

MINUTES
SANDOWN RECREATION COMMISSION

Date: 08-18-21

DRAFT

Location: Edward Garvey Rec. Facility

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 PM by Chairman George Blaisdell. Present: John Donahue; Heidi Dyer; George Blaisdell. Also present Deb Brown, Rec. Director. Absent: Jennifer Dangas and Darren Hudgins, ex officio.

There were no minutes to review. A discussion was begun regarding special funds that will be received by the town from the Federal Government in the amount of approximately \$600K and regarding what the funds can be used for. Deb had spoken briefly with the town administrator Lynne Blaisdell and it appears that the funds could be applied to, for example, the Pavilion that the Rec. Commission is formulating plans to put up for the benefit of the community. It will be an outdoor structure where residents could gather outdoors to socialize; have concerts; provide protection for children in the recreation programs etc. George Blaisdell questioned whether the money could be used for that purpose. Deb said that it is likely since it could help to address safe places to gather outdoors because of Covid.

Updated quotes from Morton builders were reviewed regarding a 30' x 30' space and a 30 x 36' space. The quote for the 30 x 30 was \$26,000. Mr. Donahue felt the price was 'not bad'. For the 30 x 36 the quote was \$29,500. Figures do not include site work or a concrete pad. Deb commented that Morton had not priced a larger structure that was included in the original quote of February 2020. She noted with the larger structure you could fit 12 picnic tables under it. Currently 10-12 tables are in use during the warm weather months. Pricing will be requested from the additional 30 x 48 ft structure from Morton.

Brief discussion about the development going in off Ferguson Lane. John Donahue thought that another 11 hours may be added to the development in addition to what has already been approved.

Deb Mentioned the water that flows across the playground and washes out the playground chips and creates issues. John wondered if the Commission would need to get quotes. Deb advised that if any of the funding available to the town was used then quotes would most likely be required.

A discussion was begun about the possibility of having a food truck festival event. Heidi Dyer has been doing some research on this and has spoken with those who organized this type of event in Hampstead. She reported it would probably be impossible to have one this year. Organizers told her that you need to be planning for it about a year in advance. Heidi felt vendors would work closely with recreation, much as they do with a charitable event and that things have changed since Covid. John said he felt if recreation was providing space that vendors would be paying a fee for entrance. Discussion continued regarding a good time of year to host this. Food permits may be necessary as well as certificates of insurance. Heidi offered she thought maybe a Friday night before school started. She found out that Google will often pick up on your event and advertise it. This happened at the event in Hampstead and vendors were sold out by 3:30 pm and there was still time left that was meant for trucks to still be there. Organizers of that event noted they raised about \$5,600. They had music; people brought chairs. John suggested he could decide for his band to play. Members said they did not feel it could be accomplished this year but next year for sure. Maybe as a 'back to school' type thing.

49
50 John Donahue mentioned he had been in Fremont and attended a small artisan fair with 15-20 vendors
51 all from Fremont. Perhaps we could do something similar in the spring.

52
53 Deb Brown reported the instructor she had been working with to offer a 'Boot Camp' had to back out
54 due to other obligations. Coincidentally Heid Dyer is a certified instructor and has offered to run a 6-
55 week session. She and Deb will meet next week to go over a plan.

56
57 John mentioned his friends of Training Station in Manchester where they are self-defense instructors
58 and he could reach out to them to see if they would run a women's self-defense program in Sandown.
59 Members felt this was a great idea. John will be lead on that for gathering info on that and gearing it
60 towards high school and up.

61
62 There was a discussion on some of the upcoming activities such as Town Wide Yard Sale, adult and
63 senior exercise classes; a "Boo Hoo Back to School" coffee hour for parents who may be crying either
64 tears of joy or sadness as the kids head back to school. George would like to see more on the website.
65 Deb reported she has added to the calendar for upcoming events. George could not find it but she
66 pointed out there is an actual calendar to click on for a date to see what's going on and thought there
67 was where he wanted it posted to. Some are 'save the date' until activities can be firmed with
68 instructors at which time flyers can be linked to the event giving more details.

69
70 There was conversation regarding the annual Senior Dinner and moving the date up to October so that
71 there is a greater chance that it will go on. Deb didn't want to see the seniors miss out for a 2nd year in a
72 row. Heidi Dyer suggested we call it a Harvest Dinner. Deb will be working with Zorvino's on dates and
73 pricing as well as firming up entertainment.

74
75 A discussion was begun regarding the summer program and money taken in to pay for the following
76 expenses: Payroll for all staff except for the two coordinator positions; field trips, t-shirts, and some
77 supplies (for things such as cook-outs; pizza party etc.). She reported she believes there is enough
78 money to cover payroll of the counselors and supervisors and should also be enough to cover the payroll
79 for the 2 coordinators as they are budgeted for in the operating budget. Should there be any funds
80 remaining she would like to see the Commission earmark that for next summer's payroll to help with
81 hiring much earlier. There were several good counselors lost since following last year's numbers there
82 was a large unknown factor of how many campers would return or new ones sign up. Enrollment tripled
83 from 2019 and there was a definite strain on staffing she reported. Both Plaistow and Atkinson said
84 they could not fully staff their summer programs forcing them to limit enrollment. John Donahue asked
85 how many kids in the Sandown Program were not from Sandown. The answer was 2-3.

86
87 By starting much earlier to hire and take registrations they should hopefully not end up with a negative
88 balance as happened in 2020. Also a contributing factor was the late start to program planning, hiring
89 and registrations due to the furlough and reduced hours of the director. Deb reported that programs in
90 Plaistow and Atkinson had to limit participation to 70 campers whereas their numbers are typically
91 higher than Sandown. They typically run about 170-200 participants however those towns also make a
92 larger contribution towards the costs of their summer program. Sandown's program saw enrollment
93 triple over 2019 and there was a definite strain on staffing she reported. John Donahue asked how
94 many kids in the Sandown Program were not from Sandown. The answer was 2-3.

Issues also included information from the state as to what the guidelines were for even having a program.

Discussion was begun regarding changes that are urgently needed such as creating fillable forms, being able to register and pay on-line for programs. Heidi Dyer is concerned about the security of recreation creating and building its own system to address this as people would be putting in information regarding health, banking etc.

John Donahue offered that he feels the programming that he set up for Sandown Baseball Association is very secure and it has been in place for 9 years without issue. Heidi feels that if something is built 'in-house' that someone always needs to be available to address problems. John feels it would not be an issue and he would try to be available for problems that may arise. He said he feels he could do this by next spring. He wanted to know if there was anything from the town restricting building a recreation commission website. Discussion ensued about why the town had gone to one website for all departments and committees.

Members reviewed the town website and thought it appeared that different committees and departments were already accepting payments on line. Deb Brown said she would find out. George Blaisdell was asking about something on the town website regarding pay.gov and whether something is already in place to accept payments.

FIELD TRIPS: Deb Brown questioned whether she was meant to be going on all the field trips for the duration of the field trip. A few years ago, knowing there was experienced staff in place, she would be able to split up a field trip between the two coordinators, each driving a vehicle because we assign one vehicle per bus. (if one bus were to break down or be in an accident or have a medical emergency there still remains a coordinate to oversee the other bus). Some field trips that had more risk to them (such as Canobie; or Water Country, or Launch, she would stay. Other places such as a movie or bowling really did not need her presence except to be sure that things were paid for and at the appropriate pricing etc. There was an incident when she was out where the program was overcharged by \$600 and she discovered it in reviewing the charges.

Discussion continued regarding the role of the coordinators and their responsibilities as well as what the director is taking care of so that the coordinators are able to concentrate on strictly the campers, CIT's and counselors. The consensus seemed to be that if it is a lower risk field trip that the rec director would not necessarily need to go if experienced coordinators are there. Trips that may involve large amounts of money she would make sure payment was all set before the possibility of returning to the office (Canobie, Water Country etc.). George Blaisdell questioned whether coordinators were needed if the director was going to be as involved. Deb Brown went over some of what goes on during the day and how the roles differ. She invited members to spend a couple of days observing the program to see what goes on as it's not always easy to demonstrate verbally the importance of what each position is responsible for and the flexibility needed to be able to change direction very quickly and oversee large amounts of kids and staff.

Rentals have not yet returned to pre-Covid levels but it is starting to pick-up. Sixty Plus will return to the rec building next month. Garden Club is meeting in the rec building again.

Miller Field sign update: George Blaisdell asked if anyone had watched the Board of Selectmen's meeting when they were given the paperwork to sign off on releasing the insurance money for the sign.

He said some were making comments such as whether the sign should be placed there, or maybe moving it etc., Members felt that selectmen were not within their purview to be talking about placement as the state had previously worked with the town on the placement so that it met sight distance etc. and the sign was going back in the exact same location already approved by the state. The director stated that selectmen had to sign off on releasing the money because those funds were not part of the Revolving Account but rather insurance monies.

The sign company asked if it could substitute a PVC wrap of the posts as the aluminum material originally quoted was going to be an extended wait time. Mr. Botting of ProSource sign said He'd be happy to bring a sample of the material to the office so members could view it first if they wanted him to. Members agreed that it would be fine to just move ahead with the PVC wrap. Currently the materials have been ordered and once they arrive they sign will be started.

Miller Field parking. George Blaisdell asked if Keach Engineering had been contacted regarding the property. Deb Brown said they had but it did not seem to her that it was interested in doing the survey but suggested places to contact to see if a plan already existed. George asked if they could find someone to do the survey. He would like to see it done before the weather gets colder.

Heidi Dyer asked about the plaque that had been placed on the dugout on B Field. Discussion regarding it took place. Members stated they were not approached by the Sandown Baseball for permission to place the plaque and nothing is to be done at the field unless written permission is given by the Commission. Members continued to say that naming something after someone (regardless of how much they had contributed and they agreed the person on the plaque had contributed much to the program) but that doing so simply overlooked the many people who, over the years have put in a lot of time, effort, and work on the field.

The suggestion has been made to have a plaque which could have an individual's name added as a plate of some sort. A member inquired as to whether SBSA had put up the fence that marks the parking area in the outfield of C Field. Mr. Donahue said it had not. He had instructed SBSA that it needed to go up and it did not. He suggests that a meeting with SBSA should take place and that next year the field will not be released for play until the tasks such as the fencing, be completed. This is in accordance with a report done by Primex years back when SBSA first requested using the outfield on C Field for additional parking.

The Recreation Commission is still without a recording secretary and really needs one.

A motion was made by George to go into non-public. Seconded by John. In attendance John Donahue, George Blaisdell, Heidi Dyer. Also present was Deb Brown.

The Commission exited the non-public session at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Brown

Acting for Recording Secretary