

MINUTES OF THE RECREATION COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
March 10, 2021 @ 4:45 p.m.

Committee Members present: Councilor Nancie Cameron, Chair
Councilor Richard Michaud, Vice Chair
Councilor Martin Pepin
Councilor Crystal Paradis

Administration/Staff present: City Manager Bob Belmore
Recreation Supervisor Kristen Davenport
Director of Planning and Community Development Michelle Mears

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cameron at 4:45 pm.

APPROVE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 28, 2020

Councilor Paradis made a motion to accept the October 28, 2020 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

BABE RUTH BATTING CAGE SIGN REQUEST

Manager Belmore outlined a memo from David Witham, VP of Somersworth Babe Ruth, looking to replace the old batting cage at Noble Pines Park. The new unit would replace the old one at the same location and include a sign recognizing financial contributors. Councilor Cameron indicated she spoke with Mr. Witham who informed her the new cage is easier to install and take down. Councilor Paradis said she thinks this is a great idea and is glad to see the funding lined up.

Councilor Paradis made a motion to support the request to replace the batting cage at Noble Pines Park to include signage for the financial contributor. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT USE OF MALLEY FARM SOFTBALL FIELDS

Manager Belmore informed the Committee that the School Department has requested the use of the softball fields at Malley Farm due to work being done on their own fields. He said the current lease will be modified to fit with the School Department's use. The School Department has agreed to properly maintain and repair the fields as needed, as well as enforce the parking rules. Councilor Cameron said this is a great use of the field. She also mentioned there may be another group requesting use of the City's softball fields. Councilor Pepin said he is in favor of the School Department's use of the softball fields at Malley Farm since they do a great job maintaining their own.

Councilor Pepin made a motion to approve the use of the softball fields at Malley Farm by the Somersworth School Department. The motion was seconded by Councilor Paradis and passed 4-0 by roll call vote.

RECREATION PROGRAM UPDATES

Recreation Supervisor Kristen Davenport informed the Committee that the Easter event is typically their largest. In lieu of the egg hunt this year, she has decided to have a drive-through event on April 3rd where the Easter bunny will hand out egg kits for children to have an egg hunt at their homes. Two of the kits will contain tickets to win an Easter basket.

Ms. Davenport said she and her department are following the everchanging CDC guidelines and, unfortunately, have decided to forgo holding their usual summer camp programs and modify them a bit. In order to avoid confusion of parents thinking the same program was being held the name was changed to the Noble Pines Summer Program. The program will run from June 21 through August 13 (excluding July 5th) and will be weather dependent. 24 kids will be permitted to register and will consist of 3 groups (or pods). Each pod will have one councilor. Also on staff will be two directors as well as an addition councilor to assist with cleaning and Covid related guidelines. Ms. Davenport said there is a budget of \$2500 which will help cover required PPE and train staff on Covid policies. Pick-up times for the camps will be staggered to help reduce unnecessary contact. Councilor Paradis asked if there were any potential costs (for PPE, etc.) that could be reimbursed. Manager Belmore said he and staff would continue to track this and get back to the Committee. Councilor Pepin gave Ms. Davenport and the Recreation Department high praise for their attempts to get us back to normal during a difficult time. Councilor Cameron asked if restrictions would change once more people get vaccinated. Ms. Davenport replied she would continue to monitor and adapt as guidelines permit.

USS SOMERSWORTH PARK – NAME

Manager Belmore informed the Committee that the memorial once held at the USS Somersworth Park has since been moved to the newly opened Veterans Memorial Park. With the move, he requested feedback from the Committee on their thoughts of renaming USS Somersworth Park, which is a small pocket park. Multiple Councilors indicated there was no rush to change the park's name and liked the idea of remaining flexible for future considerations. Councilor Paradis inquired about a potential name changing contest if/when the Committee wanted to go that route.

VETERANS MEMORIAL – STEIN PARK REGULATIONS

Manager Belmore suggested the Committee engage in a discussion on potential signage for regulations at Veterans Memorial Park due to concerns of dog walkers not picking up after their pets and also skate boarders using the park and potentially causing damage. Councilor Paradis asked if there were current rules regulating the times people could use the park. Manager Belmore replied that the City Parks are open from 7am-9pm April through September and 7am-7pm the other months. Councilor Cameron inquired about the enforcement of potential new regulations to which Manager Belmore noted it would be somewhat difficult. Councilor Pepin and Paradis both offered their support for keeping the rules as is and addressing if issues are found. Councilor Michaud agreed with this notion and noted he sees people using the park respectfully on a regular basis.

MISCELLANEOUS

Manager Belmore spoke to photographs he provided to the Committee showing a recently broken sign at Willand Pond which was damaged by a fallen tree. He informed them that pricing for repairs is already underway by staff.

Councilor Cameron stated she was excited for the dog park to reopen and asked when that may happen? Manager Belmore said he would provide projected openings shortly, but thinks it will be soon.

Councilor Michaud made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 4-0 by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Slaven
City Clerk