

Town of Harpswell
Recreation Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2024 - 6:30pm

Members in Attendance: Tom Carr, Gabe Coulon, Scott Gill, 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 6:40pm.

1. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:

Several spelling errors were noted in the DRAFT meeting minutes. Rick agreed to make the corrections prior to finalizing the meeting minutes. After a brief discussion, ***A motion was made and seconded to accept the DRAFT September 09, 2024 meeting minutes with the corrections noted. The minutes were unanimously accepted and approved.*** The approved FINAL September 09, 2024 Committee meeting minutes will be forwarded to the Committee.

2. Recreation Director's Report:

Tom Mahoney read Gina's report aloud to the Committee:

- Carve and Craft Event – The department has been busy getting ready for the Fall Carve & Craft event on 10/26. Holbrook's Wharf/Store has agreed to sponsor the event. We are purchasing 80 pumpkins this year. We will be offering a number of craft tables, a photo booth with props and Goodie Basket raffles. We will also have seasonal snacks and beverages.
- Youth Basketball – We have attended pre-season meetings with Topsham, Bowdoin and Bowdoinham for HYL/AYBL basketball. Travel team tryouts are on 10/24 at MTA middle school.
- Maine Municipal Association Conference - Gina attended the MMA conference and attended sessions on General Assistance updates, Using AI responsibly, Women in Leadership, Aging in Maine and "It's always been done that way, why should we change."
- Harpswell Heating Assistance - Harpswell Heating Assistance opened on 10/15/24 and will remain open until 4/15/25. The Town has received 15 applications to date. This program is for Harpswell households with monthly income less than upper limit of the designated Moderate Income Limits calculation. A household may receive up to 200 gallons of heating fuel (or its equivalent) during the heating season (October 15 to April 15) in 100 gallons installments. General Assistance has also seen an increase in applicants in the past few months.
- Harpswell Aging at Home - We are beginning a transition process with HAH. Tom Mahoney has been hired as HAH's Community Connector. He has started training on the Home Repair applications and other nuances. Daily calls continue to come to Gina's office, but once Tom has a dedicated phone number, we will start to give that out to folks. Mark Weaver is the new head of Home Repair for HAH. The transitions are going well. Also working with HAH to bring a day of free tax prep (March 2025) for older adults that qualify. Gina will be meeting with Jay McCreight and Steve from the CASH Maine organization to begin planning.
- Fall 2024 Youth Program Report –
Harpswell Harriers: (grades K-6) We had a total of 27 Runners this fall (We had 2 head coaches and 2 official helpers. We had many top 5 finishers for each division throughout the season. The championship race was held on 10/19, we had 19 kids participate. We also hosted a XC Meet on 9/25, with approx. 125 runners
Pee Wee Soccer: (ages 3-5) We had 25 kids participate, 5 coaches. Participants received a tee shirt and their own ball.
Puzzle Pursuit: (ages 8 and up) Puzzle Pursuit was cancelled due to low registration (only 2 entries, we need 5 or 6 to run it) but will look to run the program again during the winter.

- Story Walk: “Room on the Broom” – A new Story Walk was put up on the accessible portion of the Cliff Trail. It has received lots of positive feedback and may be featured in an article in the *Times Record*. Community Members have also posted about it on Facebook. We are working to have a two + year rotation of seasonal stories to keep them fresh!
- Upcoming Winter Programming: Ski - We have received preliminary Ski/Snowboard information. We’re working with surrounding Towns and registration information will be out soon. **Youth Basketball** – Registration is open between 10/1 and 11/1 or until teams are full.

3. Fall Programs:

- Fall Swim Program - Don Miskill reported that the Fall Swim Program at the Bowdoin College pool is now in its 4th week. The program is held each Sunday from 4:30-5:30pm through December 1, 2024. The program is free and open to MSAD 75 and Harpswell residents. Don reported that everyone is now using on-line registration to register.
- Beginner Adult Pickleball – Tom Mahoney reported that a new session of adult pickleball is underway Wednesdays at 6:00pm the Community School. There are 8 participants in this session. It will wrap up this Wednesday, October 23 with a tournament with previous adult pickleball students.
- Cliff Trail Clean-up – Tom Carr reported that he and David Brooks worked on September 13 to clean up some problematic areas of the fairy house zone on the Cliff Trail. He reported that they were successful in tidying up the area prior to the winter season.
- Mitchell Field – Don reported that he has been busy cleaning up storm damage debris, particularly on the south perimeter road. Volunteers have been assisting in moving the debris to the burn pile. In addition, he has re-painted the fire hydrants, and Katherine Goodrich and her family have re-painted the bollards at the end of the causeway. Don also reported that the main upper and lower fields along with the old Navy landfill are scheduled for winter mowing soon, and that a 50 ft x 80 ft area of the Community Garden area (outside of the fenced area) will be tilled for wildflower planting. The town attorney is working to find a way to dispose of the large, abandoned boat that is being stored near the burn pile, and finally, Don mentioned that Verizon now has transformers and a generator on-site at the cell tower, and he expects that they will soon be installing antennas on the tower now that the osprey have vacated their nest.
- Carve and Craft Event – The Recreation Department will once again be holding a family Carve and Craft Event. Details to follow.
- Clark Cove Update – Jane Covey reported that the Selectboard has approved the public access plan for the State-owned property at Clark Cove at their October 17 meeting.

4. Projects:

- Lawn Tractor – Rick Rumba reported that he has not yet had a chance to evaluate the lawn tractor at Trufant/Summerton Field. The tractor is currently used to drag the infields of the softball diamonds at the Field, but also has a mower deck that could potentially be used for mowing the XC trails at Mitchell Field. It is unclear what, if any, preventative maintenance has been done on the tractor in the past. Rick agreed to look at the lawn tractor this week and report back on its condition, recommendations for maintenance, and future use.
- Fence Removal, Batting Cage Removal at Trufant/Summerton – Tom Mahoney reported that a group of volunteers got together on September 12 to put away the softball/baseball field equipment for the season at Trufant/Summerton Field so that soccer can begin. The group met and took down the batting cage, removed the outfield fence, and stored them for the winter.
- Snack Shack - At our meeting in September, we discussed 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. At the September meeting 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. In the meantime, Gina provided some additional information to consider:

1. Most of the games are now played in Topsham and Bowdoinham. They have better facilities and are considered easier access for most families by distance. This year there were only 1 minor league softball game, 3 minor league baseball games and 3 rookie baseball games hosted in Harpswell. The scarcity of home games in Harpswell would make it difficult to make it worth the time and energy to find volunteers, pay for all the food and open the shack. The number of days between games is too long for food to stay fresh unless it all gets frozen. It's unlikely that the sales would make back the purchase price of the food in one game.
2. Volunteers are hard to find to work during the games. Most parents want to be out sitting by the field to watch their child play. You can't see the baseball field clearly from the shack serving window. It used to be that there would be multiple games or back to back games. Volunteers would come early or stay later, so they could work the opposite of their child(ren)'s games but that doesn't happen anymore.
3. The snack shack building is owned by the Town. The shack needs repairs that the Town may not be willing to make. There is no food making equipment or refrigerator/freezer in the shack. These items would need to be purchased by the volunteer group. The water is non-potable. If a volunteer group wanted to use it to prepare, cook and serve food, the group would need to request to lease the building. That would require a contract. They would also need to purchase insurance. There may also be food handling requirements. We would have to make sure all the rules were being followed in case of an audit (these happen regularly).

Gabe reported that he did not receive much interest from parents to re-open the snack shack at this time. Given this and the information provided by Gina above, ***a motion was made to allow the Recreation Program Director to work with the Town to determine a plan for the fate of the snack shack building. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.***

5. Other:

- Cliff Trail – Tom reported that there was an accident on the Cliff Trail a few weeks ago where a person fell from the edge of the cliff, was seriously injured, and needed to be rescued by Airboat from Long Reach. The exact cause of the fall is unknown at this time, but Tom feels that we may need to re-route part of the trail to avoid the area where the accident occurred. This will be discussed further in the future.
- Town Lands/Recreation Committee Trail Maintenance Discussion – At our last meeting, there was a discussion about combining responsibility for town trails and town lands under one Committee. This was discussed at a Town Lands Committee meeting as well. Tom reported that at this time the Committees have agreed to have the Recreation Committee continue to be responsible for maintaining the Cliff and Devil's Back Trails only, and the Town Lands Committee will continue to maintain all other town lands.
- HHLT Solstice Walk – Don reported that HHLT will once again be sponsoring a winter solstice walk at Mitchell Field on the evening of December 21, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm

Next Meetings: March 10, 2025 @ 6:00pm at the Town Office

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Rumba, Secretary