

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of September 24, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Bruce Breton called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Selectmen Phil LoChiatto, Kathleen DiFruscia and Roger Hohenberger were present, as was Town Administrator David Sullivan. Selectman Ross McLeod was excused. Mr. Breton opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mrs. Barbara Coish, President of the Windham Seniors, announced that the Visiting Nurses Association was no longer conducting flu clinics, so one had been arranged with CVS and will be held the following Friday at 10AM at the Senior Center. Pre-registration is required and forms are available at the Administrative Offices.

Mrs. Margaret Case approached noting at the last meeting of the Advisory Board the members had voted to request that the Selectmen withdraw up to \$25K from the Cable Fund for the purchase of remote cameras for use at the High School. She indicated that this purchase would allow Cable to televise games, etc., and that the WCAB had met with the School District to establish the type of equipment that was needed. If authorized, four remote cameras would be purchased, and the School District will absorb the cost to wire the two sides of the gym that are not currently wired. Mrs. Case indicated that housing, switches and ancillary connectors will also need to be purchased and that, although pricing has not been solicited yet, the WCAB's best guess is it will run approximately \$21-22K for all. She added that the School District will be handling all the bidding, and Cable will simply fund the purchase.

Mr. Hohenberger advised that, as liaison to the WCAB, he had voted to support the purchase; adding that the Comcast franchise fees are specifically for these things and the funds are available. Discussion ensued as to the expense to upgrade once Comcast goes to full HD. Mr. LoChiatto inquired whether the equipment would be HD compatible, and Mrs. Case replied in the affirmative.

Further discussion ensued regarding future upgrades, the acoustics of the gym, and the CAT 9 wiring. Mrs. DiFruscia inquired whether the purchase would include a maintenance contract, and Mrs. Case replied that one could be included.

After further, brief discussion, Mr. Hohenberger moved and Mr. LoChiatto seconded to authorize the expense of up to \$25K from the Cable Special Revenue Fund as requested. Passed 4-0.

Mr. Sullivan requested a moment of silence in acknowledgement of the recent passing of former employee Les Bell; noting that Mr. Bell had worked for the town for 20 years and extending his condolences to his family.

SENATOR JIM RAUSCH: The Senator indicated he was present to provide the Board with the latest information available regarding the National Guard as it pertained to the golf course property. Senator Rausch noted that he had met the previous Tuesday with the National Guard and that it had been made clear to him that, in order to attain its Mission Statement, the Guard must obtain a piece of property; and Windham is one place under consideration. He advised that the General and staff have analyzed three (3) properties and on their scale, right now, Windham is the best of the three. Senator Rausch noted that he had shared with the General the very strong concerns raised by the Town and his constituents regarding reducing the tax burden in Windham.

Senator Rausch explained the process further, noting that though the Federal Government will build the facility in question, the State of NH must provide land for the National Guard's use. He advised that the issue the State is facing regarding the Windham parcel is that it was purchased with Federal Highway Funds and, if it is given to the Guard without them securing a waiver from the Federal Government, the State will be required to reimburse \$3.4M. The Senator indicated he had strongly encouraged the General to look at other state-owned properties which are available, and that it is still too early to predict the outcome. He advised that the facility would be a field maintenance/storage/disbursement site, and that he is hopeful another of the state-owned parcels will fit the Guard's requirements.

Mrs. DiFruscia inquired whether any consideration had been given to the parcel's location in a wetland overlay district. Senator Rausch replied that ten acres is needed for the 7800sft facility, however, no discussion had been had regarding the wetlands.

Discussion ensued as to whether or not the other parcels available were in Windham, and whether the property will remain on the market for sale until the decision is made. Senator Rausch indicated that the property would be on the market and could be sold before the National Guard makes its decision. Discussion then ensued regarding the State's procedures for sale, and the National Guard's time frame.

Mrs. DiFruscia sought clarification as to whether Senator Shaheen was the driving force behind this as had been indicated to the Board previously, and Senator Rausch replied that he knew the Senator was advised of it, but he did not know any more than that. Mr. Sullivan noted that a representative from Senator Shaheen's office had called staff to confirm that the Senator was contacted by the General but that no action had been taken.

Discussion ensued as to the Board's sending a letter to the General and others regarding the loss of revenue to the Town, as this is a very valuable property. Mr. Bob Young, Chairman of the Windham Economic Development Committee then approached and read the attached letter into the record. Discussion ensued regarding the EDC's concerns as outlined, and the State's concerns regarding the need for a waiver.

Mr. LoChiatto inquired how long the parcel had been for sale, and Senator Rausch replied that it had originally been on the market eight years ago at a substantial price and, after its rezoning was defeated, that price was reduced. Recently, the price had been reduced again due to a downturn in the market. Mr. LoChiatto indicated that, as the parcel has been on the market for 8 years, has no town water, and requires much to be saleable, he was not ready to just say no to the National Guard's request. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the viability of the property as zoned.

Mr. Hohenberger noted that the golf course is leaving the site next year, and that the State can't seem to make up their mind as this has been going on for a long time with the Town losing revenues all the while. Senator Rausch replied that the State has decided that the property is for sale, although the Town may not agree with the price of \$3.4M; adding that the golf course has been advised as such. Lengthy discussion ensued.

Mr. Al Letizio approached and urged the Board to support sending a letter in opposition to the Guard's use of the property, noting that all should rally for the highest and best use of the parcel. He indicated that he agreed that it may not have the most favorable zoning, however it can be developed so as to generate \$3-500K in revenue for the Town. Discussion ensued regarding the length of time the property had been on the market and the current multi-use zoning, and Mr. LoChiatto clarified that he was in favor of the highest and best use, however he felt that the zoning is delaying the sale.

Further lengthy discussion ensued regarding the golf course parcel versus others, and Senator Rausch clarified that there is no other piece of property in Windham that the National Guard is considering. Mr. Ralph Valentine, EDC member and local realtor, approached noting that he had polled his colleagues as to whether there had been any activity on the property; and found that there was much of various sorts including a concept plan in the development phase for the property. Mr. Valentine indicated that the \$3-500K in revenue as suggested is a real number, and stressed that a unified position to the National Guard is important. He then inquired of Senator Rausch whether the Guard was looking at only state-owned property, or if they were considering privately owned parcels as well. Senator Rausch replied in the negative, reiterating that the Guard does not have any funds to purchase land and thus is looking at State properties for transfer. Further discussion ensued as to the zoning of the parcel, and Mr. Breton suggested that an unbiased, third party should evaluate the parcel to establish a true number.

Senator Rausch suggested that letters be sent to the Governor and Counsel, as well as the General, specifying that the Board would be happy if a sale proceeded and delineating their tax base concerns. Representative McMahon approached noting that the Town is not a part of this process unless it makes itself such. He concurred with doing the letter immediately, reiterating that there are alternate sites available to the Guard, and offered to hand deliver same. Discussion ensued as to whom to address the letters to, and Senator Rausch indicated he could provide those names. Further discussion then ensued regarding the potential revenue this property could generate if sold.

Mr. Karl Dubay approached noting that, back in the 1990's, his company had presented a plan to the Planning Board for heavy retail, however, the State had then taken the entire parcel. He stressed that it is developable within its current zoning and he commended the Board for their discussion; voicing his support for the letters.

Mrs. DiFruscia then moved and Mr. Hohenberger seconded to endorse joining with the EDC's letter for presentation to various entities as provided by Senator Rausch.

Mr. Hohenberger requested that the letter detail the criticalness of the timing, and Mr. Breton noted he would like to see specific revenue numbers analyzed and included. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the latter, as to whether the \$300-500K is an accurate number or conjecture.

Motion passed 4-0. Senator Rausch then provided the contact information to the Board.

HIGHWAY AGENT: Mr. McCartney advised that the following bids had been received for crack sealing:

Vendor	Price per pallet	Estimated Sq Ft Coverage per pallet
Superior Sealcoat, Inc, Wilmington MA	\$5,150.00	\$2.145 lb
H.W. Dow LLC, Concord NH	\$3,650.00	11,000 Linear Ft; 1-3 miles
Sealcoating, Inc., Hingham MA	\$3,816.00	60,000 SF
Bedford Sealcoating, Bedford NH	\$4,680.00	8,832 Linear Ft

Mr. McCartney then recommended that the bid be awarded to HW Dow, noting that he had dealt with them previously with no issues. Mr. Hohenberger moved and Mr. LoChiatto seconded to award the bid to HW Dow for their bid price as shown. Passed 4-0.

Paving – Mr. McCartney noted that the following bids had been received for paving.

Vendor	Park St	Farrwood Rd	Total for Both	Option: Package Bid*
Brox Industries, Dracut MA	137,449	127,449	264,898	255,000
Tate Brothers Paving, Hudson NH	145,775	128,800	274,575	No bid
Hudson Paving, Hudson NH	154,800	139,192	293,992	287,992

Mr. McCartney recommended that the bid be awarded as a package to Brox Industries; noting they were the lowest both individually and packaged. Mr. LoChiatto moved and Mr. Hohenberger seconded to award the bid for paving as a package to Brox Industries in the amount of \$255,000. Passed 4-0.

Sand – Mr. McCartney advised that Brox Industries has offered to hold their price of \$9.75/ton from last year for the Town's winter sand needs. He indicated that this service has not been bid since 2009, however, he does have quotes available from the previous bidders. Mr. Sullivan added that the price to continue with Brox is lower than the quotes received.

After brief discussion, Mr. Hohenberger moved and Mr. LoChiatto seconded to waive the bid process. Passed 4-0.

Mr. Hohenberger then moved and Mrs. DiFruscia seconded to award the bid for winter sand to Brox Industries for the price of \$9.75/ton. Passed 4-0.

CORRESPONDENCE: Bond Release – Ryan Farm Road/Great Mountain Estates: Mr. Sullivan noted that this bond release had been previously discussed and the only concern at the time was the transposition of the station numbers in the posting.

Mr. LoChiatto moved and Mr. Hohenberger seconded to grant the partial bond release in the amount of \$97,180, retaining \$1,485,764. Passed 4-0.

Mr. Sullivan advised that a request had been received from the Windham Actors Guild to partially abate the usage fee for the Searles facility for their upcoming production; this due to the fact that the \$800 fee would represent 50% of their maximum box office proceeds. WAG is asking the Board to consider either a flat fee or box office percentage, and is willing to provide their own custodial services.

Lengthy discussion ensued regarding negotiating a lesser fee, the Historic Commission's opinion, and concerns regarding setting a precedent for future requests.

Mr. LoChiatto then moved and Mr. Hohenberger seconded that WAG be charged 25% of their box office proceeds as a reduced rate and that they provide their own custodial services. Passed 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING/SKATE PARK: Mr. Sullivan opened the discussion by noting that, after Mr. Senibaldi's recommendation last week that the park be closed, the Board had determined that public input should be gathered. He noted that the Chief of Police and Recreation Committee have both since submitted their recommendations in writing, which is to close the park. Recreation Coordinator Cheryl Haas and Police Chief Lewis then both read those letters into the record, as attached. Mr. Breton then opened the discussion to the public.

Mr. Gerald Ventola approached noting that he utilizes the park nearly daily, as it offers a safe haven from stress, and adding it is very important to he and his friends.

Mr. Peter Ventola, Nottingham Road, approached noting that Gerald and his friends were all good kids and expressing his disappointment that the Town was going to let a few bad kids ruin the skate park. He pointed out that there is no process to monitor the park; and added that litter and swearing are not isolated to the skate area. Mr. Ventola concurred that something needed to be done, but that closure was not a solution.

Mr. Dave Hutchings, Hawthorne Road, approached noting that the skate park was one of the best things the Town ever built; and that it draws a lot of attention from out of towners. He noted that he had spoken to the Police Department and the top three complaints regarding the park related to trash, swearing, and the lack of helmet usage. As to the latter, Mr. Hutchings indicated he did not know what it would take to lift the helmet rule at the park, but that many of the neighboring parks do not have such a rule. He went on to note that tearing down the park is a bad idea, and suggested that when the park is closed for the day due to issues a sign indicating why may be helpful. Mr. Hutchings asked that the Board not close the park, and expressed that he was not opposed to the possibility of moving it to a different location.

Mr. Bobby Pantano, Lancaster Road, approached indicating that the immediate effect of closure would be the kids moving to public places. He also noted that there are little to no restrictions at other, area parks, and they do not experience such issues there. Mr. Pantano noted that, while he didn't think the lack of respect at the park should go unaddressed, it should not be shut down.

Mrs. Barbara Coish approached expressing her support of the closure, but noting that perhaps relocation might be a solution.

Mrs. Michelle Hutchings approached and read the attached into the record. She then suggested that the entrance to the skate park could be moved to the basketball court side, and the entrance on the driveway side boarded over to reduce impacts on other users of Griffin Park. Mrs. Hutchings noted that there needs to be an air of tolerance for the skaters.

Representative McMahon approached in opposition to the closure. He noted that the skate park had been designed by the youth in Town and constructed as part of a cohesive plan to develop the community; adding that the Board should not punish all for the actions of a few. Mr. McMahon concurred that Police resources should not be used for helmet violations, and indicated that other measures should be considered for control at the area such as limiting it to Windham only users or volunteer monitoring. He indicated that, when built, the skate park was placed in its current location specifically for security/safety reasons, and that the parents took basic responsibility. He urged the Board to find alternative solutions to closure, and suggested that a parent group be formed for oversight, that helmets not be mandated, and that the fencing be changed out to an unclimbable material.

Mr. Breton, after briefly discussing the history of the park's construction, noted that the issues are user related and suggested they self-regulate. He suggested the park be closed for the rest of year to allow the Board to determine how to proceed. Mr. Breton then inquired of Chief Lewis how many other parks have helmet regulations and the number of calls related thereto in Windham. Chief Lewis indicated that most other parks have optional helmet regulations, and that approximately 70% of the skate park calls to the PD here relate to helmet use. Further discussion ensued, and Chief Lewis indicated that his recommendation for closure is based upon the circumstances as they exist now; adding if they were to change his recommendation may, as well. Mr. Sullivan clarified that the Town's insurance carrier recommends that, at a minimum, the Town have a strong recommendation for helmet use posted.

Mr. Hohenberger suggested that, since several had mentioned that the issues were related to a lack of adult presence, if a volunteer force was put together to handle he would be in favor of keeping the park open; adding however that, absent that, it should be closed. He noted that, in the past, stickers/registration had not worked.

Mrs. DiFruscia noted that efforts were made, unsuccessfully, to round up volunteers in the past. She also noted that, at previous Board discussions regarding the skate park, efforts including petitions were mounted to keep it open, however, those individuals now were not here. Mrs. DiFruscia felt that it was not a small group of troublemakers, but a lot of them; citing issues with bikes, scooters, and smaller children being forced out.

Mr. LoChiatto indicated he concurred with Mrs. DiFruscia, however, the park would be closing soon for the season anyway; which would give the users time to come up with an action plan before spring. Mr. Breton concurred, noting that it is closed now and should remain as such. He suggested the onus be put on the users to correct the issues, and that perhaps Mr. Ventola could put a group together.

Mr. Senibaldi approached expressing his continued recommendation that the park be closed; noting that it is the worst area of the park and represents a constant battle. He also cited increasing costs to maintain the area. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding helmets, possible relocation of the area, the feasibility of monitoring the area with volunteers, and whether the Town had consulted with any of the surrounding towns who do not have these issues.

Representative Mary Griffin suggested that all needed to step back and cool off; noting that she herself had been subjected to indignities at the Park. She asked what the Board's plan would be for the area if the skate park were removed; citing other items which had been slated for the park that never happened, including a horseshoe pit and/or shuffleboard court.

Mrs. Margaret Case approached, noting that when originally proposed she had been adamantly opposed to the skate park. However, after hearing the discussion that evening, issues appear to exist all over the park. She went on to note that the skate park is the only area there not supervised/organized and that the good kids needed the opportunity to be able to fix the issues. She suggested that repeat offenders could be taken to the police station immediately, their parents called, and community service be imposed. Discussion ensued.

Mr. LoChiatto then moved and Mr. Hohenberger seconded to close the skate park immediately until such time as a volunteer organization can come forward with a viable plan to oversee the park; and further, that from the date of its re-opening, said plan be subject to six-week trial period and, should it fail, the park be closed.

Mrs. DiFruscia requested that the plan be submitted to the Board for review, and Mr. Senibaldi that volunteers coordinate with the Police Chief and Recreation. Discussion ensued, and Mr. LoChiatto amended his motion and Mr. Hohenberger his second accordingly, requiring that the plan be submitted one month prior to the opening of the park. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Hohenberger moved and Mr. LoChiatto seconded to adjourn. Passed 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendi Devlin, Administrative Assistant.

Note: These minutes are in draft form and have not been submitted to the Board for approval.

WINDHAM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

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September 17, 2012

Mr. Bruce Breton
Chairman
Board of Selectmen
Town of Windham NH
PO Box 120
Windham, NH 03087

RE: 53 Range Rd. Parcel 18-L-300

The Windham Economic Development Committee is submitting this letter to encourage the Board of Selectmen to continue supporting the sale of the property at Lot 18-L-300, also known as 53 Range Road, to be developed at its highest and best use within the current zoning. This lot is one of the few prime locations left in the town for commercial development. The NH Department of Transportation, Long Range Planning Committee voted in early November to return the subject parcel to the real estate market and we ask that you encourage them to continue to follow this path so that Windham can realize its goals for successful economic development.

As we know, Windham is saddled with increased borrowing costs due to our bond rating, which was reduced in large part because so few of our tax dollars are generated by commercial development. Development of this prime parcel into a tax revenue generator is crucial to our financial health.

Some of our schools need modernizing, with cost figures starting at \$20,000,000. Per our EDC survey of late 2010, the residents of Windham indicated that this area is one of 3 preferred locations for economic development.

A January 2012 Cost of Services Study commissioned by the Conservation Commission indicates that of three development types, residential, open space and commercial, commercial development has the most positive tax impact. For every dollar of commercial tax collected, 72 cents goes into the general revenue fund.

One recent analysis of the build out of this parcel shows that if the parcel were developed within the current zoning parameters, then at the current tax rate of \$23.08 the development would yield annual taxes which range from \$300,000 to \$500,000.

The Economic Development Committee supports the continued marketing of the property as currently zoned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Young", is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Robert Young,
Chairman
Windham Economic Development Committee



TOWN OF WINDHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

CHERYL S. HAAS, RECREATION COORDINATOR
Post Office Box 120, 4 North Lowell Road, Windham NH 03087-0120

MEMO

To: Windham Board of Selectmen

From: *CH* Cheryl Haas, Recreation Coordinator

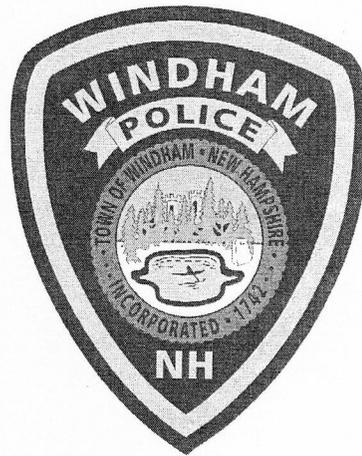
Date: September 21, 2012

RE: Windham Recreation Committee/Skate Park

Please be advised that at the Recreation Committee Meeting on Monday, September 17, 2012, the Committee was in agreement to close the Windham Skate Park permanently. There was a lengthy discussion with the Police Chief regarding the issues that have been going on, such as the foul language, disrespect, not wearing helmets, the excessive trash, enforcement issues, and the users not following the rules.

Thank you.

Memorandum



To: Board of Selectmen Members
From: Chief Gerald S. Lewis
CC: David Sullivan, Town Administrator
Date: September 21, 2012
Re: Skateboard Park

As requested by the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, I am writing in order to provide a recommendation concerning the proposed closing of the skateboard facility at Griffin Park.

As everyone is very aware, the Police Department has played an integral part in the “policing” of the park since its opening. Officers regularly conduct directed patrols at Griffin Park and specifically watch for and address violations or issues within the skateboard park itself, which is centrally located at the Griffin Park entrance. We also respond to calls where a member of town staff (Maintenance Department, Recreation Coordinator, Park Ranger, etc.) or a Recreation Committee member has attempted to address an issue but is having difficulty in dealing with the violator(s).

I must preface my comments by stating that a good number of users are local youths and teens who abide by the rules and conduct themselves appropriately. They are pleasant and enjoyable to interact with. I know a number of officers, as well as myself, have spent time chatting and watching the skateboarders over the last few years and have enjoyed doing so.

However, the issues at hand are not about them. Unfortunately, there is a significant percentage of users, mostly from outside of Windham, that are the source of our problems and issues. Many people from throughout the region visit and use Griffin Park regularly, yet we experience very little if any need for ongoing police presence there – except for the skateboard park.

From an enforcement perspective, the skate park presents a never-ending supply of problems and issues. First, and foremost, there is a constant lack of compliance in mandatory helmet use. While many argue that helmet use should be optional or recommended, the fact remains that the town has deemed this a requirement for all users and as such we have been tasked to assist in the enforcement of this mandate (although doing so may not be the wisest use of police resources, especially when dealing with staffing shortages and other policing priorities).

Over the course of a season the department will likely see no less than fifty (50) incidents or contacts involving helmet violations. This takes into account both documented and

undocumented contacts and is a conservative figure. Prior to the use of Park Rangers this number was undoubtedly higher.

Another policing issue is managing those who have been “trespassed” or ordered to leave and stay away from the facility for a variety of reasons. It becomes cumbersome when officers have to check names against those previously banned from the facility. In addition, we routinely eject users who have scaled the fence when the facility has been locked – which is a common occurrence.

Finally, there is the issue of trash as well as the overall conduct of the users. The facility is regularly littered with trash and bottles despite the best efforts of the Maintenance Department to clean the grounds. Trash receptacles are available, but rarely used. This conduct seems to go hand-in-hand with the endless use of foul language and general lack of respect for others, including those in authority. On many occasions’ police officers, town staff, and Recreation Committee members have been questioned, challenged and verbally abused by a select segment of skate park users.

Unfortunately, the skate park is not a stand alone or isolated facility. Rather it is positioned at the “Gateway” to Griffin Park. Virtually every visitor to the overall park becomes a spectator or witness to the activities and conduct within the skate park itself. Young families with toddlers and young children; grandparents with grandchildren; baseball families; soccer families; etc. must pass by the skateboard park to get to their particular activity area of the park. Not only am I concerned about the conduct and language on the part of some of the skate park users and what the “passers-by” hear or see, but I am also concerned about the constant interaction between authorities (police and others) and violators and how that may influence young and impressionable children.

In my opinion, the town has made a concerted effort in trying to resolve ongoing issues at the skate park. While not all users can be blamed for what I have outlined, the fact remains that unnecessary resources are being expended and there is an overall lack of respect on the part of many users of the facility. Essentially, we keep trying to make a “round peg fit into a square hole” – it just won’t work as it exists today. Therefore, my recommendation is to close the skate park facility and designate the area for another use.

The Police Department remains willing and committed to following the desire and direction of the Board of Selectmen and would be more than happy to participate in future and/or alternative discussions about this topic.

Skate park Stays

When my son was about 6 months old, he made it obvious that he was transfixed with anything with wheels. At the age of 6, he began to show an interest in skateboards. I figured the interest would pass. At 7, he asked to go to the skatepark. My husband took him because I was afraid—don't drug deals and dangerous events go on at skate parks? He had a great time, learned a lot, but I was still afraid. Finally, the day came when he asked to go, but my husband was out of town. I agreed to go, but extorted promises about language and safety equipment.

We tried the skatepark at Hudson first. It was new, out in the open, and I like the color purple. David ran off with joy, but I parked with my van aimed at the park, ready to race onto the scene if anyone came near my son. After a couple of successful visits, I began to relax and bring a book. However my services were needed on the park. As it turns out, even a seven-year-old skateboarder will hold his mother's hand when learning to drop in off of a four-foot-high ramp. This worked for a little while, but this method was only a temporary fix. Soon two skaters from across the park came over and encouraged him. I was a little stunned. Pretty soon I stood back and let them do the teaching, and we all learned a valuable lesson about stereotyping that day. After that experience, we tried out several different parks. The ones in public areas, such as in Nashua and Hudson, I found most inviting. The Londonderry Park Is hidden from view so we avoided it most of the time.

That said, I would like to get to my three points. First, I would like to challenge the stereotype of the skateboarder. In our skate park, I see parents skating with their kids. I have seen older skaters helping younger ones, much like when David was learning to drop in. I have asked some not to smoke in the park that I helped to pay for, and they either left or stopped. Usually I let language go, but at times I have even asked some to be thoughtful around my kids, and they got quiet. Most skaters are teenagers trying to enjoy some exercise and fresh air, and that is a big success for the recreation program reaching a population that is hard to reach!

My second point is about language. If you want to hear bad language, the skate park is not your best option. I watch the high school tennis matches and have many times asked the adjacent basketball players, with their frequent, loud and deliberate expletives, to tone it down so that the tennis players could concentrate on their matches. The skate park cannot hold a candle to a walk down the hall at Salem High School when my children took classes there. Why single out the skate park?

And my last point is the issue of trash. Again at tennis matches, I pick up bottles and cans and plastic wrap up and down the ditch between the basketball and tennis courts. I love seeing the dogs at the park, but I would rather step on an exploding bottle of red Gatorade than the stuff they leave behind. Again, why single out the skate park?

These young people are the fellow citizens of your children and you. In my experience it is good to speak up, with respect, when you have a problem. The skate park is no different from any other sport, with the exception that skaters do not have an adult coaching them. If parents are nervous about what they might hear, I propose that we make a second walkway near the t-ball field that will bring them by the pond and to the center of the park a different way. And, we could assign fines for littering, but these fines would apply to all fields. Or we could look around on any given day at the park and be proud of the level of activity offered to all ages and interests, and learn to work together

cooperatively instead of with punitive responses. Skate boarding is a remarkably peaceful sport—there is no one stealing the ball or boxing you out or kicking your shins. The most competitive they get is challenging each other to try a trick. Bad language and littering are not good qualities, but neither do they make young people “bad people.” The hostility is developing from a poorly handled situation that puts people on opposing sides. I am grateful for the park where it is because I know my son can enjoy the sport with all ages around him, including adults. Windham can be welcoming or we can try to build a bubble around us. Bubbles work about as well as stereotyping.