

Town of Harpswell
Recreation Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2020, 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

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

Meeting Minutes: The DRAFT minutes for the January 13, 2020 and February 03, 2020 Special Committee meetings were accepted and approved as written. The approved FINAL January 13, 2020 and February 03, 2020 Special Committee meeting minutes will be forwarded to the Committee.

Old Business:

1. **“You Are Here” Signs for Cliff Trail:** As discussed during the Committee’s regular meeting last November, Gina and the OBIFD Fire Chief discussed having signs installed on the Cliff Trail at the trail heads and at each trail junction. These signs will depict a map of the trail along with a numbered marker on the map showing their current location. The purpose of the signs is to assist hikers to identify their approximate location and relay that information to Emergency Responders in the event that they require assistance. It was noted that over the summer there were additional instances of hikers calling 911 due to injury and/or disorientation. As a result, Gina has designed the signs which she presented to the Committee. All Committee members agreed that these signs should be purchased and deployed on stakes at the trail heads and at each trail junction as soon as possible.
2. **Trufant-Summerton Athletic Field Garage Roof:** Gina reported that garage roof replacement that was approved at last November’s Committee meeting was completed on budget by Handy Harley.
3. **Changes due to Covid-19:**
 - a. **Spring and Summer Season Programs:** Due to concerns regarding Covid-19 and keeping residents safe, many of the regular spring and summer recreation programs did not take place this year. However, several “virtual” programs were held over the summer including a virtual kids’ cooking program, a virtual walking group, and a virtual youth Lego challenge. The virtual programs will continue and new programs may be added.
 - b. **Gathering and Organized Events on Town Properties:** There is currently a moratorium on holding any gatherings or organized events on Town properties due to Covid-19 concerns. This moratorium is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.
 - c. **Town Property Signs and Banners:** Signs were installed at all town properties (including town trailheads and at Mitchell Field) describing procedures for staying safe on town properties. In addition, “Keep ME and Harpswell Healthy” banners were installed at the “Entering Harpswell” road signs and other major road intersections in town.
 - d. **Cedar Beach and Mitchell Field Monitors:** We were able to conduct increased monitoring at Cedar Beach and add monitoring at Mitchell Field this summer as a result of increased use due to Covid-19. Monitors were deployed at Mitchell Field on Saturdays and Sundays from 10am to 2pm.

New Business:

1. **Trail Updates:**
 - a. **Trail Conditions:**
 - Devils Back Trail: A walkthrough is needed at Devils Back to determine if we need new signage at the northern portion of both the East and West Devils Back Trails to prevent people from leaving the trail and walking up to the highway rather than continuing on the loop. Don agreed to look into this.
 - Cliff Trail: It appears that the increased use of the Cliff Trail has prompted some hikers to walk over and down the cliff toward Long Reach at several points. This is causing issues with erosion, loss of vegetation and increased risk of injury. It was suggested that we place signs saying “Vegetation Restoration Area” at these areas near the cliff to deter this activity.

b. Cliff Trail Project Update:

- **MCC Cooperative Agreement** — Tony Barrett reported that with the Committee’s approval, we will be forwarding the MCC Cooperative Agreement for consideration and approval at Thursday’s Selectboard meeting. All in attendance agreed.
- **Bridge Materials** — Tony also reported that he received the materials list from MCC a few days ago. The MCC project manager has visited the site to evaluate the four bridge locations on a couple of occasions, which has resulted in several changes. Specifically, the bridge width has been increased from 4ft to 5ft, and will be constructed in a more robust manner to handle the gravel hauling and other trail construction equipment. These changes, in addition to the fact that the cost of pressure treated lumber and other building materials have increased dramatically since the original estimate have increased the estimated bridge materials cost from slightly over \$1,000 to almost \$4,000. In addition, the town (rather than MCC) is now responsible for purchasing and delivering these materials. Since pressure treated lumber is currently in short supply, Tony asked for David’s assistance in reviewing the materials list, and suggesting materials suppliers that can cost-effectively provide the needed materials.
- **Fundraising** — All Patrons have agreed to extend their matching gift commitments until July 2021. As a result, we have the opportunity to extend our publicity and solicitation efforts.
- **MCC Staff Housing** — Sue Rich, has graciously offered her cottage to house the 3-4 MCC workers starting October 13 for two weeks.

c. Fairy Houses and Signage: Gina reported that Bill Perkins recently stopped by and they discussed revising the Fairy House Zones, rules and installing new signs. Bill graciously made a donation - a portion of which will be used for making and installing new signs. After some discussion, it was agreed that the new rule signs should be clarified, simplified and installed at either end of the Fairy House Zones in order to increase compliance. Gina will forward some revised language for the new signs to the committee members for comment and approval prior to printing the signs.

d. “Rogue Do-Gooders”: Several people have reported that there are many cases of unauthorized spray painting of roots, stumps and other “trip hazards” on many of the town as well as HHLT trails with brightly colored fluorescent paint. While the culprit may have had good intentions, the markings are unauthorized and unsightly. As a short- term fix, several committee members have agreed to cover the fluorescent markings with brown paint.

e. Canine Management Taskforce Update: The Canine Management Taskforce has been appointed by the Select Board to gather information to assist in developing recommendations for managing dogs on Town properties. A Harpswell Dog Management Survey was sent out to all Harpswell taxpayers with their September billing. Gina is a member of the Taskforce. She reported that many completed surveys have been submitted, and the Taskforce is expected to review the results at their next meeting on September 23.

2. Fall Updates:

a. Upcoming Programs (XC, Soccer, Yoga): Gina reported that the Recreation Department will be holding 3 “low risk” outdoor programs for the Fall 2020 season. These will include: the Harpswell Harriers Cross-Country program, PeeWee Soccer, “Footie” soccer skill clinics for grades 1-5, and a Community Yoga program. Due to Covid-19 concerns, these programs are open only to Harpswell residents, and all will take place at Mitchell Field where there is plenty of open space and restroom access. Additionally, Gina and Kala will be available to train coaches on minimizing risk of exposure and monitor participants for Covid-19 symptoms.

b. Possible Fall-Themed “Drive-Thru” event: In addition, Gina is considering holding a Fall-Themed “Drive-Thru “ event, such a drive-through “Trunk or Treat” Halloween event or a walk-through “Pumpkin Walk”. Such an event would also likely take place at Mitchell Field.

3. Budget Season (Due by October 9): Gina is preparing to submit the Department’s budget for next year, and there are two items that she would like the Committee’s input on:

- a. **Snack Shack at Trufant Summerton Athletic Field:** The “Snack Shack” at Trufant Summerton Athletic Field is currently in very poor condition, and has seen little use in recent years. Despite limited use, it requires annual Recreation Department funding for pest control. Gina would like to propose that the Department budget funds to demolish the Snack Shack, construct a small building to house the on-site utilities (water and electricity) currently contained in the existing Snack Shack, and pour a concrete pad that can be used by a Food Truck if food is desired during an activity at the Field in the future. All Committee members present agreed with this plan.
 - b. **Camp Harpswell:** Camp Harpswell is Recreation Department sponsored program that has been in existence for many years. It has routinely been held at the Community School for the 2-week period immediately following the last week of school. However, the program has not been held for the past 2 years (due to school construction in 2019 and Covid-19 in 2020), has been getting more and more difficult to plan and staff due to changing dates for the end of classes, and low enrollment. As a result, Gina suggested that perhaps we consider retring the program. All Committee members present agreed with this plan.
- 4. Other Business:**
- a. **Mitchell Field Update:**
 - Mitchell Field Master Plan Update — Don reported that the Mitchell Field Master Plan update has been approved by the Board of Selectmen.
 - Memorial Benches — Don reported that 2 of the older, smaller memorial benches at Mitchell Field have recently disappeared. These two older benches were constructed of lighter gauge stone that unfortunately could be more easily picked up and carried away. One new bench is currently being installed. The new design is made by Swenson Granite and is constructed of larger, heavier gauge granite that is much more difficult to disassemble and carry away. Don suggested that if anyone is interested in purchasing a memorial bench for Mitchell Field to please contact him directly.
 - Float and Ramp Grant Update — The Town received a matching grant from the State of Maine Coastal Program to construct a seasonal floating dock and boat ramp at the site of the former Navy Pier. These projects were recently put out to bid with the intention of beginning construction next year. However, all of the bids came back at a much higher cost than budgeted. As a result, the Mitchell Field Committee will be discussing how to proceed at their next meeting.

Next Meeting: November 02, 2020 @ 7:00pm at the Town Office

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Rumba, Secretary