

City of Portsmouth, NH
Recreation Board
Minutes of Meeting of April 17, 2024

Present: Lauren Krans, Kathie Lynch, Rich Duddy [chair], Bob Bogardus, Rich Blalock, Jacki Calli-Pitts, Todd Henley, Connor Mullin

Meeting called to order at 6:35 with a roll call to establish a quorum.

No one came forward for the purpose of public comment.

Communications: Todd Henley introduced Connor Mullin as the newly hired Recreation Supervisor with primary responsibilities at the Community Campus for programming for elementary age children. Connor shared that he has an undergraduate degree from UNH and a graduate degree from West Virginia in Park and Recreation Management. He has extensive experience in outdoor recreation primarily focused on kids and has begun departmental programming for after school and early release days programming at the Community Campus [CC]. He is involved in the redesign of space at the CC for activity centers for elementary aged kids with a goal in 2025 of offering a full-time afterschool program for students at the 3 elementary schools in Portsmouth.

Members of the Board asked about after school activities for Middle School aged students beyond the Connie Bean Center gym. Todd shared that some changes in available space at the Connie Bean/PMS have already been made to accommodate quiet activities including homework completion. Further offerings will be explored.

Old Business:

1. Tribute/Memorial Sub-Committee: A review of the tribute plaque at the softball field revealed that the plaque has experienced aging and needs attention. This plaque primarily acknowledges the contributions to the athletic dimension of recreation. Much discussion followed including the need to 1: review and revise, if necessary, the current Naming Criteria, 2: determine locations for tribute plaques [i.e., should they be location specific meaning contributions to senior recreation at the Senior Center, contributions to the pool at the Indoor Pool, etc.], 3: determine the role of experiences in tribute determinations, and 4: improve the visibility of tributes already in place. Rich Duddy requested that the current sub-committee review the Naming Criteria in place and come back to the full Board with suggestions for changes for discussion and adoption.
2. Skatepark: May 18 @ 11:00 am will be the ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly built skatepark. All Recreation Board members are encouraged to attend [wear your name badge]. Work still to be done includes expanding the parking area into the proposed pump track area to add ~ 24 parking spaces, adding lighting to the expanded parking areas, paving the parking areas, replacing the seating benches, finalizing rail trail access, and completing any other outstanding items.

New Business:

1. CIP projects:
 - a. Turf Field – field #2 is in the design process and will be stripped for softball in addition to usual field stripes and will be lit. A net/fence will separate fields 1 and 2.
 - b. South Mill Playground – design is in process to replace the playground equipment and layout and will involve improvements from the street to the tennis/pickle ball/basketball courts including adding permanent toilet facilities.
 - c. Indoor pool: improvements will be partially funded by leftover funds from SIPP each year [up to 35% contribution] until the SIPP funds are exhausted.
 - d. Todd shared the Buildings and Infrastructure proposed improvements with the Recreation Board and detailed what is planned for 2025 as well as possible improvements for the following five years. Todd and Rich Blalock emphasized that the document is not a “done deal” but represents the plans for keeping recreation facilities safe, accessible, and in good condition.
2. Upcoming Events:
 - a. Special events information for late spring/summer 2024 was shared with the Board.
 - b. Todd shared a visual presentation of the planned changes to the CC building comparing current room and space usage to planned room and space usage. Funds for the renovation have come from ARPA [1.5 million] and a grant Todd received for the Recreation Department [1 million] – with this funding no taxpayer dollars should be needed to complete the building renovation. Current and future tenants have been involved in the design process with JSA and construction work will be completed by BPS [the firm currently renovating the Lister Academy space].

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathie Lynch
Recreation Board Secretary