

City of Concord, NH
Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee
DRAFT Meeting Minutes from September 19, 2024 5:30pm

Committee Members: Acting Chair Althea Barton (Ward 1), Robert Kleiner (Ward 2), Brian Sartorelli (Ward 6), Nick Kotkowski (Ward 7), Paula Bowers (Ward 8), Jim Figueira (Ward 3), Councilor Michelle Horne, Councilor Nate Fennessy and Kenny Edwards (MVSD)

Staff Members: David Gill, Parks & Recreation Director, Laura Bryant, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director and Anne Marie Skinner, Acting City Planner

Guests: none

Meeting was called to order at 5:33pm by Acting Chair Althea Barton

Althea started the meeting by having all RPAC members introduce themselves, several new members were in attendance.

Minutes approved as written from the April 2024 meeting (no meeting in May, June, July or August).

New Business:

Council Referral Change for Concord: David reviewed the referral from Council to review the request from Change for Concord for free space on Friday nights outside regular business hours. David indicated would cost around \$3,300 a year to have building open and would need to find staff that will work. RPAC had an extensive discussion about all aspects of remaining open including costs, staffing and how the space will be used. RPAC also discussed in 2023 Change for Concord did not use all of their approved free hours (only around 10 hrs. of the 48 hours of approved free use). Jim suggested staff let Change for Concord know about the new space at Grappone Mazda dealer on Manchester Street as they have space that is free to community nonprofit groups. Nick motioned to deny the free room request (with the caveat that should regular hours change in the future Change for Concord could make the request again) seconded by Jim. Passed without descent

Council Referral Rolfe Park Safety Concerns: David discussed the council referral to have a community meeting at Rolfe Park to address the concerns that have be expressed by the neighborhood. All RPAC members all shared in the concerns and agreed a meeting would be beneficial. Councilor Michelle Horne made a motion to moved forward with planning a community meeting that would also include Concord Police, seconded by Nate. Passed without descent.

Concord Capitals request for Field Storage: David share with the group that Concord Capitals Football has request to install a storage shed at Martin Park. The Capitals organization will complete all required permits and be responsible for paying for the shed. RPAC all agreed it was a great idea to keep the park cleaned up and organized. Nate made a motion to allow a shed to be installed, seconded by Brian. Passed without descent.

Funding Request for SPARC program: The SPARC program would be a free drop in program for Concord and Penacook youth. The program will have a gym component as well as an arts & craft one. Laura and David spoke about a similar program that happened last winter that was run by a combo of staff and volunteers and mentioned the need to improve the program for this winter. This funding (\$20,000) request will allow Parks & Recreation Department to hire staff to create and implement the SPARC program this winter. There was discussion around the importance of not relying on volunteers for program success and dividing the program into two age groups and times to allow age appropriate activities to be planed. One age group would be under 10 with parent/caregiver and another for 10 to 15 years old's supervised by staff. Laura indicated that would be a good approach as it is similar to how our other programs are offered (by age groups). There would be a pre-registration process for the older age group but not one for younger group as they would come with parent/caregiver. Councilor Michelle Horne asked if any of the \$20,000.00 has been earmarked for the new community room in Penacook. Staff indicated not at this time as city still does not own space. RPAC members agree a program like this is important as long as it is organized and administered under the same guidelines of all Parks & Recreation programming. Councilor Michelle Horne made a motion to support the SPARC program and funding with the understanding she will be requesting similar opportunities for Penacook, Nick seconded. Passed without descent.

Keach Park Access from Loudon Road: David shared with RPAC that he had received a request to consider adding a gate at the entrance of the playground from Loudon Road. There was a concern about kids gaining access to Loudon Road. RPAC discussed the request and ultimately would like more information before moving forward with any recommendations.

Updates: David gave status updates on various projects and public meetings.

- Kiwanis Riverfront Park design and permitting
- New Riverfront Park in Penacook
- Phase 2 of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail
- Monkey Around Playground
- Eastman Clocktower restoration project
- Memorial Field Master Planning Process
- White Park Pond Lotus removal

Information on our CIP's is online at www.concordnh.gov/144/CIP-Park-Master-Plans

Pending Public Meetings: Next Keach Park light meeting is pending

Next RPAC meeting will be held Thursday October 17, 2024

Motion was made to end the meeting by Nick at 6:35 and seconded by Paula and approved.

Summited by Parks and Recreation Assistant Director, Laura S. Bryant