

Town of Harpswell
Recreation Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2023 - 7:00pm

Members in Attendance: David Brooks, Tom Carr, Don Miskill, Jeanie Rubio, and Rick Rumba.

Also in Attendance: Gina Perow (Recreation Director), Kayla Matthews (Programs Assistant); and Jane Covey, (Selectman)

A quorum of Committee Members was present when the meeting was called to order at 7:05pm.

1. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:

After a brief discussion, two spelling errors were noted. ***A motion was made and seconded to accept the DRAFT June 12, 2023 meeting minutes with the corrections noted. The minutes were unanimously accepted and approved as amended.*** The approved FINAL June 12, 2023 Committee meeting minutes will be forwarded to the Committee.

2. Things to Celebrate:

We are all pleased that cooler (and hopefully drier) autumn weather is on its way!

3. Fall Programs:

- Kayla reported that Pee Wee Soccer begins on 09/22/2023 and will be held Friday afternoons at Trufant Summerton Field. They are still looking for coaches! The program is full.
- Kayla also reported that the Sunday Community Swim Program at the Greason Pool at Bowdoin College begins on Sunday September 17 and already has 113 swimmers registered.
- Registration for the Harpswell Harriers XC program ended on 09/07/2023 and we have 29 runners registered. We have a new coach – Scott Guild, and a new sponsor – Mike Webber Enterprises. Our home XC meet is scheduled for September 20, 2023 at 3:30pm at George Mitchell Field, and we are looking for people to volunteer as parking attendants. In addition, Rick Rumba volunteered to mow the woods trails prior to the event.
- Fall Carve and Craft event is scheduled for October 28, 2023 at Trufant Summerton Field, and we are looking for Donations and Sponsors for this event.

4. Pumpkin Patch Update:

Gina reported that the pumpkin patch that was planted at the Community Garden to provide some pumpkins for the Fall Carve and Craft Event was unsuccessful. The extremely wet weather caused the seeds to rot and the plants never developed.

5. Cliff Trail Updates:

- Gina reported that the Summer Story Walk was installed on the accessible section of the Cliff Trail and will be up for everyone to enjoy between 08/11 and 09/15/2023 to read the book and count the red birds. There is also a digital guest book to sign at the end. So far there has been very positive feedback.
- Gina reported that several new signs for the Cliff Trail have been ordered; and suggested that some of the recently milled cedar planks be used to make rest benched at several locations along the accessible portion of the trail.
- The local Fire and Rescue Departments have recently started a new group called Fire Recruit Assistance Program (FRAP) for individuals, ages 16-30, who share an interest in Emergency Services and wish to learn about and participate in the various roles and activities associated with Fire and EMS agencies. They have also reported that calls for injuries and rescues on the Cliff Trail, Devils Back Trails and Giant Stairs are up, and callers are still not always able to identify their location to the Fire and Rescue Department. Gina reported that they contacted her to suggest that perhaps the FRAP group could consecutively number each trail blaze to make it easier for persons needing

assistance to better identify their location on the trail. Gina explained to them that this would probably be impractical and difficult to maintain due to the variability and sheer number of trail markers and blazes, as well as the fact that the trail pathway and markers require frequent changing due to trail conditions, etc. To further address these concerns, all 3 of the towns independent Fire and Rescue Departments have recently begun organizing a new wilderness rescue team, seeking volunteers, offering training, and identifying specialized rescue equipment that may be needed.

6. Shelving at Trufant/Summerton Garage:

Gina reported that Kevin Hunt was able to complete installing the sports equipment storage shelving inside the Trufant Summerton garage. In addition, Kevin was able to respond to a last-minute request to provide porta-potties for the Mallett Brothers concert at Mitchell Field. Thankyou Kevin!

7. Mitchell Field Update:

- Boat Launch - Don reported that the Maine DEP required an eel grass study at Mitchell Field before they could approve the Boat launch permit. That study has been completed. They hope to get all of the necessary permits by the November/December timeframe, and then possibly send out an RFP and get bids to complete the work in January.
- Running Tide – Running Tide has until the end of September to act on its option to lease additional land in the Mitchell Field business area.
- Survey – Hardy and Hardy Professional Land Surveyors have been contracted to map major land uses and landmarks at Mitchell Field as documentation for the Record Plan.
- Administration Building – The future of the administration building is still being discussed. Last year’s opinion survey for Mitchell Field did not identify a strong townwide consensus about whether to rehab or demolish the building. The Mithcell Field Committee is looking to get analyses of the town’s cost liabilities for both options, as well as get the question on the town meeting agenda in March.
- Mitchell Field Steward - Don announced that he will be stepping down as the Mitchell Field Steward at the end of 2024.
- HHLT: “Why Dark Skies Matter” - HHLT and the Southern Maine Astronomers want to hold a stargazing event on the night of October 18 at Mitchell Field. The event has already been approved by the Mitchell Field Committee, but still needs Select Board approval.
- Verizon – Verizon has reported that they hope to have their antennas up on the cell tower at Mitchell Field sometime this Fall/Winter and begin service at the beginning of 2024.

8. Bandstand Concert Season, Community Garden and Cedar Beach:

Gina reported that there were 13 summer concerts this year. The program was very well attended and very successful. There is a winter concert planned at the bandstand at Mitchell Field in December, and spring concerts planned at the Orrs Island Schoolhouse and Cundy’s Harbor Community Building. Gina also reported that the Community Garden survey results are in and will be analyzed and used to set priorities. Finally, Gina reported that we had a smooth season at Cedar Beach, mainly because the rainy summer weather kept use of the beach down this year.

9. HAH Drop-In Program: Program dates have been set for October 19, October 26, November 9 and November 16.

10. Other:

- a. **Instagram** – Recreation and Community Services as well as the Bandstand Committee now have new Instagram accounts.
- b. **Harpwell Food Pantry** - There will no longer be a mobile food pantry truck scheduled at the town offices. Instead, the Mid-Coast Hunger Prevention Program is opening a new satellite pantry in the Harpswell Town Office. It will be in Conference Room 1, and will be open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10am-3pm and on Thursdays from noon to 6pm starting Monday October 16th.

- c. **Harpswell Coastal Academy Building** – Gina reported that the new owner of the former Harpswell Coastal Academy is planning to convert the classrooms in the building into office space.
- d. **Comprehensive Plan** - Kayla reported that the Comprehensive Plan Taskforce has been holding a series of workshops focusing on several key topics that they have identified. All of the workshops are being held from 6-8pm at the Harpswell Community School. The next workshops are: September 12 (Climate Change), September 19 (Working Waterfront) and October 10 (Land Use). Kayla encouraged everyone to try to attend and provide ideas, comments and feedback. The Task Force is hoping to finalize the Comprehensive Plan before the March 2024 Town Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02pm

Next Meeting: October 16, 2023 @ 7:00pm at the Town Office

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Rumba, Secretary