

## **DRAFT Minutes for the New London Recreation Commission Meeting of June 8, 2010**

**Members Present:** Chad Denning (Recreation Department Director), Jason Stadler, Laura James, and Jerry Coogan, Keith Pomkoski

Chad Denning called the **MEETING TO ORDER at 4:40pm.**

### **Beaches and Vandalism**

Mr. Denning shared that there had been some vandalism at Elkins Beach, including the breaking of lifeguard stands and some floats have had some of the cedar slats broken, which are being replaced. He mentioned the occurrences to the Police Department, who installed a camera above the Elkins Post Office. Tom Prohl was informed that the camera was there, and since its presence, there has not been any vandalism. Mr. Prohl is not suspected as the vandal, to be clear. Mr. Pomkoski added that the porta-potty was also vandalized recently at Elkins Beach. Mr. Denning said that they are working closely with the Police Department and will not inform the lifeguard staff when cameras are being used.

Mr. Coogan asked about the occurrence of non-residents using the beaches, which are intended for residents only. Mr. Denning said that the policy is that you have to have a sticker to park at the beach, but anyone can go to the beach if they don't park in the parking area. He said that it is up to the Police Department to monitor this issue. He noted that the loop hole is that the statute says that the beaches are for "New London residents AND their guests." One thing that non-residents are not allowed to use, however, is the kayaks and boats.

### **Set-up Selectmans Meeting to go over Summer Programming**

Mr. Coogan thought the Recreation Commission should meet with the Board of Selectmen a couple times per year to update them on what is going on. They hoped to get on the agenda for the June 28<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen meeting. Mr. Denning said he would ask Ms. Levine to get added to the agenda.

### **NLREC Awards**

Mr. Denning announced that New London Recreation Department has recently been recognized for their Winter Wild program with two awards: Government's Council on Physical Fitness, and the NHRPA Shelnut Excellence in Programming Award. The latter award is given to just one program in the State. Mr. Denning said that next year they will be using Whaleback, Ragged Mountain, Pat's Peak and Mount Sunapee for the event. He has been talking with Tom Hubert (of Hubert's department stores) about working together on programs such as Winter Wild. They hope to get giveaways of Merrell shoes and other prizes through this partnership.

### **Shuttle Bus From Woodcrest**

Mr. Denning said that he has been using the shuttle for a couple different things already. He has put a Recreation Department magnet on the side of it. Mr. Denning reported that the shuttle had to go into the shop today because the ABS and brake lights came on. He also added that he has offered the use of the shuttle to Mrs. James and her kindergarten class to come out to the Story Walk. Mrs. James said that she was very appreciative of how well the district has been working together with the Recreation Department.

Mr. Denning shared that Newbury Recreation will team up with New London Recreation on some outings this summer. He also noted that Village Sports wasn't working out as he thought they might, with regards to installing a trailer hitch onto the back of the shuttle. He is also having a hard time finding a bench he can have installed in the back of the shuttle to make it seat 13. He said that they would like to take longer trips with the shuttle, to places like the Saco River.

### **Summer Brochure Distribution**

Mr. Denning said that this year the brochure is in web format only and not in print as in years past. Even though the distribution method has changed, the registration numbers are not way off from last year. They saved \$1,000 by not printing them out. Jason Stadler asked if it would be worth coming up with a one-page printed flyer to post around town which would direct people to the website. Mr. Denning thought that was a good idea and he would look into it.

Mr. Denning said that he would like a town crier type of thing that would point people to the website or announce upcoming events. He opined that Hubert's has a good spot for this type of thing, but wasn't sure that it would work. He has made the suggestion to Rob Bryant at the information booth about putting a board up that is appealing and that everyone can use. Mr. Denning opined that anything located outside the center of town would most likely be stolen or vandalized. He suggested doing a V-shaped sign with a small light on it. He thought it would best be located at the information booth. Some wording that was suggested for the top of the sign was "Visit nlrec.com for all your recreation needs." They thought the pharmacy and the grocery store should be approached about possible signage. Mr. Denning said that it could be either a recreation board or a community board.

Mrs. James asked Mr. Denning to talk to Ms. Levine about signage around the Town Office. Mr. Denning said that they have had the discussion previously, but that he would approach it again. It was suggested that they put the New London Recreation website at the beaches. Mr. Denning said that people who are visiting the Town would find it useful to have easy access to information about recreation possibilities. He said that he would put some brochures at the information booth.

### **Carter Malpass and Adult Sports**

Mr. Denning said that Mr. Malpass, Colby-Sawyer College student, is heading the Adult Sports program this year. They will include activities such as softball, whiffle-ball, a softball and whiffle-ball tournament, 6 on 6 football, and soccer. There are many options listed on the site to spark interest. Mr. Denning said that they are also doing a horseshoe tournament on the Sunday of Columbus Day weekend at Mount Sunapee. They will have a lot of beer distributors there, leaf peepers, and the lifts will run for free. He thought it was a perfect venue for such a tournament.

Junior Summer Adventurers – These are 2-day programs offered for the first time this year. Most of the weeks are filled, and a few have a couple of spots remaining. They are open to children between the ages of 6-12 and include such topics as: Gardening and Farming with Springledge Farms, Fishing with NH Fish and Wildlife, Fort Building with Peter Shanks, Plant Identification and Animal Tracking with Dave Pilla, Geocaching with Nick Baer, and Art in Nature with Sam \_\_\_\_\_. Jamie Messier will represent the Recreation Department for each outing.

Summer Programming Sign-ups. Mr. Denning reported that while the day camp is down in numbers, they are not that far off from their usual numbers.

### **NEW StoryWalk**

The new Story Walk is completed and features the story “Froggy Goes to Summer Camp.” There are 20 boxes that hold the pages. Mr. Denning opined that they are the best boxes he has ever seen on a story walk. He said that the trail is about 70% board-walked and that it begins behind the OCIC field. There will be a sign there that says “New London Story Walk.” The walk ends at Pleasant Street, where a new sidewalk will be started in a month. Walkers can use this new sidewalk to walk back to the field. Mr. Denning said that a press release went out about the walk that day. He is still in need of a brochure to advertise the walk. He suggested that if there were any students out there who would like to do this as a project, he would welcome the help. He said that he would be able to pay them as well.

### **Bike Rodeo and Touch a Truck dates**

Mr. Denning said that this event has been planned for Saturday, September 25 with a rain date of the following day. He already has the DHART Helicopter scheduled to attend, as they did last year.

### **Skateboard Park Update**

Mr. Denning said that there was a meeting scheduled for that night at 7:30pm. Mrs. James said she was in favor of the park as long as it was closed during school hours. It abuts the playground that is used for her Kindergarten students. Mr. Denning said that no one would be at the park to police it during the day. She felt it would be a distraction and was concerned with safety. She felt apprehensive about who would be coming near the Kindergarten playground. Mr. Denning felt that the majority of the users of the park would be in school during school hours. She felt it was a great location for the park, but having it open during school hours would concern her. She validated that the public is not allowed on school playground during school hours.

Mr. Denning said that the proposed space is ideal because it is near the playground, is hidden, and there is a sidewalk leading into that area. He said that they have to be careful not to try and police this park, such as requiring helmets. Mr. Pomkoski asked for confirmation that this project was not a Recreation Department responsibility. Mr. Denning assured him that it was not. He explained that the meeting that night was to help them get ready for the Board of Selectmen presentation of the park location and plans. They have to convince the Selectmen that skateboarding is safer than other sports. Mr. Denning and the Town are assisting the private group on how to proceed with the Board of Selectmen. He said that he has been through this sort of thing several times before, and knows what the hot-button questions are and what the right answers are. Mr. Denning said that he was certain that the Town and the School District will be able to make the land transition without a problem. The School District was suggesting using the location of the old SAU office, but no one on the committee felt this was a good idea.

### **New Facility Use Agreement with school district**

Mr. Denning reported that for the use of the School District’s facility, the day camp is being charged about \$400-\$500 to cover maintenance costs.

### **New Beachfront Directors Hired/ Beach Organization has begun**

Mr. Denning said that the Beach Front Directors have been hired and that the beaches have been cleaned and the bathrooms and buildings are being repainted. They have brand new lines and floats in the water. This year one person will be overseeing the beaches instead of four. Her name is Renee Forceir and she did all the hiring.

Mr. Stadler asked when the bathrooms are locked for the night. Mr. Denning said that they close at 5:30pm when the lifeguards leave. The Police Department used to close the bathrooms at night but there tended to be a lot of vandalism. The septic tank had to be pumped once/week last year at busy times. They dump in Sunapee now for \$300/pump. The pumping truck comes the same day the alarm goes off and Mr. Denning remarked that if the alarm goes off when it is not staffed, no one will call the pumping truck and it will overflow. That is another reason they do not like to leave the bathrooms open after hours.

Mr. Coogan asked if they should start putting together some plans for upgrading Bucklin Beach. Mr. Denning said that he has the plans completed already and was happy with them. Mr. Coogan asked if they could get some estimates and then bring them to the Board of Selectmen to get the project moving forward. Mr. Denning said this could be done. He noted that the buildings at Elkins were in good shape, but that Bucklin needed some attention.

Mr. Coogan asked about Hospital Days and whether the Recreation Department would be involved in them this year. Mr. Denning said that they have no role in Hospital Days this year. Ms. Levine is the director of the Triathlon. She said the hospital comes in and asks the departments to run things and that they don't offer to offset the costs for the work they do. Hospital Days is a hospital fundraiser but not a Town fundraiser. Locals mostly come to this event. Mr. Denning said that they are talking about revamping Hospital Days, or even changing it. He said it used to be very different and felt they should go back to the way it was. Farming and produce was a big part of it. He commented that the Midway is good for the kids but the Hospital doesn't get much money for it. Mr. Denning said Hospital Days should remain an event, but felt it could be more and that it should be more of a community function. He said the Town has a lot of work to do for the event and that they are not very excited about it. Mr. Denning said he needs to come up with some ideas on how to make the event better instead of just complaining about it.

Mrs. James said that Friday night of Hospital Days is the old fashioned, free games for the kids and she really enjoys it. Mr. Denning said he felt the midway was good for the teens, who are mostly overlooked in this area. He'd like to think about how Hospital days could be revamped.

Mr. Denning shared that he recently went to visit a new piece of property off of Otter Pond (Otterville area). It is a 17 acre piece of property that the Conservation Commission wants to purchase. They want to make it into a kayak destination. The property is entirely waterfront. New London already owns 96 acres of land adjacent to the property, which has been mostly untouched. The owners are from Massachusetts and want to put it up for sale for \$470,000. Mr. Denning said that if they sell it privately, he knows there will be big, beautiful homes put in.

The next meeting was agreed to be at the June 28<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen's meeting for their presentation.

The meeting adjourned at 5:53pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London