

Merrimack Parks and Recreation Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, 12.16.20
Virtual Meeting
7:00pm

Attendees on Zoom: Laura Jaynes, Christine Lavoie, Tracy McGraw, Maureen Hall – Senior Citizens Club, Shannon Barnes – School Board Representative, Rick Greenier – MYA and Michelle Creswell

Parks and Recreation Staff on zoom: Matt Casparius, Director

Absent: none

Excused: Julie Poole, Abbie Cote – Student Representative, Jon Barkley – Alternative MYA and Lon Woods - Town Council

Public: Joy Morris, Troop 1 for Gaga Ball Pit Project and CJ Bourn

Start time: 7:05pm

- 1 Open Meeting/Introduction
- 2 Approval of minutes from November 18th, 2020
 - Tracy McGraw made the motion to accept the November meeting minutes
 - Shannon Barnes 2nd the motion
 - 7-0-0 motion passed
- 3 New Business
 - Eagle Scout Project Proposal – Joy Morris, Troop 15, Gaga Ball Pit
 - Located in Wasserman Park
 - Approximately \$1850 for the cost
 - Start in January and completion date in late March/early April
 - Discussion with the committee was if Wasserman Park is the best part to put the pit
 - Shannon Barnes made the motion to recommend the Gaga Ball Pit at Wasserman Park near the beach waterfront to the Town Council
 - Rick Greenier 2nd the motion
 - 7-0-0- motion passed
- 4 Old Business
 - Wasserman Park Beach Update - Matt Casparius
 - All necessary permits have been received
 - Winter is here, so this is now being planned for spring completion
 - Update from Merrimack Dog Park - Christine Lavoie
 - Dog Park Fund Balance – \$1,762.59
 - Tracy McGraw thanked Shannon Barnes for her donation
 - Donations for baggies for dog waste is always welcome
 - Bring water for your dog as the waterline project is still ongoing
- 5 Director's Report - Matt Casparius
 - Report on Annual Holiday Happenings Events
 - Santa's Merrimack Holiday Tour / Tree Lighting
 - Modified Holiday Happenings event took place on Sunday, December 6th and it went pretty well
 - Santa's Tour of Town - some locations in Town and had 5 or 6 families come out to Wave and other locations only had 1 or 2
 - We would like to thank the Fire Dept for helping to make that happen

- Abbreviated Tree Lighting Ceremony took place which was about 10 minutes this year and consisted of Santa's Countdown to turn on the lights, a brief and socially distanced performance by Broadway Bound. We also had Miss Merrimack and Miss Greater Hookset join us and welcome the small crowd of about 40 people which realistically is what we wanted
 - Santa Calling Program
 - Annual Santa Calling program had 9 Town Employees volunteering their time to play Santa & Mrs. Claus and make calls to 63 children in Merrimack.
 - We would like to thank the Police Dept, Library, Finance, and Welfare Dept's for helping us this year
 - Holiday Food Drive December
 - Last Saturday, the Drive Thru Holiday Food Drive was held and about 70 families came out and donate food which was distributed to the Food Pantries at St. James Church and St. John Neuman's Church on Monday so
 - We would like to thank everyone who came out and donated
 - Southern NH Festival of Lights
 - Last week, the master list of 144 homes in the Southern NH Festival of Lights was released that spread out between the 9 communities (23 homes from Merrimack)
 - Homes on the tour are expected are encouraged to keep their lighting shining from Friday, December 11th - Sunday, December 27th
- Winter Program
 - Virtual Coffee Connections
 - This is a new free program geared towards outreach to our Seniors and held a Virtual Coffee Talk that will be offered every 2 weeks thru the winter months virtually
 - 16 people signed up
 - Ideas of other programs to offer for our seniors were discussed that included home virtual fitness programs and trivia nights
 - Coming up in future weeks, we have speakers from Public Works, Welfare, the Library, Police and Fire Dept's to talk about what those Departments are working on to keep people connected
 - Vacation Week Program
 - Permission was granted from the Town to run the December School Vacation Week program
 - This will be kept small so we can offer families a chance to get their kids out of the house that week
 - Mix of indoor and outdoor activities including sports, games, arts & crafts and movies
 - Program runs daily from 8:00 -5:30 pm for a fee of \$40 a day and participants can sign up by the day or for the entire 4 days that week
 - COVID-19 precautions are in place including temperature checks, screening questions and everyone has to wear a mask but we do have some spaces left if people are interested
 - Skate with a Date
 - DPW is working to get the Ice Skating Rink setup at Watson Park
 - Once the ice is frozen it will be posted out in press releases for its ready for use
 - Event will include music and hot chocolate
 - E-Sports Leagues

- Currently working with a number of communities in Southern NH and have setup a Virtual E-Sports Leagues which include Madden Football, Fifa Soccer, Fortnite, Super Smash Brothers, NBA Sports and Rocket Sports that can be played from the comfort of your home
 - Protections in place so that kids aren't able to talk to strangers and they will be competing against kids in other towns
 - 6 week leagues and the cost \$20
- Celebrating Merrimack's 275th Anniversary in 2021
 - Parks & Recreation has been charged with leading a Committee to develop how the Town will celebrate
 - 3 virtual meetings were held and are starting to develop plans
 - Hold an event each month from April 2021 through October 2021 with smaller scale activities scattered throughout the year
 - Each organization represented will take turns of responsibility planning the monthly event
 - The biggest question mark right now is whether or not we will be able to offer large scale community events due to the on going COVID-19 pandemic
 - The Historical Society is looking to conduct interviews with some of the families in Town that have been here for generations that can talk about how the Town has changed as well as possibly have some virtual speakers
 - Once we get into the Summer, the hope is to be able to do more large scale event such as end of Summer Festival (old home days type of event) which would feature fireworks, music, maybe a civil war reenactment and other family friendly activities over a weekend
 - For those on Facebook there is a Merrimack 275th Page that has been created. Also if you go to the Town website, there is a button right on the front page that will lead you to our page on the Town website. Once activities are scheduled, we will begin posting information to these sites to begin planning.
- Other Department Updates
 - Matt Casparius will be presenting the Parks & Recreation Budget to the Town Council on Wednesday, January 13th, 2021
 - Permission has been given to start advertising Summer Camp positions in anticipation that camp will be running next summer
 - Camp registration to open in January after budget has been presented to the Council on January 13th

6 Organization Reports

- Senior Citizens Club - Maureen Hall
 - No meetings are held due to COVID
 - John O'Leary building is closed, and possible re-opening date will be April
- School Representative – Abbie Cote – not present
- MYA - Rick Greenier
 - Lacrosse registration is open now
 - Softball registration will be active in January
 - Basketball and wrestling registration are on hold for right now
 - merrimackyouthassociation.com
- School Board – Shannon Barnes
 - School remote learning day scheduled for 12.17.20 due to the predicted snow

- School has been remote learning since Thanksgiving and will be back in school right after Martin Luther King Day
- Winter sports are open with regulations
- Town Council – Lon Woods – not present

7 Comments from the Public – was none

- Those wishing to participate in "public comment" can do so via a dedicated e-mail address prior to the start of the meeting. These e-mails can be read at the discretion of the participants or recorded for the meeting minutes as part of the public record. Emails should be sent to: mcasparius@merrimacknh.gov. All e-mails sent to this address for the November 18th meeting will be sent to ALL members of the Parks & Recreation Committee if they are received before the meeting begins.

8 Comments from the Committee

9 Future Meeting Dates

- Wednesday, January 20, 2021

10 Adjourn at 7:57pm

- Shannon Barnes made the motion to adjourn at 7:57pm
- Tracy McGraw 2nd the motion
- 7-0-0 motion passed

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Creswell