

**Town of Chester
Recreation Commission (RC) Meeting
Monday, September 27, 2021
Municipal Complex
Approved Minutes**

I. Preliminaries

1.1 Call to Order

Chairperson Dircks called the meeting to order for the Town of Chester Recreation Commission at 7:03 PM.

1.2 Roll Call

Members present:

Marie Davies (remotely)
Kathryn Dircks, Chairperson

Members absent:

David Webster, Vice Chairperson

Staff present:

Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director

Guest present:

Mark Desiderio

II. Approval of Minutes

The RC reviewed the minutes from the June 14, 2021 meeting. Chairperson Dircks moved to accept the minutes as written. Ms. Davies seconded the motion. A vote was taken. The motion was approved 2-0-0.

III. Reports

3.1 Recreation Budget / Revolving Account

Director Reishus reported that the Recreation Department budget has been sent to the Finance Department.

The Wason Pond side of Recreation stayed flat. On the Recreation side, there was a \$100 increase in subscriptions due to the cost of online meetings. The Recreation electricity line (the town fields, the baseball shed, soccer shed, snack stand) was reduced by \$100. The senior fitness program is 100% budgeted through the Town. The instructor conducted classes virtually this summer and did twice as many, so the cost doubled for that time period.

The current Revolving Account balance is \$86,416.11. This is average for this time of year.

3.2 Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee (SHFAC)

Chairman Dircks attended the SHF Fall Festival and reported that it went very well.

Director Reishus said the next event will be a Winter Carnival, which will be a joint effort sponsored by the Recreation Department, the 300th Anniversary Celebration Advisory Committee, and the SHFAC. It is tentatively planned for February 26th. The PTA wants to do a winter walk, so they are interested in participating as well. It will be a family fun day with activities, s'mores, hot chocolate, bonfire, sleigh rides, etc. There will be no charge, but donations will be accepted.

3.3 Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation Commission (WPC&RC)

Director Reishus reported that the closure of the causeway bridge made holding the summer program a challenge, having to walk the trails to access the beach facilities. The Conservation Commission and volunteers (including Mr. Webster) built a temporary bridge over the current bridge. As it was an emergency temporary fix, no engineering costs were incurred.

Soccer is currently going on at Wason Pond.

Eagle Scout project: Mr. Alex Brillhart has completed the walkway project.

IV. Old Business

4.1 Recreation Programming

Boot Camp is still going strong, with two sessions a week, the majority of participants doing both.

Senior Fitness is back to two virtual classes a week (Monday and Thursday), which is preferred by the seniors. She will set up a hybrid session in the MPR for any seniors who want to attend in person. Director Reishus has asked the instructor to conduct one in-person session per month.

The **community center** was closed for a couple of weeks due to a potential COVID exposure. It will be reopened next week.

Yoga will run through end of October in the Annex. Director Reishus is looking for a new instructor, as the current one will be leaving at that time.

Soccer has over 200 players enrolled this season, with 35-40 volunteers. The program is run very well by the soccer volunteers. There are four groups in U6, six divisions in U8, three in U10, two in U12, and one each in U15 and U18.

Basketball is undecided for the 2021-22 season. Chester Academy has not decided if they will be running a program this year. This will determine if the program can use the Chester Academy gym.

Director Reishus will attend the Southern New Hampshire Recreation Basketball League (SNHRBL) this week and the Lamprey River Basketball League on October 12th. The girls have played in SNHRBL in the past, but the majority play in the Lamprey League. The numbers in the programs have decreased as participants found other ways to spend the winter during COVID, so the leagues might possibly combine. She will update the Commission members when she has more information.

4.3 Recreation Events

Town Fair Update – This was the best year they've had, in spite of the wet field. Recreation has been running the event since 2013. There will be a wrap-up meeting in the MPR (including any new volunteers/vendors/BOS/ Police Department/Fire Department) on Monday, October 18th at 6PM to discuss this year's event and ideas for next year. Next year's Town Fair is tentatively scheduled for September 10th.

Winter Carnival – Will be discussed at the next meeting.

V. New Business

5.1 Recommendation of New Member – Mark Desiderio

Mr. Desiderio has attended the Recreation Commission and the SHFAC meetings since June 2021 and is interested in officially becoming a member of the RC.

Ms. Davies moved that Mark Desiderio be appointed as a new member of the Recreation Commission to put forth to the Board of Selectmen for approval. Chairman Dircks seconded the motion. A vote was taken. The motion was approved 2-0-0.

Mr. Desiderio will appear before the Board of Selectmen on October 7th for consideration. He will be appointed as the Recreation Commission representative to the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee.

5.2 Recommendation of Committee Representatives

Mr. Webster is the Recreation Commission representative to the Wason Pond Commission. A second voting representative needs to be appointed. Chairman Dircks volunteered to fill that position. She will appear before the Board of Selectmen on October 7th for consideration. Mr. Desiderio will serve as the alternate.

5.3 Annual Update of the Capital Improvements Plan

The Recreation Department can access impact fees to pay for projects that are on the CIP table. Projects of at least \$5,000 can also be approved through a warrant article. The last projects approved through a warrant article were grading and reseeding the fields at Wason Pond and obtaining floor mats, wall pads, and netting for the MPR. Impact fees were used for the water filling station, the metal picnic tables for Wason Pond, the benches and bleachers, and the water cannon to spray the fields.

The Commission members discussed the items that are currently on the CIP for 2021 through 2028.

2021-2028 Project Request & Evaluation:

22/23: \$12,000 – Well pump and water line for Wason Pond buildings, since current pump building was condemned.

22/23 – \$40,000 – Beach Area Pavilion – This has always been on master plan for Wason Pond.

23/24 – \$10,000 – Ballfields Equipment Sheds – They have been on the CIP for a long time. The current shed is an old pumphouse in poor shape. This figure might need to be increased.

23/24 – \$50,000 – Refurbish Playground

24/25 – \$10,000 – Ballfields – Goals, Field Lining Equipment

24/25 – \$10,000 – Gravel entrance/parking at SHF Lane Road property – If graveled, it could be plowed for parking during winter activities

25/26 – \$50,000 – Ballfields Toilet Facility – To avoid spending money renting portable toilets

27/28 – \$20,000 – Fitness Trail – Gladys Nichols Trail behind town fields and school. It is now Conservation land.

Last year, everything was kept on the table and pushed out a year to be conservative.

The Town Maintenance Department said the water pump needs to be moved into the garage and asked that it be placed on the Recreation Department's CIP. The well is fine, but the shed it is in has been condemned. This project was priced at approximately \$10,000 for excavation and piping with the plumbing work at approximately \$8,500.00 a couple of years ago.

The Commission discussed if they wanted to put forth the fitness trail or hold off for another year. They have estimates on the materials but have not received Conservation Commission approval. The Planning Board requires that the project to be fully vetted before they will consider it.

They also discussed the Wason Pond causeway bridge. The WPCRC decided the Recreation Department should ask the Planning Board if they can put the engineering costs on their CIP to tap into their impact fees to pay for it at no cost to taxpayer. Then, all interested parties could assemble and make an informed decision whether they want to put forth a warrant article in the future for the replacement in kind. Town Planner Hadik estimated engineering could cost approximately \$124,000. The Planning Board liaison for the Board of Selectmen requested from the Town Planner that it not be added to the Recreation Department's CIP until all parties had an opportunity to meet.

Director Reishus believes it should be on the table, so it can be considered. The Rec program is directly impacted when the bridge is not passable. Many items on the Recreation Department's CIP are not feasible without an improved bridge.

Mr. Desiderio said his wife is a structural engineer and might be willing to donate time to draw plans for construction projects.

The town is growing. The Commission discussed the need for another playground and possible locations for it.

Mr. Desiderio suggested reorganizing the items on the CIP in order of importance. In light of the current situation with social distancing and COVID, the more outdoor recreation that can be done, the better.

The Pavilion might not be viable due to the situation with the causeway bridge. The fitness trail was suggested at Wason Pond but was not approved, so another site would be need to be vetted.

Director Reishus will ask if they need to purchase a tractor and a York rake, or if Maintenance would be willing to pull the rake to maintain the beach.

The Commission suggested the well pump and water line in 22/23, York rake 22/23, causeway bridge 23/24, fitness trail 24/25, pavilion 25/26, and everything else moved back.

The CIP needs to be submitted by next Monday, as it was due last week. Director Reishus will work on the list and send it out to the members for approval.

5.4 Any other new business

Director Reishus will be attending the New Hampshire Rec and Park annual association state conference on October 21. One of the topics under discussion is e-sports. There was a good following when she offered e-sports this year. There will be a fall offering as well, but the e-sports organization is going through a transition. This will be discussed at the regional meeting. Now that the structure has been established, e-sports programming will be profitable moving forward.

Ranger John Wright said people have been asking about the Halloween and winter scavenger hunts at Wason Pond, so these will be held again. Last year, the Halloween items were stolen immediately, but the winter ones were left alone. Director Reishus will install the Halloween one near the end of October.

VI. Adjournment

The next meeting will tentatively be held on December 13, 2021.

Ms. Davies made a motion to adjourn and Chairman Dircks seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Haggeli

Recording Secretary