

DRAFT Recreation Committee Minutes
Thursday, December 19, 2013
Community Development Department, 3 North Lowell Rd, Windham NH

Dennis Senibaldi called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Members Present: Dennis Senibaldi, Fred Connarn, and Mark Lucas.
Also present was Recreation Coordinator Cheryl Haas.
Kathleen DiFruscia arrived at 7:10 pm

Members Excused: Chris O'Neil and Bill Fidler.

Mr. Connarn, Alternate will sit in for Chris O'Neil.

Minutes

Mark Lucas made a motion to accept the minutes of November 21, 2013 with amending the date of the December meeting from December 21, 2013 to December 19, 2013; seconded by Fred Connarn, the vote carried 3-0.

Recreation Coordinator Updates

Ms. Haas asked the Committee if they wanted to recommend to the Board of the Selectmen that Fred Connarn be moved from Alternate Member to Regular Member. It was the consensus of the Committee to do so. Ms. Haas will send an email to Mr. Sullivan regarding this.

Ms. Haas reported that the Senior Christmas party was great and all had a good time.

Mr. Senibaldi updated the Committee on Spruce Pond in the CIP. As it currently stands, Spruce Pond is in the CIP, and the current vote of the Board of Selectmen is 3-1-1, with Ross McLeod recusing himself. The next discussion will be at the deliberative in February.

Old Business

Tree Lighting & Road Closure Review

Ms. Haas reported that the road closure and detour plan went well during the Tree Lighting. She thanked the Stove Shoppe for allowing people to park there. There were many positive comments regarding the tree and Ms. Haas noted that Delahunty's did a great job. The plan is to use the same road closures for next year's event.

Prioritization of Special Projects for 2014 budget

Mr. Senibaldi noted that there is currently \$20,000 allotted in the 2014 Proposed Recreation budget for 2 special projects. The projects cannot be done until after the March voting, so a decision does not have to be made at this meeting. The three projects

that were discussed, that would need to be prioritized are: the completion of the swale at Griffin Park, which would extend the rear field by approximately fifty feet or so; the Wonderland Playground (sand/seal, etc.); and repairing the Nashua Rd tennis courts. There was a brief discussion regarding the projects and it was decided the Committee would do site visits when the weather allowed and discuss then.

New Business

Hunting on Gage Property:

Mr. Wayne Morris, from the Conservation Commission, was in front of the Committee regarding banning firearms on the Gage Lands. The Conservation Commission was approached by an abutter. The Conservation Commission voted unanimously at a recent meeting to ban firearms but to allow bow hunting. This is Recreation and Conservation Lands, so input is needed from Recreation. Mr. Morris noted that there is no hunting on Fosters Pond and Deer Leap. This does not have to go to a Town Meeting vote, but would have to go before the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Morris suggested that the School Board weigh in as well.

The high school abuts the Gage Lands, which is approximately 108 acres. Some concerns are the close proximity to the school, the cross-country trail that runs through the middle of the property, the proximity of the softball field, and the many new housing developments being built.

There was a great deal of discussion on this topic. Two residents with hunting experience, Tony Bottai of Tokanel Drive, and James Thoele of Lowell Rd were present at the meeting. It was explained that with bow hunting, hunters are to be between 10-30 yards and be able to identify the target. Mr. Thoele noted that rifles are banned in Southern NH. He also informed the Committee that hunters need to be 300 feet from an occupied dwelling. The hunting season is short – archery season is approximately mid-September to mid-December; firearms (not rifles) is around the time of early November to early December; and muzzle loader is approximately beginning of November to beginning of December. Mr. Thoele told the Committee that hunters are required to take a hunter safety education course, so it is regulated.

Mr. Senibaldi noted that he was against banning firearms on the Gage Land. He did some research and the cross-country season ends before the firearms season begins. He felt that hunters and residents co-exist and there have not been any issues that he is aware of in Windham. He understands the safety and concern of the matter, but feels that hunters are reliable and take the necessary safety precautions.

Mr. Connarn inquired if any other sports use those trails for training or anything else off season. He also noted that some residents might snowshoe or walk the trails during the hunting season.

There was discussion about possibly having a buffer area by the high school softball field. It was the consensus of the Committee to defer this to March or April, so they can gather more information, gather information from the Police Chief, and do a site walk.

Hockey/Open Skate at Griffin Park

This was posted on the agenda to let everyone know that Jerry Manchester is looking to come before the Recreation Committee in January or February to have a workshop with the Committee regarding hockey/open skate at Griffin Park, in the former skate park site.

There was a brief discussion regarding this with Kathleen DiFruscia suggesting to look into using Cobbetts Pond for hockey. Mr. Lucas noted that he was concerned because he wanted to make sure that there was public input before anything was done.

Griffin Park Pond

The discussion then went on to having a family skate event on the pond at Griffin Park. This was discussed a few years back, and approved by the Board of Selectmen, but the weather did not cooperate. Mark Lucas made a motion for the Recreation Coordinator to ask the Board of Selectmen for permission to do this, and for Ms. Haas to check on ice safety information with the Fire Chief; seconded by Fred Connarn; the vote carried 3-0.

Future use of former Skate Park area

Kathleen DiFruscia suggested to the Committee to have a posted meeting open to anyone with ideas for what to replace the former skate park area with. Then there would be a public meeting with the Board of Selectmen with recommendations from the Recreation Committee. She noted that a lot of people want to be heard and this would be the best way to hear them. Mr. Senibaldi suggested to begin this process in the May-June. The consensus of the Committee was to set a date soon so that it would be well publicized.

Mr. Senibaldi noted that Chris O'Neil is the Acting Chair of the Committee until the June elections.

Mark Lucas made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 am; seconded by Fred Connarn, the vote carried 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Cheryl Haas
Recreation Coordinator