



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

May 19, 2022

Whipple Hall

5:30 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jackie Christensen (Chair)

Chris Lorio (Vice Chair)

Scott Fitzgerald (via Zoom, did not vote)

Tara Stone

Justin Garzia

OTHERS PRESENT:

Putnam Kidder, Town of New London Recreation Director

Russell Moore, Kearsarge Bike and Walk Coalition

Presentation by Russell Moore of Kearsarge Bike and Walk Coalition

RM attended meeting to give Commission background on KBWC and their mission, recent work, and the possibility of Rec. Dept. Collaboration in the future. Group advocates for safe bike and walk routes in Town and education about bike and walk safety measures. Group has gathered information from community members with a survey and works to stay connected with Town committees about present and future plans and how safe bike and walking routes can be promoted. Downtown Business Bike Loop is one example, long range project that was presented to Commission in the past. Rec. Director was a part of recent Bike Safe event held at KRESNL to help promote bike safety, giving out helmets, bike tune ups, and bike course. Group is enthusiastic to work with Rec. Department and Town groups to further access and education around safe bike and walk routes and access to those routes. Rec. Commission was supportive of group and the benefit of collaboration with Rec. Dept.

IT WAS MOVED by Chris Lorio AND SECONDED by Jackie Christensen to accept Minutes from Rec. Commission Meeting 4-7-22 THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

*Rec. Director reported on:

Easter Event Round Two (first one postponed due to Covid exposure for Rec. Director). Positive turn out with younger kids and families, 50 plus people over the course of the event. Local preschool had a bake sale and we had Easter Egg hunt and other scavenger hunt along with other lawn type games for people to play.

*Recent Summer Programming Presentation to Selectmen. Director shared write up with Commission prior to presentation. The plan of activities was reviewed, and budget projections were given. The budget has increased significantly for staffing this Summer due to increased wages. Current projection has the staff wages exceeding budget by \$34,000. This projection is high as staff will not work due to weather or other factors, but those are hard to predict so Director went with a higher projection based on the maximum days worked. The Selectmen were supportive of the plans and presentation but did suggest measures be taken by Director to keep costs on target for budgets. Commission discussed options of ways to handle possible budget overages. It was agreed that the

Director will look at ways we can provide the services for the beaches, but still save money. Reduce hours or days for staff? Possibly shift funds from other areas of Rec. Budget to cover wage increases? Cover overages from Rec. Activity Fund?

*Strawberry Fest was brought up and everyone agreed that it would be great to be able to rejuvenate this tradition, but this Summer is not possible, given Covid in the late Winter and Spring, and Rec. Director position being part time and with limited time beaches and other events took priority. The option was discussed about looking at ways to get this event back on the calendar next Summer as it was a wonderful community event.

*Possibility of Rec. Van being leased by a Dance camp to use for a few days a week over the Summer for their day trips. The Rec. Dept. Will not need the van for those days and the concept of revenue coming in, as group will pay to use the van, was deemed worth looking into. Rec. Director will look into details around liability issues and whether those could make the arrangement not worth pursuing. Commission continued to discuss the topic of reinstating the Rec. Director position back to full time from its current part time role. The Rec. Director was on the agenda for next Selectmen's meeting 5/26 to bring up this question. The Commission decided that it would prefer to have more time to review the necessary information and provide a more thorough report on all aspects of the question. Commission also discussed recent Town Governance changes. Currently, it doesn't seem to be impacting the Commission and its membership. The idea of future recusal if necessary was brought up if there were concerns around overlapping roles on various Town committees.

IT WAS MOVED by Jackie Christensen AND SECONDED by Chris Lorio to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM
The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday June 1st 5:30 at Whipple Hall

Respectfully submitted,
Putnam Kidder
Recreation Director
Town of New London