



TOWN OF RANDOLPH, VERMONT

Recreation Advisory Committee
Monday, January 27, 5:30 pm
Town Hall Conference Room B
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order: 5:36 pm

Committee Members Present:

Kristin Chandler
Larry Davignon
Kristen Gage
Kyla Grace
Paul Rea
Valerie Schoolcraft

Absent: Dalyn Luedtke

Town Staff Present:

Haidi Arias, Recreation Director
Larry Satcowitz, Selectboard Liaison

2. Public comment:

None

3. Update on current programs and activities

a. Brent Wallace Youth Basketball Tournament: Sixteen teams participated. Randolph came out on top -- both the boys' and girls' teams. There were no issues, and it was well run. The food concessions did well. Final numbers for the amount of money raised will be coming soon. The money raised will be used to replace basketball hoops at RES & Braintree Elementary. All reports indicate that the event was enjoyed by all & the gym was packed with people. Next year, Arias suggests that they increase the current team participation fee from \$40 for a double-elimination tournament so that Randolph is more in line with other community tournaments. For example, Montpelier charges \$75 for a single-elimination tournament. The new amount is TBD. ARA, led by Ryan Langlois, sponsored the trophies.

4. Scheduled Items

a. Harmony Park: David Palmer and Morgan Easton came to present updates to planning of the proposed Harmony Park to the committee, beginning with a location update. They came with scale drawings showing two potential locations -- between the bridge and the pavilion and one near the parking lot fence.

There was some confusion over the committee's recommendation of having it near the rink. Palmer and Easton didn't understand that the committee was requesting information about siting the park near the skating rink. Palmer thought this recommendation was for a second location. Committee thought not. Easton asserted that the committee's rink suggestion doesn't seem viable and suggested that maybe this first installation be placed at the playground and subsequent installations be considered for the rink area.

The committee again raised questions of noise. Kristen Gage asked if there were decibel counts for other parks. Palmer said that the sound levels for close proximity are around 90 decibels. At 100 ft away, the sound would be around 60 decibels (the same level as conversational noise). Of the two site suggestions presented to the committee, the river location (option #2) is more buffered from the adjoining neighborhood and would be quieter to the people living nearby.

Easton thought that the installation would be better at the playground (option #1 on the handout) so it would be easily accessible from camp, pool, etc. but agreed that noise is worth looking into.

Arias thought option #1 was too big and took up too much space in the camp's main play area, an area that is used all the time for games and free time. She likes option #2, but it's really close to the ball field, which could be distracting to players. She noted that there are noise complaints on the other side of the river from houses near the basketball and tennis courts, and the majority of these complaints are because people playing on those courts are playing music.

Kristin Chandler noted that the rink site would be significantly better from a noise perspective. Easton rebutted that there is already noise from the playground and that neighbors have always understood that. Arias noted that, to her knowledge, there has never been a noise complaint from the mobile home park next to the ball fields and the playground.

Arias asked why a third site wasn't looked into -- between the playground and the trees by river? That location would be further from both the homes and the ballfield, and it's empty, available space. Rea wondered if that location (now known as option #3) is in a floodplain and said he'd look into it. Palmer asked if the committee would like him to investigate this third potential location. The committee unanimously said yes. Regardless of location, there will need to be at least three feet around each instrument for wheelchair accessibility and ADA compliance.

Palmer said that the drums and chimes are installed on concrete pads. Mallets are replaced for free by the company. Rea asked about who would be installing the instruments, volunteers or contractors? A lot of cement will be needed, and hiring a contractor for that makes sense. Larry Davignon agreed. Palmer said the assembly of instruments would be done by volunteers once the cement and poles are in. Arias asked if the cost of contractors is included in the group's fundraising efforts? Palmer said those costs could be included in the extra funds they are seeking. Rea knows several concrete contractors. Davignon told Palmer that the concrete surely cost more \$3,000. Easton thought they should have numbers in-hand for the cement and the excavation costs before presenting the idea to the selectboard. Everyone agreed.

Valerie Schoolcraft asked about the weather's impact on the concrete pads and who would be financing repairs? Palmer does not know what the maintenance or repair costs might be, but his

group is trying to raise \$25-30,000 to build the park and give to the town so it would be the town's responsibility to maintain and repair it. Palmer does not know if the instruments are warranted by the manufacturer but says they are promoted as durable.

Potential locations: Option #1 is no longer being considered. Option #2 will be considered and option #3 will be investigated.

Fundraising status by Palmer: Seven grant applications have been submitted, and an eighth is going out this week. Two Rotary grant applications will be due in April. Hoping to raise \$25k. Instruments cost \$22k, and they want the extra money to be used for installation & signage. Responses expected first quarter 2020. By mid-spring, the group will know if there is enough money to move forward with the project. Hoping for an opening celebration in early August. Handout of projected timeline.

Arias wanted clarification that the group was planning to present their idea to the Selectboard in March but won't know about funding until April? Palmer said they want to get the conversation started with them to hear their concerns/questions. He is not expecting Selectboard approval without the funding in place.

Rea asked about ground surface after completion -- grass? Turf? Palmer said it would likely be grass or woodchips.

Larry Satcowitz suggested that some of the labor for the project could be donated.

b. Town Report Rec Committee Insert - Feedback

Arias asked for feedback on the draft of the Rec Committee update for the town report. She would like a full page for the Rec Department, not a half page. The group suggested edits on wording and grammar as well as suggesting that there be more information included about the pool.

c. Pool Fees

Arias has reached out to other towns to find out what their pool fees are, but many seem to be reevaluating their fees as well. . . . Arias provided the committee with a handout of past (2017, 2019) and projected (2020) pool revenues: She is looking to increase the fees to \$125 for a resident family pass, \$75 for an individual, and \$50 for seniors (55+), and \$75 for swim lessons. No non-resident family membership would be offered, but daily fees would be offered for both residents and non-residents.

Arias would also like membership cards to be issued for pool and rink use, so that staff could scan the card and be able to track visits. The cost is \$700 for the equipment, and this cost would be offset by charging pass holders for the card. The committee agreed that this sounds like a good investment, and everyone agreed it is a good idea to raise the fees. Gage asked whether there are scholarships and/or financial aid in place for families. Arias answered that yes, grant money from the Lamson-Howell Foundation is specifically earmarked for this purpose.

Need all pool/rink fees agreed upon by March for the Rec Dept newsletter that is available publicly and distributed through the schools.

John Kidder, from VTC, has reached out about putting up solar panels at the pool to heat the water, which is unheated now. It's quite cold in the morning when the youngest kids are there for swimming lessons. Rea said it will require a LOT of solar, and in his experience solar alone isn't going to do it. Arias asked if he'd like to attend the next meeting with Kidder, and Rea said he would.

Chandler suggested that the town may also want to look at raising tennis/pickleball fees, which are currently quite low.

5. Future Agenda Items

Chandler asked that we PLEASE put time limits on future agendas so things stay on track. Arias answered yes. Everyone wholeheartedly agreed. Rea suggested that the committee require groups to send handouts/written information to the committee the week before they are scheduled to present, as the passing out of papers eats up a lot of time. Again, everyone enthusiastically agreed.

The February meeting looks to be a long one -- there will be an update on rec fees, an update from both the Harmony Park AND the Dog Park groups. The committee will plan for a 90-minute meeting. Chandler would like to get back to signage, branding, and strategic planning.

The committee realized they haven't been officially approving minutes from prior meetings. Rea offered a motion to approve the December 2019 minutes. Chandler seconded. All agreed. Motion passed.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.

The February meeting is scheduled for the 24th from 5:30-7:00 pm in Town Hall Conference Room B.