

DRAFT Minutes for the New London Recreation Commission Meeting of May 4, 2010

Members Present: Chad Denning (Recreation Department Director), Laura James, Jerry Coogan, and Jason Stadler, Allison _____.

Chad Denning called the **MEETING TO ORDER at 4:35pm.**

He started the meeting by sharing that the Easter Egg Hunt went very well this year and that they had good weather. Prior to the hunt, they had a Girl Scout troop come in and stuffed all the eggs in one hour. Mr. Denning thanked Allison for coming out with her son, Carter, to help set up for the hunt.

Mr. Denning said that the May Day celebration was the past weekend. He felt that he should have included the Recreation Department more in this event. It was a Chamber of Commerce Regional Program, and they asked him to provide games during the event. He had 10 students from Colby-Sawyer College to help oversee the activities, which included tug of war, potato sacks races, Baggo, and a parachute. There was a parade down Main Street, and the event went on in conjunction with the Chocolate Fest in Town. They had Morris dancers and music. Mr. Denning shared that the Center for the Arts was the lead on this event. Colby-Sawyer, the Chamber of Commerce, and several businesses in Town played a part as well. The Recreation Department offered a coloring contest. On the back side of the picture to color, there was information printed about the upcoming May Day event. For completing the coloring page, the children got a dragon dog tag necklace. They are putting the pictures in the storefronts around Town. Mr. Denning opined that the coloring contest helped with marketing the event. Mr. Coogan asked what the role of the Recreation Department was in the event. Mr. Denning summarized that it consisted of the coloring contest, games and the dragon dog tag necklaces.

Mr. Coogan asked about the skateboard park. He said that the skateboard committee had recently given a presentation to the facilities section of the School Board. They are currently proposing to use the land near the birch stand behind the Country Press. He had a map with the area in question. The size is 12,000 square feet. They would leave the birch stand as it is, and would have a complete concrete park and concrete prefab structures installed. They anticipate needing \$200,000 for the project. Mr. Denning opined that it would be one of the better parks by far, in the area, and that they would work with a design team. He went on to explain that the Recreation Department's involvement so far was just getting the project started, but not anything further right now. He said that Dianna Piatro is working on a design charette. The entrance to the park will be next to the Kindergarten playground.

Mr. Denning said that the facilities subcommittee was very excited about this plan. They were interested and slightly reserved to see what it would look like, including the signage. He shared that the property belongs to the School District and that they will ask them to sell or gift it to the Town so the Town would own the liability and maintenance on the park. Mr. Denning added that they, as a commission, will have to decide what they want to do with regards to helping with the funding for this project. They need to decide if they will appropriate funds or not. He felt that they also needed to think about this with the Master Plan on how they can appropriate money for things like Bucklin Beach improvements at the bath house.

Mr. Coogan asked who would do the design and costing of the park. Mr. Denning said he did the initial design and once they sell the idea to the School District, they will hand it over to American Ramp Co. for the design and the prefab items.

Mr. Denning commented that he was told by Mr. Stanley (Zoning Administrator) that if the land is gifted over to the Town, the Town won't have to do as many things to prepare for the structure to be built, as would a regular tax payer. They will still have to have a site plan. Mr. Denning said that they have to focus on getting the funds first. Mr. Coogan asked if the Skateboard Park Committee had any funds yet. Mr. Denning said that they did not because they didn't have a location yet.

Ms. James asked how involved they wanted to be at this point. She wanted to know if they should be as involved or let if they should the Skateboard Park Committee take it from here and to have them keep the Recreation Department in the loop. She said that right now, Mr. Denning was running with the project; do they want to keep it this way or let them take it from here. Mr. Coogan said that the Skateboard Park Committee should be out front promoting it, but that Mr. Denning could be a resource for them. Mr. Denning said that Jessie Levine (Town Administrator) agreed with this line of thought. He shared that he and Ms. Levine go to the meetings regarding the park and they answer questions from people, but they don't lead the meetings. He stressed that they will NOT be involved in the fundraising.

Allison said that Mr. Denning was very good at doing this sort of project and she wanted him to be careful and to remember that it wasn't his responsibility to raise the funds. Mr. Denning said that they made it clear to the Skateboard Park Committee that he wasn't going to be involved in the fundraising. If they want to approach the Town for funds, they can. But it won't be the Recreation Department approaching the Town. Mr. Denning added that they will need to prioritize the current funds they have. They needed to decide how much they could give or how much did they want to fund. Ms. James said that is something that could be part of their plan. They need to look at the budget and see where the funds can go. Mr. Denning concluded that he was very excited with where the skateboard park plans were going right now. He said that to have a location was the biggest hurdle. The rest will come.

Mr. Coogan said that it was a good location. It was in Town, and close to the school. Mr. Denning said that the park will have something for everyone. He noted that no BMX bikes will be allowed in the skateboard area because they are particularly damaging to parks. Alison asked how the Police Department felt about the location. Mr. Denning said that he was glad. It is in a location where they can patrol the area from their cruiser.

Mr. Denning commented that he recently showed Lisa Lacombe the proposed ropes course area. She was excited about it. She has had a meeting with Tom Gallagher from Colby-Sawyer College and wants to get the funding for the course going on their end.

5. Applications and nominations have gone out and he hasn't heard anything.

Mr. Denning shared that he has two interns ready to run the adult sports program this summer. They are Colby-Sawyer baseball players. He thought they had four softball teams signed up so far. The interns will run the waffle ball and softball teams. The student who was hired is Carter Malpass (?) and he has hired a

friend to help him. His friend is being paid out of the stipend he will be given. Mr. Denning said that Mr. Malpass is from Massachusetts and will be living off-campus all summer. The other person helping out lives in Newbury and will be in the area all summer as well. Mr. Denning thought his name was Chris Fabrey. He added that Mr. Malpass would be walking at graduation this term, but would not receive his diploma until this internship has been completed.

Eagle Scout Project Update: Mr. Denning said that they will work on the trail behind the old Middle School and will be done by the end of June. They are creating a big sign board made of Birch. They will rout the name of the trail (Kidder/Cleveland/Clough) and will include a picture with the different trails and distances. They will also create the interpretive trail with little signs for story pages.

Mr. Denning reported that the summer beaches opened up a little quicker than he expected. The rafts have had to be rescued because some students from Colby-Sawyer College set them afloat. The Recreation Committee members suggested purchasing some cable and locks to keep this from happening again. Tom _____ went out in a canoe to retrieve them. Allison said that they should spend a few dollars to lock them up. The rafts could be lost and have to be replaced. She thought there could also be a liability issue if they were floating out there and someone hit them with another boat. She thought it was in their best interest to make the area and rafts as secure as possible. Mr. Denning said that he would make sure this would get done.

Mr. Denning reported that the Day Camp staff is all new this year. They have one college student, and everyone else is out of college. The only problem he sees currently is that there are not as many people signing up for the program as have been in years past. Sarah Docham from Warner and Nancy (?) have suggested doing some more marketing. Allison said that some other towns are competing with New London because they are having their own day camps. Mr. Denning said that Dover, NH has a summer camp which is 8 weeks in length for \$300. He said that Hanover, NH does the same thing. He opined that if they did this same approach, the camps would fill up quickly. Mr. Denning said that right now they break even on their summer camp, but if they offered camp at a lower rate, their expense would go up. They would also have to morph their program to make it work for the amount of money they are receiving. He thought a rate of \$50-\$60/week/child could work. He also thought perhaps charging a flat fee of \$300 for the summer, and then an additional amount for field trips.

Mr. Denning said that the Dover program is employed by a lot of High School kids, which keeps costs down. Allison said that she is aware that Dover has a lot of resources in their town and doesn't have to bus kids anywhere like New London does. She thought the concept, however, was one they should maybe think about. She suggested that if the lower fee is offered, that a certain timeframe should be set for New London residents to register their children first. She was interested in expanding the circle and offering the program to everyone, but felt it should be offered to New London children first. Mr. Coogan said that this is how all the programs should work. Mr. Denning said that they did that for swim lessons and summer camp last year.

Mr. Denning shared that the majority of swimmers coming to lessons in New London are from Warner. Mr. Coogan said that he thought 70% of the users of the services come from New London and that the

rest were coming from other towns. Mr. Denning said that overall, that is the case, but not for the camp. He noted that people who are in need of camp scholarships are not from New London.

Mr. Denning said that the Junior Outdoor Adventures and Middle School Adventure programs were up in enrollment. The programs are just two days/week in the afternoons from 12-4. Fort building is the most popular program. Mr. Coogan asked if there were grandchildren signing up for classes. Mr. Denning said that they mostly sign up for swim lessons. Mr. James suggested asking them, on their registration forms, to list their connection to New London, so they could get a better idea of how many grand-children or visiting children take advantage of the programs they offer.

Allison asked if there were a percentage of people who sign their kids up last-minute. Mr. Denning said that that happens a lot. People know there is availability and so they hold off signing kids up early. Allison said that planning is sometimes difficult for summer because their kids are busy at the end of the school year. Mr. Denning said that he is hearing that the parents like the flexibility and options that are now becoming available. He said that while it may take away from the program they currently have, it seems to be balancing out.

Kearsarge Outdoor Adventures – Mr. Denning said that he did not print out brochures this year. He wanted to send them out to the PTO to distribute to the kids. He noted that this was a non-profit business and that the brochure was on the website. He would love to send a link to the site out to the students and parents, if possible. Mrs. James asked if he wanted the teachers to distribute the information to the students. She explained that while they can post the information, they can't put it in the kids' backpacks. She said that he should touch base with Jerry Frew and Robin on how to get the information out. He said that he didn't have much luck with them passing out the brochures last year. He was told that he could leave the brochures in the school and kids could take one if they wanted to. Mrs. James said that she would call Mr. Frew to ask if they could have a link to the brochure on the district site. Mr. Denning stressed that the programs are district wide, not just for New London.

Mr. Denning reported that Mount Sunapee is doing a pig roast and free lift rides event. New London Recreation will sponsor a horseshoe tournament. They will also bring a bouncy-house and tug of war. He explained that Sunapee gave them the mountain for free for their Winter Wild fundraiser, and so he felt obligated to help them out with this event. Mrs. James said she thought Ragged Mountain was also doing something that same weekend and they may want help from New London as well. She said that she would check on the details of their event. Allison said that they should find out what the event was raising funds for, as that may help them which event to sponsor. Mr. Denning said that the event was, in fact, a benefit but he wasn't sure who or what the benefactor was.

Mr. Denning explained that the new van from Woodcrest that is being leased by the Town is a 10 passenger van and has a lot of room. They will try to retrofit the vehicle to install more seats to get it to a 13 passenger van. It has 29,000 miles on it and after the 10 month lease it will belong to the Town. Mr. Denning summarized that for \$3,000 they will get the van, which is in great shape. He said that eventually there will be a sign that says "New London Recreation" but currently he has a magnet sign that goes on the back. The van will be used for the teen programs, zip line tours, Franconia notch trip, etc. He explained that there was no CDL needed to drive the van.

It will also be used each day for the summer Day Camp to get kids to the beach.

Master Plan – Mr. Coogan thought the Recreation Committee should go on a retreat off-campus, to have dinner and talk about these issues and maybe their Capital Reserve Fund. They should talk about global issues regarding the Recreation Commission. Allison thought going somewhere that represents recreation or the out-of-doors would be good. Mr. Coogan said he would like to perhaps have a facilitator help them. Maybe bring in some of the outside group to help them. He thought perhaps Ms. Levine should be included. Allison thought they could have two sections within the retreat: half of the time to brainstorm, and half of the time to work with their other partners. Mr. Denning suggested going to the Dartmouth High Ropes Course.

Mr. Coogan asked about the timing for a retreat. It was suggested that fall would work best for those on the committee. Sometime in the 2nd or 3rd week of September sounded good to the group. Mrs. James indicated that they should plan the retreat for when the rest of the group could attend, and that she would come, but may need to arrive late depending on the day of the week or time of day it began. Mr. Denning suggested meeting with those outside the Recreation Committee separately some night before they go to the retreat. He also thought perhaps Ms. Levine may have contacts at LGC with regards to finding a facilitator.

Mr. Denning said that Ms. Levine wanted a vision statement from each department for ten years from now, within the next couple of weeks. He thought perhaps this could be done via email. They should think about where they would like to see the Recreation Department in ten years. He suggested that the committee be in contact with one another about thoughts regarding the retreat, as well as a possible vision statement.

Mrs. James asked if there was any update on the scholarship information for the summer camps. Mr. Denning said that they haven't proceeded with much. He and Ms. Levine have together a form for scholarships, but they still don't know where the money would come from that people would be applying for. Mrs. James thought this was a good start and asked Mr. Denning to forward a copy of the form to her for review.

Mrs. James explained that Mr. Denning would be conducting a discussion of "The Power of Play" with the children in her class in Springfield. Perhaps she would invite Becky's class as well. It would happen May 21st. He'll have some games and he will read two books. Valley Quest is donating the books.

Mr. Denning said that a company called "All-Terrain" will be donating all-natural sun block and insect repellent for the trail running series.

It was confirmed that the next meeting should be held June 8th at 4:30pm.

The meeting adjourned at 5:36pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London