

City of Concord Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee
DRAFT Meeting Minutes from December 21, 2023 5:30pm

Committee Members: Chair Mary Miller, City Councilor Candace Bouchard, Robert Kleiner, Chiara Dolcino, Nick Kotkowski, Councilor Nate Fennessy, Althea Barton, and Paula Bowers.

Staff Members: Laura Bryant, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director and Heather Shank, City Planner.

Meeting was called to order at 5:34pm by Chair Mary Miller

Minutes approved as written from the November 2023 meeting. Mary started the meeting by recognizing it was Councilor Bouchard's last meeting. Everyone thanked and congratulated her.

New Business:

2023 Pool Season Review: Laura shared with the group the successes and struggles of the 2023 pool season. Hiring enough staff was once again a struggle. Based on the limited number of lifeguards hired the department did not open Garrison Pool. All other pools and new splash pad were open regular hours.

Splash Pad Operation Review: The new splash pad at White Park was a huge success and was open until end of August. The group discussed the idea of making it free to all users but most RPAC members feel that Concord Residents should be able to access for free as tax payers are paying the cost of operations and visitors should be required to pay a small fee. Members agreed having it staffed when open is necessary for supervision to ensure it is being used appropriately.

Garrison Pool Renovation FY 25: RPAC discussed renovating Garrison to be a splash pad may help to reduce the crowds at White Park. They were not in favor of renovating just as a pool, based on the consistent staffing issues and pattern of use it just doesn't make sense. Councilor Bouchard asked if it was an Adult Pool if we would still be required to have lifeguards. Laura answered that yes she believes based on insurance they would still need to provide lifeguards. Chiara made a motion for staff to explore having a splashpad at the Garrison location seconded by Nick, passed.

Staffing Update: Currently the Cemetery division is down 1 FT and 2 FT shared positions. Two new Guest Service Associates were just hired to work at the Merrimack Lodge and the City-Wide Community Center.

Winter Programming Update: Laura gave an update about current programming. Regular season basketball numbers are higher than last year. Travel basketball is also higher as we added 7th and 8th grade girls and boys teams. There will be a new Tai Chi instructor in January as Bill Halacy longtime instructor has retired. Many programs begin in January such as session 2 of ice skating, BKL Nordic Ski league, Fresh Pickles classes and much more.

Grant Applications: Laura shared the following update provided by David via email.

- Recently been notified successful LWCF grant applications for following amounts: \$400,000 for playground. Requires match and Council voting on match at their Jan meeting (\$350,000 city, \$50,000 FWP and others). Ideally construction fall 2024
- Recently been notified successful LWCF grant application for \$500,000 to help with new riverfront park in Penacook. City already approved match. Park construction scheduled to start spring

2024.

- Recently been notified of a \$18,000 grant for NH Council of the Arts for restoration of Eastman clock tower. No match required. Council to accept at their Jan meeting. Huge thank you to Chris Miller with the project and grant application.
- Just submitted a LWCF grant application for \$500,000 to help with cost of new skateboard. Requires \$500,000 match and will work with new skate board group and RPAC after the new year on fundraising plan.

Keach Park Athletic Field Lights Public Meeting: There is a public meeting scheduled for Thursday January 11, 2024 6:00pm at the City-Wide Community Center. This meeting is for all residents and user groups interested in learning more and sharing their thoughts about the project. Letters will be sent to all abutter and more information will be posted online next week.

Memorial Field Second Public Meeting: David is still working with the School District to nail down a date, TBA in the new year.

FY 25 CIP review at January Meeting: Prior to next months meeting David will send out a PDF of current Recreation CIP for review at the January meeting. Typically, we try to prioritize safety items first.

Althea asked about the timeline for signage at the new park and renovations to the old park. Laura said she would check with David and they could update her at another time.

Nate brought up the need to be thinking about space (buy land) where additional parks could be added with all the new residential units being built. Heather let RPAC know she and David have been talking about it. Terrill Park was mentioned as one solution as well as some land closer to the mall area.

Lastly Laura shared with RPAC results from the Senior Focus group she held in November. There was a nice mix of attendees some who currently participate and some who never have. Many folks want to do more things out and about so our Senior Coordinator Ruth will be slowly adding new things to the calendar. Althea added it might be nice to develop a cultural exchange type program, as many new American seniors may benefit from participating. Laura said she would look into it and contact Clement from the Overcomers program to try and get some folks involved.

Mary made a motion to adjourn meeting at 6:39pm, seconded by Chiara, passed.

Summited by Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Laura S. Bryant