

Merrimack Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 19, 2016

Merrimack Town Hall, Memorial Conference Room

7:00 pm

Attendees: Chris Christensen, Michael Thompson, Dan Dwyer, Rick Greenier, Christine Lavoie
Parks & Recreation Director, Matt Casparius

Absent: Laura Jaynes, Maureen Hall, Julie Poole, Michelle Cushman

Start time: 7:05 pm

Open Meeting/Introductions

Approval of minutes from September 21st, 2016

- Christine Lavoie motion to accept the minutes as presented
- 2nd by Rick Greenier
- 5-0-0 motion passed

Old Business:

- **Recognition of Eagle Scout Project Completion:**

- Eagle Scout Candidate Nick LaRoche provided a brief PowerPoint presentation on the completion of his solar lighting project at Wasserman Park. The Committee collectively thanked him for all his hard work.

- **Merrimack Dog Park Construction Updates**

- Parks & Recreation Director Matt Casparius reported that construction on the dog park began on Monday, October 10th and that we are tentatively looking at a completion date for late November.
- He also reported that we have received \$200 in new donations to the Dog Park since the last meeting and will be requesting the \$25,000 from PetSafe in the next couple of days.
- He shared with the Committee an email received that day from Town Counselor Tom Mahon who had reviewed a draft of the proposed rules for the Dog Park and had some concerns with several of the rules and had also suggested that we propose making changing to Section 142 of the Town Ordinances and adding the rules to the ordinance. Director Casparius expressed concern with the timing of making this happen noting the possibility that the park would be complete but unable to open because the rules hadn't been finalized.
- Collectively the Committee felt that we should proceed with submitting the draft rules to the Town Council for approval and proceed from there.

- **Parks & Recreation Budget Discussion**

- Parks & Recreation Director Casparius reported that while he has not yet received instructions on the budget for this year, he led the committee thru a review of the few areas of the Parks & Recreation budget that he was planning to propose to the Town Manager for this next fiscal year.
 - Propose a Full Time Maintenance position for the Department
 - Since we have not been able to hire weekend lifeguards for the last 3 Summer, he is going to propose a weekend Park Attendant during the summer months to address patron complaints and trash cleanup.

- Increasing the budget for the Annual Holiday Parade & Tree Lighting to adjust for rising expenses.
- Director Casparius reported that the Town Manager has asked him to take over the Merrimack Rocks event. Costs are unknown at this point.
- For large scale projects in the next fiscal year
 - Waterfront Improvement project at Wasserman Park to address lack of water circulation, erosion issues, and silt build up. Working with the Town Engineer has received an initial estimate of around \$60,000.
 - At our September Meeting, the Committee had discussed possibly adding funds to the Town's Capital Reserve Fund for future athletic field development. The discussion continued and while the Committee acknowledged the need for future planning, it recognized that we didn't have specifics on a type of field, location or an estimated cost of developing a future field and that the Town would be unlikely to support a project with so few details known. It was ultimately decided by the Committee not to recommend to Director Casparius to try to add any money into the Capital Reserve Fund for athletic needs for this year.

Director's Report

- Employment Update: Director Casparius reported that Parks & Recreation Secretary Gianne Cruz has given her notice and that he is currently working to recommend changing the position from a Secretary to a Program Coordinator who can assist with planning and supervising programs. He expects that it will be late December or early January before he is able to fill the position.
- Function Hall Updates: Director Casparius provided an update on Function Hall usage. He is finding that there are 2 factors which seem to be limiting interest from potential renters. The first is that the Town requires renters to purchase liability insurance coverage and while the fee for the insurance and the rental fee is still cheaper than other places in Town it is an extra step that seems to be a hassle for people. The second issue is the acoustics in the Function Hall are not very good and so he is currently exploring ways to address that issue.
- Fall/Winter Programs are ongoing
- Upcoming Events:
 - Annual Halloween Party will take place on Friday, October 28th.
 - Annual Holiday Parade & Christmas Tree Lighting will take place on Sunday, December 4th.

Organization Reports

- Senior Citizens Club: No report
- MYA: Sports currently in session are Football, Cheerleading & Soccer. Basketball and Wrestling will be starting soon. There is a new MYA Secretary Brian Webb
- Town Council: Nothing to report
- School District: The plan for a new field at the High School has been pushed 1 year in the budget.

Comments from the Public: None

Comments from the Committee: Mike Thompson wanted to state how impressed he was with all the Matt does.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 16th

Motion to Adjourn made by Dan Dwyer and 2nd by Christine Lavoie. Motion 5-0-0. Adjourned at 8:30 pm

Submitted by: Matt Casparius