



Gates Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting April 11, 2023



Those in attendance:

Commissioners: Rhoda Ride Eileen Andrews Brom Bianchi Steve Murphy John Unson
Director: Dan Hock
Town Liaison: Chris DiPonzio
Not in attendance: Greg Westbrook

The meeting was called to order at 6:31PM by Rhoda Ride. Rhoda asked for a moment of silent prayer in memory of Dominic DiPonzio. Following this, Rhoda welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for coming.

The minutes of the March 14 meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Eileen Andrews and seconded by Steve Murphy that the March minutes be accepted as written. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

Financial Report:

The financial report was reviewed by the Commission. Highlights of that discussion included:

- * Pertaining to the A7020.485 expenditure, Rhoda Ride inquired where the “portable signs” were to be placed? Dan Hock shared the signs be used by the department in various spots to give directions for classes or events. He also mentioned the signs might be borrowed by other town departments if needed.
- * John Unson inquired as to why the park attendant wage percentage is higher than others listed. Dan explained he thought it was because of the three pay periods that occurred in the month of March.
- * Rhoda Ride inquired about the monies budgeted for “Star Camp.” Her concern was that less money has been scheduled for this year’s program and asked if would it be enough to cover expenses? She also asked for verification of where the production would be held. Dan Hock shared this particular program has seen a decline in support due to a variety of reasons (e.g. - participants aging out, less interest, time demands, etc.) Factoring that in, the program is still worthwhile to continue, but to modify it to meet the current needs. There will be one performance, held at the GCPAC, and in lieu of a full play, vignettes will be presented. Rhoda inquired if there was a minimum number of participants required, and Dan indicated there was, and that advertising about this program had been done at all the schools. Rhoda requested a detailed accounting of the specific numbers for this program be shared with the Commission, and also a specific accounting of costs. Dan will compile that information and share it with the Commission. A brief discussion followed related to the changes made in the is program.
- * Steve Murphy inquired about monies spent under acct. #A7140.485. Dan Hock explained that tables have been purchased for inside the Memorial Park shelter. These are heavy duty tables made from a composite material. Dan also mentioned that additional picnic tables are being purchased for outside use too.

A motion was made by John Unson and seconded by Steve Murphy that the financial report be accepted. The vote was unanimous to accept the report with no modifications.

Correspondence:

No correspondence was shared.

Program Reports:

Commissioners reviewed these reports, and there were no questions or input shared.

Old Business:

Easter Egg Hunt:

Rhoda Ride shared what a wonderful event this was! It was well attended, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, and it seemed run very smoothly. Dan Hock thanked all the Commissioners who attended this event, and agreed with Rhoda that the event went well. A brief discussion followed with the following highlights:

- * Eileen Andrews shared she was disappointed that the hunt this year didn’t include the “golden eggs” as in years past. She was concerned that participants were expecting that to happen, and were disappointed. She also mention she was confused related to who got prizes because there were no ping-pong balls either for special recognition.
- * Steve Murphy inquired as to the availability of giving out gift cards from local merchants also as has been done in the past? Steve also asked about the number of attendees being higher or lower than at past events, and if holding it at TSE made a difference?
- * Brom Bianchi shared he thought holding this event at TSE was a good choice due to the uncertainty of the weather at this time of year. Brom also inquired as to adding more activities for the children to participate in after the egg hunt was over. He mentioned in addition to the sports games (which he felt needed more adult supervision for concerns about safety for younger children getting hurt), that having face painting might have been fun, or adding other activities that would have engaged kids for a longer period of time. Discussion followed.

- * Dan Hooch explained that in the past, these aforementioned activities had been included at this event, but over the years, the activities have been modified (e.g. - ping-pong balls have not been part of this event for a few years.) Dan indicated that he appreciated the input he had received, and next year's event (already scheduled at TSE) could be modified to include these suggestions.

Summer Celebration: August 12

- * Dan Hooch shared the food vendors have been arranged for. The choices include a variety of offerings and he is hoping to add one more to the listing. Input from the Commission included possibly a "healthier" option be included. Dan explained a "healthier" option has been included in the past, but was not well received, but it certainly could be considered again.
- * Dan shared the bathroom trailer has been reserved for this event at the cost of \$2100 for the day. He also mentioned that golf carts are being rented to help transport people when necessary.
- * Steve Murphy inquired about the cost of the fireworks program? Dan shared that \$7500 has been designated for fireworks, and the show will be approximately 22 minutes long and custom designed for this event.

Kid Fest Event - June 3 - 1PM-4PM

Dan Hooch shared a mapping outline for events taking place that day. He explained what activities would be included, as well as addressing parking concerns and options if there is inclement weather. Rhoda Ride inquired about addressing needs of special needs participants, and if any activities have been included specifically for them. Dan shared that each of the activities planned would be open to any and all participants, and that special needs children would be able to participate in everything. A brief discussion followed. Chris DiPonzio inquired about advertising being done? Advertising will be happening, including getting information out at the local schools. Steve Murphy mentioned the Thunderbird Air Show would be happening that day also.

Park Projects:

Dan Hooch asked for input related to the placement of a pavilion at First Responders Park. The following input was shared:

- * Brom Bianchi shared his concern about one of the placement options taking away acreage at the soccer field. Dan explained that approximately 100-feet would be used, but additional footage would be added at the opposite end.
- * Brom shared he felt the spot selection to the right hand side of the shelter was the best choice, as it was still close to parking and would allow more space for expansion. A brief discussion followed.
- * Size of the pavilion choices was discussed and the majority felt the larger pavilion would offer more options for rental and higher revenues.
- * Dan explained the concrete pad for this building would be poured by the end of the month.
- * Rhoda Ride shared her concern about safety at this park because it has only one road option for entry and exiting.

Dan Hooch shared that grant(s) have been submitted related to getting monies to replace the outdoor bathrooms at Memorial Park. It's an involved process to do these requests, but hopefully we will qualify for funding to take that project on. He also mentioned that Cosmo Guinta (Town Supervisor) has reviewed the architectural plans submitted for a new shelter at Memorial Park, and Cosmo would be meeting again with the designer to modify them to meet the community needs better.

New Business:

Memorial Day Ceremony:

Dan asked for a volunteer from the Commission to participate in the rose presentation at this event. After a brief discussion, Chris DiPonzio was asked to take on this responsibility, unless one of the Commissioners is available that day to do it.

Camp Scholarship form:

Dan Hooch asked for input related to the scholarship application form that is currently available for use. He explained that for the past two years, no scholarship options have been requested, but due to different economic status this year, they might be. A discussion followed. The highlights of that discussion included:

- * The group felt the wording used in the application form need to be updated to reflect current standards of identifying parents.
- * Concern was raised as to monetary breakdown wording and if it was reflective of current standards?
- * A question was raised as to why a 10% administrative fee was added in for an application process for someone already in financial need?
- * A suggestion was made to ask the town lawyer to review this form to see what recommendations for wording, etc. could be made.
- * A question was raised as to who would be reviewing these forms (Commissioners? Dept. Staff? Town Board?)
- * A question as to what percentage would a scholarship qualify for? (e.g. - 25% off, 50% off or 75% off, and who makes that decision)
- * Dan Hooch shared the department works with families related to time payments for programs, especially families with multiple children.
- * Rhoda Ride asked if information could be obtained from other towns related to their scholarship policies. Dan will follow up on that.

It was decided that at this time, until more information is available, we will table any decision making on this form.

Parks Master Plan:

Dan Hooch asked for input and discussion related to making a long range plan for the parks in our community. He suggested that an ad hoc team meet to discuss this plan, and at a later date, it be brought to the Commission for review. A brief discussion followed on the pros/cons of this type of plan, as well as time commitment for this ad hoc team. A brief discussion followed. The suggestion that this plan be a "living" one

where adjustments can be made easily, as compared to a “plan” that limits you to the exact wording of it. The following people offered to help with this ad hoc team: John Unson, Rhoda Ride, Valerie Young and possibly Brom Bianchi.

Election of Officers - 2023

Eileen Andrews made a motion that the ballot of officers from 2022 be continued for 2023. John Unson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to have the ballot continued. Officers for 2023 will be:

Chairperson	-	Rhoda Ride
Vice Chairperson	-	Greg Westbrooke
Sunshine	-	Eileen Andrews

Good of the Order:

- Brom Bianchi - Shared he was glad the weather is better, and it was nice to see everyone in-person at this meeting.
- Steve Murphy - Shared he too was glad of the change in seasons and was happy to see everyone.
- Chris DiPonzio - Thanked everyone for their support and kind words shared with him and his family for the recent passing of his Dad.
- Dan Hoock - Shared the Ukulele Club has been quite successful and more people are joining. They will now be doing some public performances too! He also shared he will be doing presentation at the upcoming state conference on disc golf. Dan mentioned this year will be a rebuilding year for camp staffing as many of the former camp staff have moved on. They are currently interviewing applicants, and he will report back at a later meeting the names selected for hiring. Input from coaches and other camp staff members is being included in this process. Dan also mentioned the German Federation building area won't be used for a campsite this year, but the camps will return to the Disney and Armstrong schools, as building renovations are completed at these sites.
- John Unson - It's good to see everyone again. Also, congratulations to John's wife Andrea who has been re-certified to be a lifeguard.
- Rhoda Ride - Thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.
- Eileen Andrews - Shared she was glad to see everyone again in-person.
- Valerie Young - Asked for a motion to be made to accept the financial reports from the Commission meetings that were held via email from January/February/March, just to make sure it becomes part of the official recordings. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by John Unson and seconded by Brom Bianchi that the financial reports be accepted as posted. The vote was unanimous to accept this motion.

Additional Business Actions:

Rhoda Ride inquired as to when the state conference was being held. Dan shared it was being held April 23-25, and Ellen, Stacie and Dan would be attending.

A motion was made by Eileen Andrews and seconded by Steve Murphy to adjourn the meeting. The vote was unanimous and the meeting was closed at 7:58PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 9 at 6:30PM at the Department Rec. room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Valerie Young - Secretary