

Town of Harpswell
Recreation Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2024 - 7:00pm

Members in Attendance: David Brooks, Tom Carr, Gabe Coulon, Don Miskill, Rick Rumba and Mark Weaver

Also in Attendance: Tom Mahoney (Programs Assistant), and Jane Covey (Selectman)

A quorum of Committee Members was present when the meeting was called to order at 7:04pm.

1. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:

After a brief discussion, ***A motion was made and seconded to accept the DRAFT May 13, 2024 meeting minutes as written. The minutes were unanimously accepted and approved.*** The approved FINAL May 13, 2024 Committee meeting minutes will be forwarded to the Committee.

2. Fall Programs Update:

- Fall Swim Program - Don Miskill reported that the Fall Swim Program at the Bowdoin College pool begins this week. The program is held each Sunday from 4:30-5:30pm beginning on September 15 continuing through December 1, 2024. The program is free and open to MSAD 75 and Harpswell residents.
- Pee Wee Soccer – Tom Mahoney reported that Pew Wee Soccer will be held at Trufant/Summerton Field beginning Friday September 20 and continuing each Friday evening from 5:30-6:15 pm until October 18, 2024. The program is currently FULL.
- Harpswell Harriers XC – The Harpswell Harriers cross-country running program for grades K-6 begins September 16 and continues through October 21, 2024. Practices are held on Mondays and meets are held on Wednesdays with the addition of one Meet on Saturday October 19. The Meet on September 25 will be held at Mitchell Field. Rick Rumba agreed to make sure the woods trails at Mitchell Field are mowed prior to the Meet. We will also be needing volunteers to work as parking attendants.
- Carve and Craft Event – The Recreation Department will once again be holding a family Carve and Craft Event. Details to follow.
- Adult Pickleball – Tom Mahoney reported that a new session of adult pickleball is scheduled for Wednesdays at 6:00pm the Community School. It will be held every Wednesday for six weeks beginning September 18 and continuing through October 23, 2024. The intended audience is adults who have never played but would like to learn fundamentals.

3. Cliff Trail Update:

Tom Carr reported that he and Dave Brooks recently worked with some Bowdoin College students to build and install several benches along the accessible section of the Cliff Trail. In addition, Kayla will soon be installing a new Story Walk along the accessible section of the Cliff Trail.

4. Mitchell Field Update:

- Don Miskill reported that there will likely be 2 local referendum articles related to Mitchell Field on the November ballot. The first will be to see if the town is willing to post a bond to raise funds to complete the boat ramp at Mitchell Field. If approved, the State will still provide the matching funds approved several years ago. The second will be to see if the town will approve negotiating to install a private Solar Array at Mitchell Field.
- Don also reported that the Astronomy Club will be holding another “Dark Skies” event at Mitchell Field on the evening of October 6.

- Porta potties - Don also wanted to recognize Dirigo Septic Services for doing a spectacular job with the porta-potties at Mitchell Field. This is their first year providing this service, and the facilities have been very clean and professionally serviced all summer.
- Verizon - Finally, Don reported that Verizon has been working to get equipment installed on the Cell Phone Tower. They are currently waiting for the Osprey chicks to abandon the nest before they can complete the work.

5. Harpswell Hiking Challenge Debrief:

There was a brief discussion of the Harpswell Hiking Challenge that took place on June 1 and 2, 2024. Everyone agreed that the challenge went smoothly but were a bit disappointed in the number participants this year. Despite the exceptional weather this year, attendance seemed lower than usual. Suggestions included more advertising prior to next year's challenge.

6. Town Lands-Recreation Committee Trail Maintenance Discussion:

There has been some recent discussion about combining responsibility for town trails and town lands under one Committee. This was discussed at the most recent Town Lands Committee meeting as well. While the same volunteers help with maintaining both committees' properties, and it makes sense to consolidate maintenance for all town property infrastructure under one rather than two committees, concern was raised about adding responsibility to the other town agency's financial and managerial responsibilities. As a result, a decision was made to continue this discussion again at a later date.

7. Projects:

- Tractor Maintenance – Tom raised the issue of who is maintaining the “tractor”. The group was confused about which “tractor” was being referred to. Rick explained that the lawn tractor at the Mitchell Field community garden no longer has a working mower deck. He was asked to replace the belt on the mower deck in July. However, when he brought it home to work on it, he discovered that someone had hit something really hard, and the mower deck was destroyed irreparably (metal of deck was split open and bent near one of the blade spindles). Consequently the Community Garden decided to dispose of the deck and only use the tractor for hauling materials at the garden. They have hired mowing at the garden out, and there is currently no plan to replace it. As for the lawn tractor at Trufant/Summerton, no one present knew who, if anyone, is maintaining it. It is currently only used for dragging the infields. Rick agreed to look at it and see what maintenance is needed.
- Fence Removal, batting cage removal, drag fields – Tom Mahoney reported that the softball/baseball field equipment needs to be put away for the season so that soccer can begin. The group agreed to meet at 3pm on Thursday September 12 to take down the batting cage, remove the outfield fence, and store them for the winter.
- Snack Shack - Tom reported that Gina would like us to discuss and decide on the fate of the Snack Shack at Trufant/Summerton. The Snack Shack is currently only being used for storage. It is in disrepair and currently has no working refrigerator or running water. After some discussion, Gabe agreed to canvas T-ball parents and supporters to see if there is interest in organizing, cleaning and repairing the Snack Shack for use during summer youth sporting events.
- Moonlight Dog Walk – Tom Mahoney reported that there is interest in trying to organize another moonlight dog walk at Mitchell Field during the January full moon.

8. Other:

- Cliff Trail – Tom reported that the fairy house zone on the Cliff Trail is looking messy and problematic and could use some clean-up. The group agreed to schedule a workday on Friday September 13 to work on improving the area.
- Viewing Platform – David reported that the side trail and viewing platform on the accessible portion of the Cliff Trail that was damaged during the January storms still need repair. He has been working to put together a plan and materials list for the necessary repairs. It was agreed that he'd give his recommendations to Tom Carr, and he'll get them to Gina.

- Devil's Back Workday – Tom reported that a workday to improve trail conditions is scheduled for Saturday, September 15.
- Meeting Time – A suggestion was made to see if we could move the time of the meeting up to 6pm to make it easier for staff to attend. Tom Mahoney said he'll check to see if this would help, and if so, canvas members about changing the time of the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18pm

Next Meetings: October 21, 2024 @ 7:00pm at the Town Office

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Rumba, Secretary