



# Gates Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting May 14, 2019



Those in attendance:

Commissioners:	Rhoda Ride	Steve Murphy
	Eileen Andrews	John Unson
	Brom Bianchi	Greg Westbrook
	Rob Keister	
Director:	Dan Hoock	
Liaison:	Chris DiPonzio	

The meeting was called to order promptly at 6:27 PM by Rhoda Ride.

The minutes from the April meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Eileen Andrews and seconded by Rob Keister to accept the April minutes. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes as written.

Before the current agenda items were addressed, Rhoda Ride opened the floor to the discussion of question(s) raised at April's meeting that were tabled until Dan Hoock was in attendance.

- Greg Westbrook and Rob Keister raised a concern pertaining to a recent class (sponsored through the department) that included the option of serving of alcoholic beverages. Their concerns included what the liability would be to the Department/Town if someone was involved in an accident after this class and had an elevated blood alcohol level, and also a concern of the image of the department supporting a program that included alcohol consumption. Discussion followed about the pros/cons of this type of programming and Dan Hoock mentioned that to participate in any of these types of programming, the applicant must be 21 years of age. Dan will do a follow up with the town attorney to verify what the liabilities would be on this type of programming and report back at the June meeting.
- Rob Keister raised a question about the line dancing program and how the monies for it were managed? Dan Hoock explained that all applicants to this program are registered with the department and the monies are accounted through the department directly. In the past, this was not the way this program was coordinated.
- Rhoda Ride asked why so many areas of the budget included the term "*miscellaneous*" which does not explain what specific expenses this encompasses? Extensive discussion took place pertaining to how this term could be misleading, whether or not it is a legal banking term, and how it can leave questions pertaining to specific expenses. Dan Hoock asked if he separated out the specific budgetary concerns the Commission raised, would that be a better way to present the budget? Discussion followed. Dan will follow up on this concern.
- Rhoda Ride asked why the recent brochure had excluded any acknowledgements or thank you's? Dan Hoock explained he was aware of this concern. Discussion followed. Rhoda encouraged Dan to review the brochure that Chili distributes as it contains inclusive information for the entire town. Rhoda shared she felt that our brochure could be a great opportunity for increasing our communication options with the Gates community. Dan shared that this information will be put back in the upcoming brochure.
- Rhoda Ride shared the discussion on the walkway at Memorial Park has been put on hold. More study on the options related to this improvement need to be investigated and reviewed. This topic will be brought back to the table at a later date.
- Rhoda Ride asked Dan Hoock and Steve Murphy how the recent state conference was? Dan said he had a great experience and particularly found the information shared about therapeutic recreation options very interesting. Steve shared that the options of jungle gym styles and playground equipment were very interesting also. Both Dan and Steve felt the conference was well presented.

Following this discussion the regular business of the May meeting was initiated.

## Financial Report:

The financial reports from both April and May were reviewed and discussed. Again the concern of the term "*miscellaneous*" was brought up by Brom Bianchi. Dan Hoock explained that he will check with Cindy Briggs on how this can be adjusted/modified based on the town budgetary sheets. A motion was made by Greg Westbrook to accept the financial report(s) and seconded by Steve Murphy. The vote was unanimous to accept these report(s) as presented.

## Correspondence:

Several thank you notes were shared by Dan Hoock. These included a thank you note for a donation made to Relay for Life, a note of thanks for the use of the facilities for the Cub Scout Pinewood Derby, and the last was from Parkminster Pre-School for a recent field trip. All these notes were shared with the Commissioners.

## **Evaluation of Past Programs:**

A brief overview of the programs from April and early May was presented. The following is highlights of this discussion.

- Easter Egg Hunt - all felt this was a well received program and everyone who attended seemed to have a good time. Rob Keister shared a concern that he felt there wasn't much interaction of the older children with activities and that possibly next year some other options for activities could be considered. Brom Bianchi shared the GaGa pit was well received, but that it needed to be managed better with allowing more kids to participate. Discussion followed on how this could be done.
- Rob Keister asked if the Spring Recess program could include programming pertaining to basic first aid (e.g. - ambulance presentation, how to make a 911 call, etc.) Dan Hoock explained that information is included in the EPIC programming, but that he would take Rob's suggestion and share it with the staff.
- John Unson inquired about the staffing for the Spring Recess program. John indicated on at least one day, there seemed to be many more staff members working than would be necessary for the number of registrants attending. Discussion followed and Dan Hoock indicated that he would follow up and find out why that occurred.
- Rhoda Ride asked about the Scrapbooking program held, and that it appeared that more non-residents than residents participated? Discussion followed on the enrollment protocol used, and Dan will follow up on this.
- Rhoda Ride asked for a clarification of the monies collected for registration vs. the expenses for the EPIC program? It appears on the informational sheet, these final numbers have been reversed. Dan Hoock will follow up and get this error corrected.

## **Programs in Progress:**

Everyone reviewed the listing and no further discussion took place.

## **Old Business/New Business:**

The first item to be discussed was the Volunteer Brunch. Rhoda Ride shared she thought the event went very well, but she was disappointed in the overall attendance numbers. Discussion followed with several opinions offered on why attendance might have been low. Rhoda suggested that this event not be annual, but be held every other year. Discussion followed on that idea. It was decided that this event would be skipped for next year, but considered again for 2021.

The next item to be discussed was the draft letter related to contractual agreements for instructors. Dan Hoock shared this draft letter and explained he had researched other departments related to their policies, and felt it important to update our criteria. Discussion followed. Concerns raised included questions about the difficulty in changing department policies; how these changes might be received; what specific groups it would affect; and would sports groups be affected, etc. After extensive discussion, including concerns raised about custodial coverage for weekend events, it was decided that another draft of this letter will be presented for the June meeting for final discussion. This policy would be put into effect for the fall programming session.

The next item to be discussed was a brief overview of the Summer Celebration event. Dan Hoock reviewed all the pertinent information related to this event and answered all the Commission questions. Extensive discussion took place. It appears that all the programming for this event is in place. Following this event, the Commission will review and evaluate this program for planning purposes.

The next item to be discussed was the status of the long range planning suggestion list the Commission created at their April meeting. This listing included a variety of suggestions that need to be prioritized. Discussion followed on how this could be done, with many varying opinions shared. Rhoda Ride shared it was important to give the Commission recommendation to the Town as soon as possible, so they could be acted upon. As part of the extensive discussion that took place, Dan Hoock explained the need to resurface the tennis courts at Lions Park. Dan shared pictures of the court surfaces that need to be addressed. Along with these pictures, Dan shared the quotes from three different companies to do the repair work. This information included estimated costs, descriptions of what would be done and also timelines of work. The Commissioners raised several questions which included whether or not references had been checked for each company; whether the work included any form of a guarantees; whether or not the company has done work with the Town before, and also what the timeline might be for future repairs. Again, extensive discussion took place. Dan will follow up with these concerns and send out this information immediately to the Commission when he compiles it. An additional item that fell under this discussion also included concerns about the status/condition of the pickle ball courts at Westgate Park. All agreed that this needs to be included in any long range planning.

The next item to be discussed was a question raised by Rhoda Ride concerning immunization requirements for Dept. sponsored summer camps? Dan Hoock assured the Commission that all immunization requirements were being met.

The last item to be addressed was the discussion of which park should be recommended to be the first where improvements be made. Rhoda Ride encouraged input from all Commission members. The discussion included information of which park brings in the most revenue; which park is used the most and for what activities; what renovations would be included in this renovation project; and if some of the other parks could get cosmetic improvements, etc.? After extensive discussion, the Commission's decision is to recommend the first park to be addressed for renovation purposes should be Memorial Park. These improvements should include upgrading the shelter (bathrooms, kitchen, etc.) and also the outside grounds. If this recommendation is accepted, hopefully the Commission will be included in the decision making of what improvements will be made.

**Other items Discussed:**

Rhoda Ride asked that park visits be scheduled as soon as possible. The weather has been challenging to do this, but it is important the park visits get completed soon. The following dates were set for these visits:

Westgate Park	-	Steve Murphy/Greg Westbrook	May 21 - 10AM
Memorial Park	-	Chris DiPonzio/Rhoda Ride	June 7 - 10AM
Lions Park	-	Eileen Andrews/John Unson	Yet to be determined
Wegman Rd. Park	-	Rob Keister	May 20 - 9AM
Town Park	-	Brom Bianchi	May 21 - 9AM

Rob Keister shared that he has been doing research to find reusable (or bio-degradable) bags that could be used for the Easter Egg Hunt next year. He shared several options with the Commission. A brief discussion followed pertaining to these options. Rob will try and get actual samples of these bags for the Commission to evaluate. Rhoda Ride thanked Rob for his initiative in doing this research.

**Good of the Order:**

Dan Hoock: This coming Saturday at 2PM there is the Youth Sports Event sponsored by TSE and YMCA.

Chris DiPonzio: There will be an Eagle ceremony for Sam Yamonaco at 2PM this Saturday. Sam built Dr. Seuss houses as his project.

Steve Murphy: Nothing at this time.

Rob Keister: The Boy Scout camporee held at Westgate Park was a success.

Greg Westbrook: Nothing at this time.

Valerie Young: Nothing at this time.

Rhoda Ride: Nothing at this time.

Eileen Andrews: Nothing at this time.

Brom Bianchi: Nothing at this time.

John Unson: Had to leave the meeting prior to it's end.

A motion was made by Steve Murphy and seconded by Rhoda Ride the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 11 at 6:30 PM at the Recreation Conference room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Young  
Recording Secretary