

Town of Harpswell  
Recreation Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
October 17, 2022, 7:00pm

**Members in Attendance:** David Brooks, Tom Carr, Gabe Coulon, Kevin Hunt, Tom Mahoney, Don Miskill, Jeanie Rubio and Rick Rumba.

**Also in Attendance:** Gina Perow, Recreation Director; Kayla Mathews, Programs Coordinator; 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, a few misspellings minor corrections changes were noted. ***A motion was made and seconded to accept the DRAFT September 12, 2022 meeting minutes with the corrections noted. The minutes were unanimously accepted and approved as amended.*** The approved FINAL September 12, 2022 Committee meeting minutes will be forwarded to the Committee.

**2. Old Business:**

- a. **Trail Maintenance and Upkeep:** Tom Carr reported that he had not yet had the opportunity to develop the list of maintenance items that need to be addressed on the Cliff Trail and Devils Back Trails and a schedule to complete them. He and David agreed to put the list and schedule together and distribute prior to our next meeting.
- b. **Trufant Summerton Garage Shelving:** Kevin reported that he has not yet been able to work on building and installing the athletic gear storage shelving the garage at Trufant Summerton Field due to a medical issue. David mentioned that there are still several half sheets of ¾ inch plywood left over from the Cliff Trail construction project that could be used for this purpose. Kevin agreed that the plywood may be useful. He'll try to work on organizing volunteers to get this job done and report back at our next meeting.

**3. Cliff Trail:**

Tom Carr reported that he continues to see quite a few "rogue" trails being developed along parts of the Cliff Trail. This can make staying on the "real" trail difficult for those unfamiliar with the trail. He has made attempts to block the rogue trails with branches, but this has mostly been unsuccessful due to the branches being removed by trail users. He suggested that perhaps we need to try a different approach such as dropping trees across the rogue trails, marking the actual trail with arrow signs where the rogue trails enter, and posting other signs to encourage hikers to stay on the main trail and discourage off-trail use. Also, there have been some issues again with the fairy house zone. The zone has be "expanding", and fairy house builders are using large branches to build very large structures that could be dangerous to visitors if they fall down. Tom has been removing some of these larger houses. Also, fairly house builders have been removing and using some of the stones that were brought in to support the shoulders of the inclusive section of the trail. Gina reported that she and Kayla recently returned many of the stones to the edges of the trail and installed signs to remind people not to take stones from the shoulders of the trail, and this seems to have helped. It was also suggested that we add a new sign to delineate the "end" of the fairy house zone to discourage further expansion.

**4. Things to Celebrate:**

- a. **Story Walk:** Gina reported that from October 3-30, the Department is sponsoring a self-guided "Story Walk" on the inclusive portion of Cliff Trail. It features the children's book "The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything" by author Linda Williams. So far there has been a very enthusiastic response! It has a digital guest book to sign into via mobile phone, and so far at least 35 people representing over 90 visitors have signed in. Interestingly, largest age group responding were age 50+!

b. **Cliff Trail Inclusive Success:** Gina also reported that the new inclusive section has received a lot of use and positive feedback from non-traditional hikers who normally would be unable to enjoy the trail. This has also resulted in a lot of positive press.

**5. Process for New Programs to be Instituted:**

Gina discussed the fact that over the years the town's demographics have changed, and the Committee needs to begin to focus more on new recreation opportunities, particularly those designed to meet the needs of adults and seniors. As a result, Kayla has drafted a worksheet to be used to help evaluate, prioritize, and set up any proposed new programs. The worksheet was distributed to the committee members and briefly discussed. The worksheet is attached.

**6. Harpswell Comprehensive Plan 2024:**

Gina reported that last November Town of Harpswell established a Comprehensive Plan Task Force. The Comprehensive Plan Task Force is charged with developing an updated comprehensive plan for Harpswell for consideration by the Planning Board, Select Board and ultimately Town Meeting. The updated comprehensive plan shall set out a vision for the future of the community for the next decade or so and an action plan identifying the activities that the Town and community need to take to implement the vision. The task force has been meeting monthly and has set out a strategy and timeline for developing the Plan. On November 5, they are holding a visioning session at the Harpswell Community School for community members to share thoughts and ideas that will help shape the comprehensive plan. There will also be an opportunity to share ideas online. It was noted that thus far the task force has not addressed the topic of community recreation. As a result, Gina strongly encouraged Committee members to attend the November 5 visioning session and share our concerns.

**7. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds:**

Gina reported that The Town of Harpswell is seeking public input for expending ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. Some of the primary purposes/categories for these funds are as follows:

- Supporting COVID-19 Response
- Addressing Systemic Challenges that Contribute to Inequitable Pandemic Impacts
- Improving Public Health
- Assisting Households and Businesses Negatively Impacted by the Pandemic
- Providing Premium Pay
- Upgrading Public Water, Sewer and Broadband Infrastructure

The Recreation and Community Services Department has been tasked with reaching out to the community to assess the needs of various age groups. Jane Covey and Jay McCreight have a particular interest in youth mental health post-Covid. Gina and Jane asked that the Committee members contact them with any ideas, comments and concerns regarding this topic or the use of the ARPA funds in general.

**8. 2023 Budget:**

Gina noted that the Town Departments are drawing up their budgets for next year. She asked for suggestions for new programs and budget items that we may want to consider for 2023 and beyond and asked members to send any ideas to her and/or Kayla. One item to be addressed next year may be hiring a parking attendant for large events at Mitchell Field.

**9. Other:**

- a. **Mitchell Field:** Don mentioned that there are currently 3 major topics being addressed by the Mitchell Field Committee. First, the Committee is moving forward on the modified dock and boat launch project that is less costly but still meets the requirements of the funding grant. Initial plans are to focus on completing the boat launch first. Second, the Town is currently working on a proposal to remove the area behind and next to the Administration Building from the Marine Business District and to expand the district by the same amount to the east of Parcel B along the northern perimeter road. This will allow space to develop parking, water well and septic development in the event that the Town decides to redevelop the Administration Building. Third, the town will be hiring a registered surveyor to officially lay out the Community Garden area in order to avoid and conflicts with future subdivisions at Mitchell Field.

- b. Bandstand Concert Series:** Gina reported that the 2022 Bandstand Concert Series was very well attended this year and the Bandstand Committee is currently considering larger acts for 2023. If anyone has any suggestions for performers, please forward them to Gina.
- c. New Trail guide:** the new Trail Guide has been drafted and is being reviewed by Gina. As soon as its completed, it will be printed and made available on-line.
- d. Upcoming Events:** Gina reminded the Committee that the Department is sponsoring a Fall Carve and Craft event on October 22 from 11am – 2pm at Trufant Summerton Athletic Field. There will be pumpkin carving, craft making, a photo booth, tote bags, giveaways and more.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm

Next Meetings: November 14, 2022 @ 7:00pm at the Town Office

Respectfully submitted,  
Rick Rumba, Secretary

Attachment 1 – New Program Worksheet

**Harpswell Recreation Department  
New Program Worksheet**

Program Title:
Coach/Leader/Contractor Name and Contact Information:
Fees to be charged:
Equipment needed:
Brief Description:
Start/End Date and Program Duration:
Day of week and Time:
Location:
Is there an attendance limit?
Rain plans (if outdoor program)
Anything else we need to know?

Please return completed sheet to: Gina Caldwell, Recreation Director at the Harpswell Town Office, 263 Mountain Road or by email: [gcaldwell@town.harpswell.me.us](mailto:gcaldwell@town.harpswell.me.us)