

City of Concord, NH
Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee
DRAFT Meeting Minutes from October 17, 2024 5:30pm

Committee Members: Althea Barton (Ward 1), Robert Kleiner (Ward 2), Jim Figueira (Ward 3), Zoey Murphy (Ward 5), Brian Sartorelli (Ward 6), Nick Kotkowski (Ward 7), Paula Bowers (Ward 8), Chair Mary Miller (Ward 10), Councilor Michelle Horne, Councilor Nate Fennessy and Kenny Edwards (MVSD)

Absent: Bard Higgins (Concord School District)

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

Guests: Tim LaTorra, CHS Basketball

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

Minutes approved as written from the September 2024 meeting.

New Business:

New Penacook Library and Activity Room: David gave an update on the new space in Penacook. We are hoping for it to open within the next 4-6 weeks. A grand opening will be held before programming begins. Mary asked about what activities will take place there. David shared that the library will be open roughly 18 hours a week and the remainder of the week will be used for Senior and Youth Programming. Rentals won't begin until the new year when there is a better understanding how programming will operate.

Tim LaTorra – Travel Basketball: David shared some backstory about the travel basketball history within Concord Parks & Recreation. Travel Basketball was first offered during 2019-2020 season this came to be when Anthony Blinn and Tim LaTorra approached Assistant Director, Laura Bryant about adding this option as part of the existing basketball program. At that time there was limited travel basketball options in Concord.

In September 2024, Director Gill reviewed the new travel basketball programs in Concord, overall cost of the program, upcoming department initiatives and made the decision to remove Travel Basketball from department offerings. This decision was based on many factors; there is now a travel program in town, demand on staff, and pricing. When staff reached out to let Tim know about the change he was very disappointed. Tim LaTorra, Laura Bryant, Luke Bonner and David had a meeting on Monday, Sept 26 to discuss options how to continue program.

David shared the history of the departments travel basketball program, Tim made his presentation to RPAC with similar history of the program. Tim said he sent Parks and Recreation staff information on Oct 3 however he has not heard back. David indicated that was not correct as there has been several emails since with the last being on Friday, Oct 11. David indicated emails back and forth since early October were related to creating a hybrid program this year. David mentioned Councilor Fennessy on Monday, Oct 14 asked to have Tim on the agenda for RPAC. Tim passed out a flyer with information on teams with suggested tryout dates and mentioned

he has secured the Concord High School Gym on Wednesday, Nov 6 for tryouts for the Parks and Rec travel basketball program. Tim said to the committee he would be the point person with staff for all things travel related.

Tim asked if an agreement could be reached to allow the travel basketball league to run this year. An in-depth conversation between Tim and RPAC ensued. RPAC had general conversation about travel basketball, Councilor Fennessy indicated he would like to see the department continue or even expand options to other sports if need in community. Mary indicated that should be a conversation with staff this winter. Everyone agreed. At the end David indicated the department will be able to continue the program and will follow up with Tim within the next couple of days.

White Park Playground Contract: The playground contract has been awarded. This project is 12 years in the making. Cost is coming in around 800K and will be partially paid for by LWCF funds. This playground will be 100% accessible.

Staffing Update: David shared that there are 11 openings within the department. 2 are FT shared positions in the Cemetery and the remaining are 9 open positions administrative/ programming positions with Recreation. Several of these positions will be for the newly funded SPARC program.

Need for New Parks based on Growth: David shared with RPAC the need to look for more parks space to match the number of residential units coming online in Concord. David shared a report from previous years about possible projects on the horizon, Ann Marie shared that at this time none of those projects were permitted. Nate asked about the process for flagging potential parks land. David shared if any RPAC members have a space in mind they should share the location with him and he working with planning can research it's possibility.

Skate Board Park Grant and Fundraising Planning: David will be meeting with the skateboard group next week. City Council gave permission to apply for an LWCF grant for this project, the grant will be awarded in December. There is one million dollars in this year's CIP budget as a place holder but the funds have not yet been appropriated. If awarded the grant the skate board park nonprofit will need to increase fundraising efforts in order to meet the expectation of matching funds.

New Winter Brochure: The winter brochure is now available. It is available on the website and was distributed to elementary schools earlier in the week. Brian asked about advertising for travel basketball since it wasn't in the brochure. David assured him it would be sent out as soon as the details were finalized.

Althea asked about the Rolfe Park safety meeting. David said Council approved a meeting and it will be schedule in partnership with Concord PD in 3-4 weeks.

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

- New Riverfront Park in Penacook – Canal Street park is coming along nicely, there will be a soft opening later this fall
- Memorial Field Master Planning Process – the cost estimates have been presented to the school board and will be presented to City Council next month. Design in permitting is 1.5 million and full build is roughly 30 million. The build would most likely take place in phases.

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 November 21, 2024

Motion was made to end the meeting by Nate at 6:51 and seconded by Althea and approved.

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