

City of Concord, NH Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes from June 16, 2025 5:30pm

Committee Members: Althea Barton (Ward 1), Robert Kleiner (Ward 2), Jim Figueira (Ward 3), Zoey Murphy (Ward 5), Paula Bowers (Ward 8), Deodonne Bhattarai (Ward 9), Chair Mary Miller (Ward 10), Kenny Edwards (Merrimack Valley School District), City Councilor Michele Horne

Absent: City Councilor Nate Fennessy, Nick Kotkowski (Ward 6), Brian Sartorelli (Ward 7), Sarah Beauregard (Ward 4), Barb Higgins (Concord School District).

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

Guests: Andrew Gould and Craig Tuffs

Meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Chair Mary Miller

Althea asked for a change to her remarks from the May meeting, minutes approved with change from the May 2025 meeting.

New Business:

Concord Crew Sign Request: Concord Crew has asked to have a sign installed at the park entrance closet to the Crew Shed. The new sign is similar design as the existing sign for the Arena and will be located per the new park master plan. The plan to fundraise towards the effort but may ask the City for funding as well. Mary made a motion to support the effort, seconded by Michele and approved.

Bike Park Update: Andrew and Craig spoke to RPAC about their continued effort to find an appropriate spot for a bike park. After the meeting last year at the West Street Ward House they have looked at several other sites and determined that Martin Park makes the most sense. They even met with the Cities Trails Committee as several of the city trails allow mountain bikes however the committee did not have any recommendations for a bike park as most of the trails are on conservation land. Michele asked about how much space they are looking for, they said about 1/2 acre including parking. Althea asked about the terrain needed and they responded anything works if it is flat they will build features. Staff recommendation is to hold a community meeting for the neighborhood around Martin Park with the hope of moving the process forward. David indicated if the bike park was built at Martin Park it would not affect current park users. Michele asked about incorporating it into the skateboard park but there isn't any space available there. The budget would be roughly 150 K. Next steps will be to schedule a public meeting in early September.

LWCF Grant Round 36: David shared with RPAC that the city manager would like the support from RPAC before asking council for approval to submit a letter of intent. The grant is for \$500,000 that would be used for the Memorial Field Project. Mary asked about how the Memorial Field City/School meetings have been going. David said things are progressing and \$1.5 million was included in the FY26 budget for design and permitting as long as the school district contributes 750K. Althea made a motion to support a letter of intent, seconded by Mary and approved.

White Park Playground Update (CIP51): David shared that the additional fundraising goal of 60K has been reached and exceeded. He reminded the committee all the information on the project and the final design is online. Currently the project is on track to start demo in July and construction in August. David shared there will be a “going away party” for the current playground before demo begins.

Kiwanis Park & Skate Board Park: All information about the project has been updated on the Concord Parks & Recreation website. David indicated VHB our vendor who is handling the design will be sending permits to the state within next couple of weeks. It is currently projected to be a 2-phased project – Phase 1 being around \$1 million. Michele asked if the skate park fundraising information is on the website and David let her know all the fundraising information is online and that he is currently working with the Skate Park Association on a fundraising campaign for this summer and fall. David reminder the committee the City received a LWCF Grant for \$500,000 that requires a one to one match for phase 1 construction.

Aquatics Operation this summer: City Council would like RPAC along with staff to evaluate and look closely at the aquatic’s operations across the city. The are looking into how sustainable it is to continue to operate 6 pools. The Parks and Recreation Director reported he will research how other New Hampshire Communities manage their outdoor aquatics operations and will report back to the committee. RPAC had a healthy discussion about how to undertake such a project and plans to meet in July to discuss further, however Mary asked for more direction to be provided by council before RPAC puts in time and effort she would like to ensure their effort aligns with councils’ expectations. What are City Council specific questions and desired outcomes? Motion made by Mary, seconded by Althea and approved.

Sunset Baseball League referral from Council: David shared a letter from the Sunset Baseball League requesting a fee reduction for lights at Memorial Field. David shared the history of the fee structure. Mary indicated in the past this committee has usually not supported fee waivers or reductions as the fee structure is very clear online and all groups and renters are aware of the rental procedures. She is concerned when fees are waived for one group and not another without a clear written policy there will be a perception of favoritism. Also, when fees are waived there are budget considerations that may result in tax payers supporting one user group and not another. RPAC had a lengthy discussion and resulted in the following motion. Rob made a motion to refer the Sunset Baseball request follow the established procedure for requesting a reduced or waived fee to City Manager, and requests City Council and City Administration to create a clear written policy for reductions and waivers going forward, Mary seconded and approved.

Other items:

Jim asked about Healy Park clean up and how the city would keep the homeless from returning. David shed that once the camps are cleaned up the tree canopy will be lifted which will open up site lines for police, etc. to more easily see what is going on in the area. This was successful behind the Concord Crew shed at Kiwanis Park. Also, police plan to increase patrol.

Mary asked about meeting in the summer, it was agreed upon to keep July 17th open to hopefully have a meeting. Motion was made by Mary to end the meeting at 6:53pm, seconded by Jim and approved.

Next RPAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday July 17th at 5:30pm.

Submitted by Laura S Bryant