



NEWINGTON RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

There was a meeting of the Newington Recreation Committee on **Thursday, June 17th, 2021** at the Newington Old Town Hall. The Committee met at the Old Town Hall following a Recreation Committee kick-off event for the Newington Summer Camp staff and interested parents.

PRESENT: Co-Chairs Laura Stone & Rebecca Navelski, Brian Haberstroh, Bill Blatt, Kat Johnson, Dana Nowell, and Bill Wright.

Chairman Wilhelm **called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm**

On a **MOTION** by Dana Nowell and **seconded** by Rebecca Navelski the committee voted unanimously to accept the minutes from the previous meeting.

AGENDA

Camp Newington

- Stone updated Committee on COVID procedures for summer camp.
- The Committee members signed thank you cards to several benefactors supporting the summer camp including Walmart, Katie Moody and Kenny Ernstoff, Sandy Taylor and Meredith Marconi.
- Members were updated on the plan to seek legal review regarding children biking to/from summer camp.
- Martin Callahan updated the group on the status of t-shirts for camp staff etc.
- Bill Wright informed group of a new State Grant opportunity for families with summer camp participants to apply for financial assistance. The information has been forwarded to Town Hall.

Activities

- Movie Night: Dates for movie night at the library were agreed upon for 28 June and 20 July. Four movies will be nominated and the town will be given the opportunity to vote for the two movies of their preference. Food will be included. Bill Wright took for action notification of Town Hall to treat for bugs prior to these two dates due to the high prevalence of mosquitos, etc. in this section of town.
- Disc Golf: Frisbee golf cages donated by Brian Haberstroh are now installed with the help of Dana Nowell, John Stone and Ted Karabinas. Nowell is donating frisbees to use on the course. The Committee was highly appreciative of the generous donation of the equipment, materials and time to install the frisbee golf course around the sports fields behind the library. Ken Latchaw has volunteered to build signs that will mark the frisbee course.
- Tennis Courts: Bill Wright updated the group on the status of the RFP to contract with a company to determine the cost to restore the damaged courts (cracks, bird baths, etc) so this valuable resource is maintained. The court surface is degrading rapidly. A bid from a VT-based company is expected 18 July. A question was raised regarding the status of the request to cut down the two trees adjacent to the court that continue to impact court maintenance. The tree limbs continue to grow over the tennis court fencing causing additional damage to the fence (fence was damaged in previous years prior to limb trimming in 2020) and depositing a large amount of tree seed/debris continuously through the summer and fall. There is also concern that the tree root system may cause future damage to the court surface. The trees are also encroaching on the ice rink shed and hang over the rink in the winter. On a motion from Brian Haberstroh, seconded by Dana Nowell the Committee unanimously voted to remove the trees noting there is a heavy growth of maple trees in the area that are growing bigger each year. The Committee



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believes the removal of the trees will save the town money in the future and is a prudent tree management action given the volume of trees in this small area. Bill Wright took for action the task to follow up with Town Hall to request a decision from the Selectmen to approve the removal of the trees. Related to this agenda item Bill Wright then suggested the Committee should work on identifying the Recreation Committee's actual scope of work given the declining state of the ball fields, tennis courts and other recreational facilities which are not adequately aligned with the Recreation Committees budget. He believes the Committee's scope of work is not clear and the current budget does not adequately support the current scope of work as understood by the Committee. Wright proposed there needs to be more detail in future budget submissions to outline what the Committee can do with the funds currently allocated to recreation. He proposed a review of the Capital Reserve Fund to ensure the town is setting aside sufficient funds each year that will support the collective needs of the town to sustain all recreation facilities and avoid surprises with large requests for funds. There are grey areas regarding the Rec Committees responsibilities (e.g., the trail network on Fox Point Rd, around Arboretum Rd, etc.) therefore the Committee intends to seek clarification regarding their Scope of Work and review the current budget. Bill Wright and others raised concerns regarding an over-reliance on a small group of people who are volunteering a considerable amount of time and resources to maintain recreational resources in town. The Committee plans to assign a primary contact for each recreational facility/area to create an annual inventory of all Recreation facilities/spaces and provide more detail in the Committee's budget submission to ensure the town is optimizing resources dedicated to recreation.

Septemberfest

-Martin Callahan updated the group on multiple actions he is working on to support Septemberfest on 18 September. Haberstroh and Blatt took for action the task to assess the condition of the grills. Due to the volume of work to plan, execute and clean-up the event a volunteer sign-up list will be offered to all town residents to support the execution of the event. The committee discussed the construction of a stage for the band given the cost of lumber and the budget limitations. Wilhelm will follow up with Jared to see what other alternatives are available (flat bed truck, etc.) that could be used this year to meet the band's stage requirement.

Town Forest Trail System & Maintenance

-The Committee discussed the trail system and the installation of navigational markers to assist people using the trails. Bill Wright mentioned the on-going discussion in town regarding an ordinance related to motorized vehicle use of the trails. Some Committee members mentioned that trail maintenance largely falls on a small group of volunteers as well and that there is a large number of people in the seacoast region that use the current trails for mountain biking etc.

Other Business

-Brian Haberstroh proposed a plan to the Committee on purchasing the skating rink liner for next winter. Dana Nowell asked for support of the 25 September Road Race to raise funds for the school.

NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME/LOCATION (TBA)

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.