

Merrimack Parks and Recreation Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 19th, 2022
Town Hall, Matthew Thornton Meeting Room
7:00pm

Attendees: Tracy McGraw, Christine Lavoie, Laura Jaynes, Phil Przybyszewski, Rick Greenier – MYA, Maureen Hall – Senior Citizens Club, Naomi Halter – School Board Representative, Lon Woods - Town Council, Camryn Gaumont – School Representative and Michelle Creswell

Parks and Recreation Staff: Matt Casparius, Director

Absent: none

Excused: Julie Poole, David Shaw, Jonathan Barkley – Alternate MYA and Laurie Rothhaus – Alternate School Board Representative

Public: Michael Drouin

Start time: 7:00pm

Open Meeting/Introduction

Approval of minutes from September 28th, 2022

- Laura Jaynes made the motion to accept the September meeting minutes
- Christine Lavoie 2nd the motion
- 8-0-2 motion passed (abstained: Phil Przybyszewski and Lon Woods - Town Council)

New Business: Matt Casparius

- Introduce Michael Drouin as he put his application for the Parks and Recreation committee and Michael said a few words about his background
- Initial discussion on Parks & Recreation Operating Budget for FY2023 – 2024
 - Annual budget instructions from the Town Manager with his expectations on the state of the Town budget for the next year haven't been sent yet
 - Parks & Recreation Dept budget falls into 3 categories: Capital Improvement Projects, Taxpayer Funded Budget and Recreation Revolving Fund
 - Capital Improvement: only 1 of our 3 projects was being moved forward by the Town Manager for approval by the Town Council which was the Road Repair project at Wasserman Park and the other 2 projects have been pushed out until next year.
 - Taxpayer funded budget is largely items such as Natural Gas, Water, Health Insurance, office supplies, park maintenance, etc. and does also include big community special events such as Halloween, Holiday Parade, Winter Carnival, Easter Egg Hunt, Movies in the Park and Summer Concerts and 4th of July. (expecting only minor changes on the taxpayer funded side for next year)
 - Recreation Revolving Fund is where all of the programs that we run operate out of and they are entirely self-supporting programs. So, for the 300 classes that we offer in a given year; we do not receive any taxpayer dollars to support those programs. (expecting some potentially large changes on the Recreation Revolving Fund)
 - Waiting for what the salary allocation will be set at that we needed to recover and give back to the General Fund (this year was set at \$59,994)
 - Frequently heard from parents is that there is a lack of affordable after school programs available in Merrimack and 1 recommendation would be for the Town to approve a regular after school program
 - Proposal sent to the Town Manager to combine the Summer Camp Director position with this hopefully newly created After School Director position to make it a Full Time Year position with benefits

- Proposal sent to the Town Manager is a request to significantly increase the starting rates of pay for all seasonal employees

Old Business:

- Update from Merrimack Dog Park - Christine Lavoie/ Tracy McGraw
 - Dog Park Fund Balance – \$1,693.59
 - Fall Clean-Up is TBD
 - Respiratory virus status update: please keep your dog home if your dog is sick as cases have now been found in Merrimack
 - 4 ft long culvert plastic pipe for the dogs to play in was delivered by DPW
 - Looking for volunteers for fundraising events you can reach out to friendsofthemerrimackdogpark on Facebook or Matt Casparius
 - Donations for baggies for dog waste and garbage are always welcome

Director's Report: Matt Casparius

- Report on 3rd Annual Naticook Challenge 5K Race
 - Great race with a total of 87 Participants and people really enjoyed the new obstacles this year
 - 1 person get injured, but she doesn't hold us at fault and has already told us she plans to sign up next year and was given a free registration for next year
- Report on Septic Line Repairs
 - DPW repaired broken septic line and was able to do all the work for us which saved the Town about \$3000 compared to the estimates we had from the contractor that initially looked at it, so kudos to DPW
- Docks pulled from Lake for Winter
 - Told they will have a much longer lifespan if we do this every year so they are out of the water and will put back in next spring
- Progress update on Twin Bridge Park Stair Project
 - Boy Scout George Schwartz from Troop 424 has begun his stair project at Twin Bridge Park which he is hoping to complete before winter
 - This was a project this committee approved back in June and the goal was to address some erosion issues but also makes it easier for people to get down the hill to the playfield, field and trail system.
- Online reservations now available for Abbie Griffin Park Bandstand & Watson Park Gazebo
 - Ability to accept online reservations to reserve the Gazebo at Abbie Griffin Park or the Pavilion at Watson Park are in place
 - Both are free, but we ask people to get a permit so that we know who is there when and to avoid conflicts particularly at Abbie Griffin which gets a lot of requests for wedding ceremonies
 - The next one we are working on is the Function Hall at Wasserman Park and Athletic Field Rentals
- Upcoming Special Events
 - 30th Annual Halloween Party – Sat, Oct 29th from 12-3pm – currently 23 business and community organization partners providing games, crafts and other activities are signed up
 - Merrimack Friends & Families will have Hot Dogs, baked goods and drinks for sale
 - Volunteers are needed from 11:30am - 3pm

Organization Reports:

- Senior Citizens Club - Maureen Hall
 - Signs ups for upcoming events are currently going on

- Annual Fall Fair – Oct 22nd at John O’Leary from 9am – 3pm
- MYA - Rick Greenier
 - Soccer, football, baseball and softball are currently in session and will end soon
 - Basketball registration is open and will close on Nov 1st
 - Lacrosse registration will open on Nov 1st
 - Thanked the Getinge and Elbit business for use of their fields
 - merrimackyouthassociation.com
- School Representative – Camryn Gaumont
 - Any place to play frisbee golf and Matt Casparius said currently it isn’t offered
- Town Council – Lon Woods
 - Eagle Scout proposal for canao and kayak rack was approved
 - About to enter budge season
- School Board – Naomi Halter
 - About to enter budget season
 - Election is on Nov. 4th and 2 schools are used for voting and reminder there is no setting up before 6am on election day
 - No school for Veteran’s Day

Comments from the Public: none

Comments from the Committee: none

Future Meeting Dates

- Wednesday, November 16th

Adjourn at 7:52pm

- Phil Przybyszewski made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:52pm
- Laura Jaynes 2nd the motion
- 10-0-0 motion passed

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Creswell