covid Plan has been forwarded to the EOC and the Assistant Health Officer, Jake McGlashing. Little League will be provided use of one bathroom, that they will be responsible to manage and clean. The snack shack can operate but State Guidelines need to be followed including masking and the use of gloves.

Revising the Recreation Fields Use Application was discussed. Having a specific date for Spring, Summer and Fall request was suggested so that all applications could be reviewed at the same time, with league play as a priority and having that applications received 60 days in advance of use. Lee Arthur suggested that the e-mail or letter from the insurance provider be no longer required. She has conferred with the Town Administrator and it is not being requested by the Town on other space use permits. Because Primex recommended that it be included in the application process it was discussed consulting with them again.

Motion was made by Gregg Mikolaities that Stephen King has authority to negotiate and approve the field use application for Rye Little League for the 2021 Season. Seconded by Joe Persechino. All in favor roll call vote: Georgina Saravia, yes; Brett Mulvey, yes; Cory Belden, yes, Todd Cronin, yes; Stephen King, yes; Gregg Mikolaities, yes; and Joe Persechino, yes. Motion carried.

Leif Honda indicated that he plans on separating their request.

Financial Reports

Lee Arthur indicated that the financial reports do not include the current year's budget because the Town Meeting is not taking place until July. The recreation budget had \$50,807.26 expended; recreation revolving budget had \$1,327.20 expended; and the patriotic purposes budget had \$0 expended.

There will be no in person gathering for Memorial Day and July 4th, a video will be produced and posted on the Town of Rye website for on each event. It was noted that there was a good response to the Memorial Day Poster and Writing Contest.

Other

Lee Arthur reported that the Friends of the Rye Public Library were having a community outreach challenge and accepting request for assistance. She had been contacted by two committee members and encouraged to submit a request for The Wave Community Center at Rye Congregational Church as it would complement the mission of the Rye Public Library. A request for 1-20 chairs with arms was made but denied. The Rye Lions were then approached, and Lee Arthur will be attending their meeting on April 7, 2021. She mentioned that if the request was not granted other organizations/individuals would be approached until the need is filled.

It was mentioned that the second-floor space would be almost completed with the addition of the chairs. There is \$2,500 available for furnishings and it is anticipated to be open by Fall. It was discussed having the next meeting at the site.

VII. Old Business

Recreation Area Master Plan

Past recreation master plan and recreation facilities needs assessment request for qualifications and request for proposal were included in the meeting packet. There is \$10,000 that has been budgeted to update the Rye Recreation Area Master Plan.

Brett Mulvey reported that he reached out to the Town of Stratham regarding their pump track, and it would cost approximately thirty-five thousand to build. Joe Persechino expressed his support for a pump track. Cory Belden said that he wants to have a discussion with the Conservation Commission about combining areas of use and deed restrictions. Cory Belden and Brett Mulvey will meet with the Conservation Commission.

Cory Belden pointed out that the Rye Recreation Area Master Plan Request for Proposal needs to be completed. It was discussed that a lot of previous work has been completed and there is a good base available. Both Cory Belden and Joe Persechino will prepare the Request for Proposal.

Spring and Summer Programming

Lee Arthur provided an update on spring and summer programming. She reported that Baseball Camp needs an instructor and has a lead on one. Basketball Camp has been confirmed. Two different sessions of Lego Robotics will be offered, and the Video Game Designer instruction has been dropped because the instructor felt that participants would prefer another Lego Robotics choice instead. Soccer Camp is confirmed however, a few more details need to be worked out. Cory Belden asked if they would be looking for families to host a coach. Lee Arthur indicated yes but more information is needed from Challenger Sport. Youth Golf has been confirmed. Surf Lessons have not been confirmed because there are restrictions currently on beach permitting but that may change. Tennis Lessons have not been confirmed because of no facility access. Group Golf, both Adult and Women's Lessons have been confirmed as well as Adult Yoga.

The Summertime Horyezons Day Camp will not be offered. Lee Arthur explained that she had requested use of Room 100 and 200 at Rye Elementary School and was asked to explore the Rye Junior High School instead. She pointed out that at the last Recreation Commission Meeting she was clear on what was needed to operate the program and indicated that the Recreation Department is currently a department of one. She had informed the Rye School Board that she would be willing to wait for a response because they indicated that they did not know what the requirements would be from the State and their summer school numbers.

Margaret Honda explained that Rye Elementary School will be hosting extended year school again this summer. They do not know what their numbers will be and are currently waiting for guidance from the State, as to who qualifies for the program. Therefore, those numbers could be higher than normal and that is why they cannot commit. Additionally, Principal Lull will be offering other programs this summer to close the gap academically. She pointed out that during the summer their regular school cleaning takes place, and everything is moved around, the floors are cleaned, and the classrooms are utilized to their fullest.

Gregg Mikolaities asked Margaret Honda if they could use the Rye Junior High School. She indicated no because most of the programs are for the lower age children. Cory Belden asked if it was for K-5 and she indicated probably. Stephen King asked if the school knows when they would know their numbers and she indicated no. She said at the first Rye School Board Meeting Lee Arthur was asked when she needed to have an answer regarding the request because the school could not commit, and she expressed mid-April although at the last Rye School Board Meeting, she said she would be flexible. The Rye School Board is hesitant to commit because they have very little control on what is going to come down from the State.

Brett Mulvey asked if the request would be granted in a regular year? Margaret Honda indicated that she did not know but would suggest yes because there would not be as many bodies and no social distancing issues. She pointed out that it was the first year for the request and it is a unique situation. Brett Mulvey asked if she had a sense of how many kids in a normal summer would participate in the extended school year program.

Margaret Honda replied that she does not know but can find out. Brett Mulvey acknowledged the complexities and explained that space was being requested because the Recreation Department does not have its own facility and perpetually needs to utilize Rye Elementary School. He mentioned that in past summers there has not been a lot of activity at the elementary school. Margaret Honda responded that in perpetuity she would say that the rooms are generally available throughout the school year and that this request for summer use was new. She explained that Rye Junior High School was a great spot with Wedgewood right there, the fields, two sheds with equipment and play structure. Lee Arthur indicated that she would have asked to utilize Rye Junior High School if she felt she could succeed there. She pointed out that the Recreation Department has had a very tough year and that it has been very stressful. The department does not have their own facility and she advocated moving forward as a community, trying to work together to serve the residents. She posed the question on whether the town would want to build another facility and suggested they would not. Pointing out that residents are looking for services from the Recreation Department that cannot be offered without the necessary resources.

Margaret Honda mentioned that individuals want more access to the schools, but they do not have staff for that purpose and volunteers would be needed. Pointing out that it is not the school's role and mentioned that custodial staff would need to be paid. A lot of collaboration and coordination would be required, and the Rye School Board is willing to take part.

Lee Arthur suggested that a community group be formed to look at the utilization of the schools because everyone is trying to serve the same people. She understood the school's goals but that there had been a significant decline in the school population over the years. When she first came to Rye there was almost 300 students at Rye Elementary School and modular classrooms were being explored. Suggesting from a taxpayer's point of view it does not make sense to build another facility at the Recreation Area if there can be a collaboration with the school. She indicated that the Select Board needs to be involved. She mentioned that she was unaware of the Special School Board Meeting to address the facility use request and was told about the meeting from Becky Bergeron who was informed of the meeting from Bill Epperson.

Cory Belden indicated that it is a challenge to run programs without space, the summer day camp has been very successful, benefited a lot of families and it may not be offered this year. Margaret Honda indicated that the Rye Junior High School is still available.

Lee Arthur was asked what the concern was with utilizing the Rye Junior High School. She explained that when she went to look at the playground at the Rye Junior High School, she was under the impression that there was a new playground and instead there was only two play structures. Where the Rye Elementary School has two age-appropriate playgrounds that she had planned on using, allowing for the natural separation of the groups. She pointed out that the facility is turnkey, all of Rye Recreations equipment is currently there including fridge and phone line. That is important because she does not have the time or staff to prepare a new school. Indicating that she needed 100% of the

pieces to operate this summer because of all the requirements and that is why the junior high was not requested.

She mentioned that it was a push from the start to try to run the program this summer and asked if there is still the possibility of running the program at Rye Elementary School and wanted to know if the Rye School Board would be willing to readdress the issue when they find out their numbers although it may be too late anyway.

Joe Persechino summarized the discussion indicating that that until final numbers are received from Rye Elementary School the program is on hold and moving to the Rye Junior High School is not feasible or any other location because of lack of staff, capability, and time frame. If the Rye Elementary School is not available, the summer day camp program will not be offered. Lee Arthur clarified that the Rye School Board had already voted to deny the request.

Joe Persechino asked Margaret Honda if the request could be revisited. She indicated that she got the sense from Principal Lull that the program could not be accommodated at the school regardless because of the length of time requested. It was clarified that the program would not be offered as it had in the past and other programing would be investigated.

It was discussed using the Rye Junior High School in the future. Lee Arthur indicated that she felt that she did not convey herself well at the last Rye School Board Meeting and that in comparison the Recreation Department and schools are apples and oranges. She understood that the Rye School Board Budget is 13 million dollars with 8 million dollars funded by the Town of Rye and the Recreation Department is responsible for raising the revenue to cover all program expenses and do not have custodial staff to assist with moving equipment. In the past she has borrowed a truck from public works and moved equipment utilizing volunteers. She explained that she is not saying it is wrong but that there is a point where she felt that the public do not understand the inner workings of the Recreation Department or resources available. The circumstances have been compounded by the pandemic.

Leif Honda pointed out that soccer and many other programs utilize parent volunteers. He suggested utilizing the Rye Junior High School and pairing down the programs. He pointed out that he knows a lot of families with young children and the population is increasing not decreasing and they are looking for programs. Indicating that he knows 5-10 people that would be more than willing to help with the summer day camp at Rye Junior High School. Rye Soccer Association has all volunteer coaches, and they only charge a fee to cover their equipment cost. He expressed that it is a missed opportunity to engage people and just say that no one is helping. The Rye Junior High School is not perfect, but he noted that he does not have a perfect situation 9 month out of the year when he is looking for indoor space but makes it work.

Lee Arthur indicated that she did not request use of the Rye Junior High School and requested the space she needed to offer the program. Margaret Honda asked why Rye

Recreation was not available and it was noted that the under the State of NH Day Camp Guidelines the facility could only accommodate approximately ten participants. Brett Mulvey asked if the storage facility could be used, and the response was no. He asked if a tent could be used and Lee Arthur responded that it is not indoor space and the same program could not offer. Which operates rain or shine. She explained that the Summertime Horyezons Day Camp is highly planned and not just babysitting. In the past it has accommodated 30-40 participants each week. The programing for this summer's camp has been completed. It was discussed that it may be difficult to attain staff.

The spring and summer program offerings were planned to be released to the public on April 19, 2021 with the sign-up commencement set for May 3, 2021. It was discussed whether it should be delayed but noted that programs could always be added later.

VIII. New Business

Turf Management and Mowing Program: The Town of Rye Recreation Area RFP Results

Cory Belden announced that there were two proposals received. Seaside landscaping \$11,455.00 and York river landscaping \$18,665.00.

Motion was made by Gregg Mikolaities to recommend that the Select Board accept Seaside Landscaping's proposal. Seconded by Brett Mulvey. All in favor roll call vote: Gregg Mikolaities, yes; Joe Persechino, yes; Brett Mulvey yes, Georgina Saravia, yes; Stephen King, yes; and Cory Belden yes. Motion carried.

Lee Arthur indicated that she received a text from Todd Cronin indicated that he was a yes.

Attend Select Board and Conservation Commission Meetings

Cory Belden mentioned that he wanted to introduce himself to the Select Board as incoming Chair and provide them with an update and he also wants to meet with the Conservation Commission similarly and discuss the opportunity for recreation pursuits on conservation property. Joe Persechino indicated that he would like to participate with Cory Belden and Brett Mulvey when they meet with the Conservation Commission if he is available.

Other

Brett Mulvey indicated that he had friends that were in Europe with their children and in the woods, there was different apparatus, like a deconstructed playground and thought it would be a good idea for the Recreation Area.

Stephen King asked what the status of the outer marker building was, and Lee Arthur indicated that it was deeded for recreation purposes and could not be sold. If there was a proposition in terms of recreational use it may be welcomed.

The next meeting of the Recreation Commission was tentatively set for Monday, May 3, 2021 at The Wave Rye Recreation Community Center at Rye Congregational Church or outside at the Recreation Area.

IX. Adjournment

Motion was made by Georgina Saravia to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. seconded by Stephen King. All in favor roll call vote: Gregg Mikolaities, yes; Joe Persechino, yes; Brett Mulvey, yes; Todd Cronin, yes by text; Stephen King, yes; and Cory Belden, yes. Motion carried.

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