

MINUTES OF THE RECREATION COMMITTEE

January 24, 2022 @ 5:30 p.m.

Committee Members present: Councilor Nancie Cameron, Chair
Councilor Richard Michaud, Vice Chairman
Councilor Martin Pepin
Councilor Kenneth Vincent

Administration/Staff present: Mayor Dana Hilliard
City Manager Bob Belmore
Finance Director Scott Smith
City Clerk Jonathan Slaven
Director of Planning Michelle Mears
Recreation Supervisor Kristen Davenport

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cameron at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVE MINUTES OF AUGUST 17, 2021

Councilor Pepin made a motion to accept the August 17, 2021 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 4-0.

Mayor Hilliard asked the Chair if he could address the committee before they start their Agenda. Chairman Cameron responded in the affirmative absent any objection. Seeing no objection, Mayor Hilliard was given the floor.

Mayor Hillard informed the committee he would like to read a portion of his Mayor's report for this evening's Council meeting that he will be assigning to the Committee.

While the Monarch Butterflies are enjoying the warmth of the Mexican heat and sun, now is the perfect time for the Recreation Committee to begin planning and seeking partners on the re-design of the Ash Street Park into the Pollinator Garden. I am requesting that the Recreation Committee in Partnership with Councilor Gerding who is Chairing the Mayor's Monarch Butterfly challenge begin planning, designing, and building partnerships so that a park re-design can begin and be completed in 2022. I look forward to hearing the ideas and proposals.

BLACKWATER ROAD BASKETBALL COURTS

Manager Belmore stated as part of the Planning Board's review of the CIP, the Board recommended the discontinuance of the use of the basketball courts on Blackwater Road. They also recommended a study to determine a location for a potential new court. There was a brief discussion on potential new locations to include current park properties. Recreation Supervisor Davenport mentioned there are currently two other parks that have basketball courts (Noble Pines & Jules Bisson) in the City and both are heavily used. Manager Belmore said the courts on Blackwater Road are in very bad shape. Councilor Pepin said there is a lack of parking at that location as well. Councilor Vincent said the courts are on a superfund site and he is in favor of their discontinuance.

Councilor Pepin made a motion to support the removal of basketball hoops/nets at the courts on Blackwater Road and also have staff look into potential locations for another court. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 4-0.

NE COTTONTAIL RABBITS RELEASE PROGRAM

Manager Belmore stated the Conservation Commission has been communicating with New Hampshire Fish and Game and advocating for the approval of their request to release New England Cottontail Rabbits at the City's Malley Farm land. He said the Public Works Committee discussed and supported the plan. He indicated wanting to make sure the full Council was aware as the NE Cottontail rabbit is an endangered species and could potentially create an issue if the City ever decided to develop Malley Farm. Councilor Pepin said he is not opposed to the request.

The Committee reached a consensus to support the New Hampshire Fish and Game's request to release New England Cottontail Rabbits at Malley Farm.

LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD LEASE & MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

Manager Belmore stated the National Guard Building Review Committee requested staff prepare a lease and maintenance agreement with the Little League and thought he would share the DRAFT document with this Committee. He said one question is whether to have the Little League adhere to the City's Sign Ordinance or leave it to their discretion. He also asked the Committee to discuss if they wanted to allow other organizations to use the field when not in use by the Little League or provide the Little League exclusive use of the field.

Councilor Cameron inquired who has been asking to utilize this field. Ms. Davenport explained there have been a few outside users asking to use it for tournaments, but nothing consistent. Councilor Pepin asked if the Little League uses their own insurance. Manager Belmore explained they will need to provide the City with an insurance certificate listing the City as additionally insured. Councilor Vincent expressed his support to allow the Little League sole use of the field since they are the ones who maintain it and allow them to continue advertising and keeping the fees as they have for years. Councilor Cameron said the City may want to retain the right to review and approve the advertisers, since it is now a City field we wouldn't want something advertised the City may not think is appropriate.

Councilor Michaud made a motion to endorse a recommendation to allow the Little League sole use of the field and exempt the Little League field from the requirements of the City Park Advertising administrative regulation. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 4-0.

MISCELLANEOUS

Ms. Davenport updated the Committee on a few programs. She stated there are approximately 80 kids registered for the basketball program for grades 1-6 and almost 30 kids registered for the basketball program for children ages 3-6. She said the Valentines Dance is scheduled for February 9th at Idlehurst Elementary and will be limited to 100 people due to Covid. Masks will be required for this event.

ADJOURN

Councilor Vincent made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk