

Town of Harpswell
Recreation Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 08, 2021, 7:00pm

Members in Attendance: Tony Barrett, David Brooks, Tom Carr, Don Miskill, Susan Rich, Jeanie Rubio, Rick Rumba

Also in Attendance: Gina Perow, Recreation Director; Kayla Mathews, Program Assistant; Jane Covey, Selectman

A quorum of Committee Members was present when the meeting was called to order at 7:08pm.

1. Meeting Minutes:

The DRAFT minutes for the September 13, 2021 Committee meetings were accepted and approved as written. The approved FINAL September 2021 Committee meeting minutes will be forwarded to the Committee.

2. Cliff Trail Rehab and RTP Grant Update:

a. **Trail Construction Progress:** David and Tom reported that MCC is still a bit behind schedule in completing the trail construction project. The town has extended the contract with MCC until November 19 in attempt to get the trail work completed before winter. David and Tom organized two volunteer work days(Saturday September 18 and Sunday October 24) to assist in clearing brush, roots and debris from the sides of the trail. A number of volunteers were able to work and most of the debris clearing was completed. The current MCC crew of 4 seems to be working more efficiently, but has been delayed in completing the trail bed as a result of drainage repair work that became evident during the recent heavy rain storms. As a result, David and Tom said that they will ask again for volunteers to assist the MCC crew with moving and installing the trail edging material over the next 2 weeks. David will send a request out via email asking for volunteers.

b. **Funding Status:** Gina reported that due to her recent temporary re-assignment to assist in the Planning and Code Enforcement offices, she was unable to look into the current project funding status prior to the meeting.

c. **Other:**

- Gina reported that the new Anchor newspaper is very interested in doing a story on the re-opening of the Cliff Trail, and the new accessibility improvements. Everyone agreed that this would be welcomed, but the article should wait until the trail work is completed and the trail is officially re-opened.
- The Committee also briefly discussed opportunities for recognizing the area businesses that have donated time, materials and money toward the Cliff Trail project. Gina reported that there are a few town restrictions on how this can be done. We will discuss again when we have more information.
- Finally, the Committee wanted to thank David and Tom for overseeing, and leading the Cliff Trail construction project over the past few months. In addition, the Committee and the MCC crew are extremely grateful to Jane for providing the MCC crew with housing during the past 2 months.

3. Adult Programs:

Jeanie led a discussion in connection with the Committee beginning to plan and focus on some new recreation programs for adults. The Committee recognizes that the town's demographics are changing, and as a result perhaps we should be focusing more attention on relevant programs for Harpswell adults. The Committee discussed other adult recreation and continuing education programs offered in the area such as at Merrymeeting Adult Education. We also discussed existing locations where similar programs could possibly be held in Harpswell, such as the Merriconeag Grange Hall, Cundy's Harbor Community Hall, Harpswell Community School, etc. The Committee also discussed ideas for possible relevant adult

recreation programs and how to recruit program leaders. For example, Jeanie suggested that perhaps one of Harpswell's local artists might be interested in leading an adult art program in town. The Committee all agreed that we need to begin focusing on possible adult programming opportunities in the future, and we will discuss further at our next meeting.

4. Youth Programs Update:

Kayla reported that Harpswell Recreation was able to hold three youth recreation programs during the Fall. These included: Harpswell Harriers X-Country running (17 participants), Pee Wee Soccer (21 participants), and Ultimate Frisbee (4 participants). Team Handball had to be cancelled due to Covid restrictions at the school. In addition, the Recreation Department held a Fall Harvest/Halloween event on October 23 Trufant Summerton Field. The event was very successful. It was attended by many town children, families and residents; and received numerous supporting donations from local businesses.

Winter programs include Harpswell Youth Basketball and Friday Nights at Lost Valley. Registration for both programs is now open. In addition, Harpswell Recreation is discussing the possibility of scheduling a family bonfire with caroling and other winter activities in the coming months.

5. 2022 Recreation Department Expansion:

Gina reported that due to recent retirements and staffing vacancies, the Town is planning to do some restructuring. Currently, the plan is to combined related town services with the Recreation Department. The new name will be "Recreation and Community Services", and will include: General Assistance, Harpswell Heating Assistance, Harpswell Aging at Home (HAH) and other Senior Services in addition to the ongoing Recreation Program. Gina will head the new Department and her hours and responsibilities will be expanded. The expansion/reorganization is still being discussed, and will be finalized in the coming weeks. Finally, due to staffing vacancies, Gina has been filling in to assist the Code Enforcement and Planning Departments. A new person has recently been hired by the Town and will be starting soon, but Gina will continue in this temporary role for another 4-6 weeks until the new hire is fully trained.

6. Mitchell Field Update:

- a. **Running Tide:** Don reported that Running Tide has completed a new lease with the Town for an additional 3 acres of land at Mitchell Field. The new lease includes a modification to the configuration of the business district on better accommodate the needs of the town and those of Running Tide.
- b. **Dock and Boat Launch:** The Mitchell Field Committee has re-submitted its grant application as an in order to complete a modified dock and boat launch project at Mitchell Field that is less costly but still meets the requirements of the funding grant. Initial plans are to focus on completing the boat launch first.
- c. **Cell Tower:** The new Cell Tower at Mitchell Field has been completed, and the cell service providers have begun installing their equipment. Both the Cell Tower lease and the Running Tide lease expansion will result in significant annual revenue increases for the Town.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm

Next Meeting: April 4, 2022 @ 7:00pm at the Town Office

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Rumba, Secretary