

Camden Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

April 6, 2016

Tucker Room

Present: Ray Andresen (chair), Landon Fake, Maureen Gordon, Casey Heard, Emily McDevitt, Brian Robinson, Beth Ward. Excused: Jim Heard, David Olivas, Jessie Tobias. Guests: Tim Barker, Roger Rittmaster. *Ray opened the meeting at 5:32 pm.*

Minutes: Emily moved to accept the March 2 minutes as amended, Brian seconded, and it passed 5-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Outdoor Leadership Initiative: Tim Barker, the Outdoor Programs Director at Maine Sport, unveiled a proposal to conduct a four-season experiential learning center at the Snow Bowl, Hosmer Pond and Ragged Mountain that could draw youth from the region year-round. It would include seasonal after-school programs focused on healthy, active, adventurous, skill-building experiences. There would be eight sessions during the year, with two different outdoor activities, a service-based project, and weekend wilderness trip each session. It would include three age groups: 11-12, 13-15, and 16-18. He would like to run a pilot program this fall

The Committee reacted enthusiastically to this proposal and suggested that the next steps would be (1) develop a financial model for the program, including equipment rentals and staffing, (2) decide which age group would be best for the pilot program, (3) determine the geographic area for marketing the program, and (4) contact Troy Curtis at the Y and high school trainers for ideas and issues.

Conservation Commission: Roger Rittmaster, chairman of the Camden Conservation Commission, presented the following five major projects his group is currently doing: (1) co-sponsoring nature walks, etc. with Coastal Mountains Land Trust; (2) looking at which open properties are in jeopardy from development and making recommendations to the Town on which ones should be conserved; (3) looking for the causes of pollution in Camden Harbor and proposing solutions; (4) surveying Camden's ash trees, which are susceptible to the emerald ash borer, and choosing which ones to save and which ones should be culled; and (5) looking at the possibility of developing a trail from the Camden Bog on Park Street out to John Street and eventually all the way to Merryspring Nature Center.

The Committee appreciated this update from the Conservation Commission, and Beth suggested that we invite them to report on their activities at least once a year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ragged Mountain Redevelopment: Landon repeated that Phase II of the Redevelopment Project is complete, and Maureen added that \$500K in matching funds has been secured for the new lodge, whose construction could be started in the spring of 2017.

National Toboggan Championships: No report.

Pathways: Geoff reported that there will be public hearings coming up regarding the widening of Route 1 north of Town.

Tannery Work Group: Ray reported that there will be three public meetings beginning in May to discuss options for using the Tannery site.

Outdoors Mapping Group: Landon and Ray reported that progress is being made on redoing the Camden Parks Guide, which will be expanded to include locations in Rockport.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Park-Rec Budget: Landon reported on results from the recent Budget Committee hearing. He said \$3,000 was taken out of the proposed trash budget line and \$10,000 out of the proposed compensation line, but \$10,000 was added into a reserve account for Shirrtail Park planning purposes.

Snow Bowl Budget: Landon reported that the latest statement shows a \$290,000 deficit, but there is still some income coming in and some costs (such as making restrooms ADA-compliant) could be shifted to other parts of the budget. He added that expenses were almost on budget for the year, but revenue was way down, reflecting the big drop in skier days from an average of 60+ in recent years to 42 this past season.. He also noted that snowmaking increased from 250 hours in 2014/15 to 450 hours in 2015/16, that revenues per skier day was on track with recent years, and that those skiers who came to the Snow Bowl were excited with the new terrain and trails.

The Committee asked what actions might be taken in future years to save on costs, and Landon said the only sure way to save money is to close down for more hours or days per week, which would have a negative effect on season ticket sales. He also noted that the Snow Bowl budget includes costs for seven full-time staffers from Oct. 1 to April 1, even though the ski season never begins until mid-December.

NEW BUSINESS

Solar Installations: Brian reported that the Energy Committee and ReVision Energy are currently looking for a 2-acre clearing for a town-owned solar installation, with the open area at Mt. View Cemetery and the old Gravel Pit and the Sagamore Farms site off Route 1 as possibilities. He added that the Snow Bowl and the Opera House are the top two energy users among Town facilities.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 6

Minutes recorded by Ray Andresen