

Town of Harpswell
Recreation Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 02, 2020, 7:00pm

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

Also in Attendance: Jane Covey, Selectman, Gina Perow, Recreation Director, Kayla Matthews, Programs Assistant

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

Meeting Minutes: The DRAFT minutes for the September 2020 Committee meetings was accepted and approved as written. The approved FINAL September 2020 Committee meeting minutes will be forwarded to the Committee.

Old Business:

1. **Cliff Trail Work Day:** A work day was held on October 22, 2020 to install the new "You Are Here" on 4 x 4 posts on the Cliff Trail at the trail heads and at each trail junction by two teams of volunteers. The new signs 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. In addition, representatives from all Harpswell Fire Departments were trained to familiarize them with the trail and the locations of the signs. Gina reported that so far there has been a lot of positive feedback from trail users.
2. **Cliff Trail Rehab Update:** Tony reported that no work will be started on the Cliff Trail Rehab project by MCC this year. MCC currently does not have personnel available to begin the work until next spring. Tom suggested that perhaps volunteers could begin some rough clearing of the new trail now to get a jump on preparations for MCC's work next spring. After a bit of discussion, Tony felt that it would be best to forgo any preparatory work and just let MCC begin the work themselves next year.
3. **Devil's Back Work Day:** Gina reported that on October 19 she heard from Fire Chief Ben Wallace that 3 individuals had set up camp and made a camp fire the previous night on Devil's Back East near the water. The FD had the campers extinguish the fire under their supervision. Don reported that he and several others visited the site on October 23. They removed the vestiges of their fire and cleaned up the trash. In addition, they remarked all the blazes on the east side, and identified several trees that need to be removed.
4. **Fall Program Wrap-up:** Gina reported that the Recreation Department held 3 "low risk" outdoor programs for the Fall 2020 season: Community Yoga, Youth Soccer, and Harpswell Harriers Cross-Country. All were held at Mitchell Field. In all, there were 16 yoga participants, 30 youth soccer participants, and 28 XC participants. Gina received a lot of positive feedback from families thanking the Recreation Program for holding these events.

New Business:

1. **Trail Needs:**
 - a. **Cliff Trail:**
 - **Trail Blazes:** It was noted that some work still needs to be completed, including repainting the blazes on the Trail to Henry Creek as well as the Cut-off Trail.
 - **Plank Removal:** David mentioned that there are still a number of large planks out on the trail that need to be hauled out to the parking lot. It was agreed that a group will get together behind the Town Hall on Wednesday morning at 9am to complete this task.
 - **Fairy House Signs:** As reported at the last meeting, Gina recently spoke with Bill Perkins about revising the fairy house zones and rules, and installing new signs. Bill graciously made a donation - a portion of which will be used for making and installing the new signs. Gina discussed the revised wording for the new signs to be located at the beginning and end of the fairy house zones. After a brief discussion, the wording of the signs was finalized and Gina agreed to have the new signs made soon.

b. Devil's Back Trail:

- **Trail Blazes:** the blazes on the West side need to be repainted and the screws holding the signs on the trees need to be loosened.
- **Signage:** Don suggested that we need two signs for DB East at the turnarounds that say something to the effect: "*PRIVATE PROPERTY BEYOND THIS POINT. PLEASE RESPECT OUR NEIGHBORS AND TURN AROUND*". We may also need new signs that remind visitors that camping and fires are NOT permitted on town property.

- 2. Canine Taskforce:** Gina and Kayla provided an update on the Town Canine Taskforce. Jane is the Taskforce Chair, and Tom and Kayla have also been serving on the Taskforce. The Taskforce sent out a survey to residents with the fall tax bill. In all, they received over 400 responses; about half from dog owners who walk their dogs on town trails, and half from residents who don't walk dogs. Graphic analyses of the survey results were emailed to Committee members prior to the meeting. The current policy is that all dogs must be leashed when on town property (except when swimming at the south end of the beach at Mitchell Field). In general, dog owners would like some options to let dogs run off-leash. The taskforce discussed several options including: a) installing a dog-park at Mitchell Field, b) restricting off-leash use seasonally, and c) restricting off-leash use to certain hours of the day. In the end, the Taskforce is recommending that dogs on town property and trails must be leashed between the hours of 10am to 4pm every day (except at Giant Stairs where dogs must be leashed at all times). After some discussion, the Committee agreed that they were in general agreement that the recommended new policy of not allowing dogs off-leash between the hours of 10am and 4pm.
- 3. Upcoming Winter Program Updates:** Kayla discussed the Recreation Department's Outdoor Winter Program offerings. She reported that the Recreation Department will be holding 4 "low risk" outdoor programs for the winter. These will include: Friday Night Skiing at Lost Valley (starts in January, registration deadline is December 15); Shawnee Peak Season Pass for Harpswell residents (starts in January, registration deadline is December 15); Bigfoot Snowshoe Club (open to all Harpswell residents (starts in January and snowshoes will be available); and Sledding (schedule to be determined – will be announced on the Harpswell Rec Facebook page)).
- 4. Other: Mitchell Field Update:** Don reported that Blue Sky Towers will be installing a cell tower next year at Mitchell Field across from the old Water Tower. It will be 199 feet tall with no beacon lights. They received a 10 year lease from the Town with an option for renewal in 10 years. He also reported that since all of the bids for the town float and boat ramp came back at a much higher cost than budgeted, the Mitchell Field Committee is considering only using the existing funds to support building a boat ramp only at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm

Next Meeting: April 05, 2021 @ 7:00pm at the Town Office

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Rumba, Secretary