

Merrimack Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes
Wednesday, October 17, 2012
Town Hall Meeting Room

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tom Thornton at 7:00 pm.

Members present:	Tom Thornton	Laura Jaynes	Chris Christensen
	George Markwell	Jackie Flood	Lorraine Lessard
	Holly Lewis	John Schneider	Sherry Kalish
	Phil Straight		

Absent: Lynne Wenz

Public Attendees: Deanna Lavoie, member of the Dog Park subcommittee

New Business

1. The September minutes were unanimously approved with an additional word “one” under the Director’s report item “e.”
2. Director’s Report: Sherry Kalish
 - a. Sherry reported that the Skateboard Park will be closed for the season on Nov. 4.
 - b. Naticook Lake: Sherry has written a press release concerning the discovery of the invasive plant species called milfoil in Lake Naticook. She will be working with the Town Manager, the Lake Naticook Assoc. (LNCA), the Town Council, DES, Chris Christensen etc. to keep residents informed. At the last Town Council meeting, Councilors voted to have both town boat launches closed until further notice. That has been done. There is an overall concern about erosion at Wasserman Park beach front, as well as all around the lake. More information to come.
 - c. Sherry reviewed the upcoming events for the holiday season:
 - Haunted Walk at Wasserman Park, Friday, Oct. 26- 5:00 – 8:00 pm
 - Holiday Parade and the Tree Lighting Ceremony are set for Sunday, Dec. 2. Any theme ideas? Holly Lewis mentioned that she could work with the 4H for ideas.
 - d. Budget items:
 - Sherry has kept the summer camp on the priority list.
 - Sherry wondered how the Committee felt about keeping camp accreditation of \$1400? This is a license through the American Camping Association. Reaccreditation is done every three years. There are other safety networks within the town and state. Is it necessary to keep this ACA Accreditation?
 - Sherry has had trouble getting lifeguards for camp because the salary that is offered is not competitive. Life guard salaries have not gone up in several years.
 - Summer concerts: The Committee discussed the future of these as there is concern about lack of attendance. Perhaps there should be fewer concerts, with bigger name attractions. Some felt that there could be more advertising; i.e. flyers at the Outlet mall, a larger sign on DW Highway, or on the Merrimack Police Dept. marquee.
3. Wasserman Park: There was considerable discussion and agreement that it is time to prioritize this park. At this time there is no regular maintenance crew for WP and the Function Hall is no longer rentable. In fact, because of the closing of the Dining Hall, deemed unsafe, the Function Hall is being used as storage for the Dining Hall appliances and supplies. The Committee felt that Wasserman Park could become a “Flag Ship” for the town. Some brainstorming included: Could a volunteer/rental group take care of cleaning the hall and other rentals? Could we rely on volunteers to “Adopt a Park?”
4. Veteran’s Park: Tom asked the Committee about creating more parking spaces at Veteran’s Park for the football and baseball seasons. After some discussion, the Committee felt that this was not appropriate at

this time and that more Parking signs at Camp Sargent would help. Laura felt that spectators could also park and walk from Thornton's Ferry School.

Old Business

1. Watson Park

- a. Pavilion: The Town Council has approved the plan and \$4,000 more has been collected.

Phil stated that he is working with the Merrimack Conservation Commission to provide educational programs for the future Pavilion.

- b. Dog Park: Tom stated that in discussions with the Town Council, DPW, etc. the Town Council would like the Committee to recommend a new site for the Dog Park. Tom would like to present a recommendation to the Town Council at their Oct. 25th meeting. He presented a list of 13 "Potential Dog Park Sites in Merrimack" for the basis of discussion.

After considerable discussion, this Committee unanimously voted to recommend:

Option #2 at Wasserman Park...is the area around the non-resident parking lot that is currently wooded. If we clear some of the small brush/trees, leaving the large ones for shade and a buffer, the area between Naticook Road the parking lot would be safer and easier to access than Option 1.

Chris Christensen made motion, Holly Lewis 2nd: 7, 0, 1 -George Markwell abstaining.

At this time Dog Park subcommittee member, Deena Lavoie was surprised by the new location but after hearing our discussion, felt Wasserman Park should work out. Mrs. Lavoie left at this time.

- 2. Room Nominations: Some discussion was held with the recommendation to the Town Council that the next meeting room available be named after Bob Kelley or the Selectman's Meeting Room. Committee recommends that the Town Hall Conference room be named Matthew Thornton and the Meeting Room be named after the Selectmen.

Unanimous vote, 8-0-0 Chris Christensen 2nd by George Markwell

Updates from the following

- a. Senior Citizens Club- Lorraine Lessard reviewed the Merrimack Senior Citizens Club mission statement. She continues to be the coordinator of the Senior Trips.

Upcoming Events include:

Wed. Nov. 14 - Foxwoods

Wed. Dec. 12 – Indian Head Resort

Mon. Dec. 31 – The Castleton – New Year's Day

Committee members commented on what a fine job Lorraine is doing for the Senior Citizens Club!

***Reminder: Field reviews are due to Lorraine ASAP!**

- b. MYA – Alternate-rep John Schneider will act as the representative for the time being.
 - He reports that the membership for soccer and football is good.
 - The November Basketball registration is completed. Basketball runs from November to March.
 - Wrestling registration will begin in January.
- c. Town Council – Jackie Flood had nothing to add at this time.
- d. School Board Rep. - The Committee welcomed back George Markwell as the new School Board Rep.
- e. High School Rep. – Thanks to Holly Lewis for coming to meetings.

Comments from the Committee:

At this time, Jackie Flood voiced her frustration and disappointment at the lack of communication from the Dog Park subcommittee. There seems to be a lot of misunderstandings. Jackie was very concerned that the subcommittee did not follow the Town's protocols, processes, and recommendations. She also stated that there may have been some unintentional mishandling of funds.

She was also disappointed that they had not met with the Merrimack Conservation Commission.

Comments from the Public: None

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm. Motion by George, 2nd by Chris.

***The next regular meeting has been changed to Wed. Nov. 14th at 4:00 pm at Wasserman Park.**