

City of Concord, NH
Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee
DRAFT Meeting Minutes from February 15, 2024 5:30pm

Committee Members: Chair Mary Miller (Ward 10), City Councilor Nate Fennessy (At large), Robert Kleiner (Ward 2), Chiara Dolcino (Ward 3), Zoey Murphy (Ward 5), Jennifer Roff (Ward 4), Councilor Michelle Horne (Ward 2), Althea Barton (Ward 1), and Paula Bowers (Ward 8).

Staff Members: David Gill, Parks & Recreation Director and Laura Bryant, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

Guests: Representatives from Ski the Beav, and Friends of Keach Park

Meeting was called to order at 5:31pm by Chair Mary Miller

Minutes approved as written from the December 2023 meeting. Mary started the meeting by having all RPAC members introduce themselves.

New Business:

Ski the Beav: David gave a brief overview about the Ski the Beav group and the history of XC skiing at the Beaver Meadow Golf Course since winter operations came over to the Department around 2011. He reminded members SkiTheBeav were instrumental with helping the city buy the “new to us” snow groomer as they raise over \$50,000 towards the cost. Sam Evans-Brown, Chairman of Ski The Beav introduced himself and the turned it over to Kevin Galeaz who is spearheading their snowmaking efforts. Kevin spoke about the snowmaking process and referred to a digital presentation for examples. The hope is to be able to do a trial run with a borrowed Fan Gun to see how snowmaking would work at Beaver Meadow. Unfortunately, due to conditions this winter it has been impossible to borrow a snow gun as they are being heavily used. Kevin estimates Phase 1 would cost around 225K for equipment and an additional 100K for staff operations. Letters had been sent to abutters of Beaver Meadow Golf Course regarding the snow making demo and several were in attendance. Those present were mainly concerned with the noise that may be caused by snowmaking which is traditionally done at night. The SkiTheBeav is still working out many details such as power sources and water access. Next steps would be for the group to develop a business plan that outlines the partnership with the City of Concord as well as the financial responsibility the city would assume, they would also like to do a community survey. They indicated they would like to go to City Council at some point for approval to move forward with the project. Kevin from SkiTheBeav suggested a road trip to look at how Jackson NH or Weston Ski Track in Mass as they have snow making on their golf courses.

Friends of Keach Park: David started off again giving some history of the group and how Friends of Keach Park was formed. Noemi from the friends group spoke first about the origin of the group and how they hope to expand access to the City-Wide Community Center and Keach Park for new Americans. Zoey spoke next about the barriers the new Americans face and also shared their proposal for a dedicated Multicultural Room in the City-Wide Community Center. Next Kelly spoke about her experience coming to America 12 years ago and how she would've appreciated a designated place to find helpful resources. Lastly Meredith spoke about the financial commitment they are asking for from the city and offered they are willing to look for grants, fundraise and volunteer to help move the proposal forward. Althea asked if the program is only targeted to new Americans, Meredith answered yes only new Americans and Refugees. Nate asked if all groups currently receiving free space would be included in the Multicultural room, Meredith said yes.

Staffing Update: Laura let RPAC know all summer jobs have been posted, applications are beginning to trickle in. She also shared many returning staff are not planning to recertify as lifeguards and are hoping to work at camp or the splash pad. Many of them just don't want to take the lifeguard class and the hourly rate is not a factor to those Laura has spoken with.

Penacook Library/ Community Room: Currently under construction. Boys & Girls Club plans to begin programming in July. The Concord Library and Parks and Recreation plan to be using the space in early September. During FY25 budget request will include operating costs for new building. Additionally, Penacook will be getting a new park, first new city park since 1988, the ground breaking will be announced soon.

Keach Park Athletic Lights Meeting Recap: David spoke about the first meeting and addressed concerns about making sure public meetings are conducted in a safe respectful environment in the future. Mary suggested a neutral party to mediate at meetings that are concerning a polarizing subject. David shared that he has met with Airport Advisory. Once plans are close to final they would like him to come back for approval and they indicated we will need to submit the final design to the FAA for approval. HL Tuner Group is currently assessing the power available on sight to determine whether or not a new transformer will be needed. David is working with Concord PD to schedule a meeting with neighbors on Newton Ave that was brought up at the first public meeting. An audience member asked about the timeline of the project as she recalls it being approved in August 2021, David said it was not on his radar at that time and currently he is working on all possible aspects of the project to keep it moving forward. The biggest barriers are electricity, permits and facility use plan.

Memorial Field Meeting: the next meeting will be held Thursday March 22, 202 6:00pm at Concord High School. The vendor will be presenting design concepts based on the previous meetings.

FY 25 CIP Handout: David gave all RPAC members a copy of the CIP for all city parks outlining the next 10 years. He presented staff recommendations for FY 25. He asked that RPAC members review the documents and we will discuss in detail at the next meeting. David asked if RPAC members to look at the parks in their Wards and review to make sure items are not overlooked. He reminded members City Council is only funding FY25 projects and anything past next year often moves around.

David shared a Concord map showing all census track as well as a map of wards/districts of Concord, RPAC will use these and information about new housing developments to discuss areas that need more open space. He pointed out Ward 2 does not currently have a park, nor does Ward 8 as Terrill Park only have a dog park and walking trail.

Lastly David shared the current fees and charges form for RPAC to review and would like to review them at the next committee meeting. He indicated the city's utility costs are expected to have double digit increases and would like to discuss rates with the committee.

Councilor Michelle Horne asked about a scheduling a meeting to discuss activities at Rolfe Park. David asked her to request at a future City Council meeting so everyone is aware of the some of the issues that park is facing. David mentioned Rolfe Park is the park with the most vandalism and trash. Michelle also asked about the vacancy on RPAC for an MV school district representative. David confirmed the spot is open and encouraged her to speak with the Superintendent to get someone appointed.

Nate made a motion to adjourn meeting at 6:55pm, seconded by Rob, passed.

Summited by Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Laura S. Bryant