

PARKS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 24, 2016 – Auburn Hall

Auburn's Conservation Commission Parks Subcommittee met on Wednesday, February 24, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm

Roll Call

Members present were Tizz Crowley, Misty Edgecomb, Chuck Lafean, Larry Pelletier and Bob Sipe. Absent was Leroy Walker. Others present were Maurice Keene, Conservation Commission and Sabrina Best, Recreation Director.

Minutes

ACTION: Tizz Crowley seconded by Chuck Lafean moved to postpone approval of the minutes of 1/27/16 until the next meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

ACTION: Tizz Crowley seconded by Misty Edgecomb moved to request the city provide minutes on a timely basis so they can be in the agenda packet as they are suppose to do according to the city clerk. The vote was unanimously approved.

Guest: Sabrina Best – Director of Recreation

Sabrina Best introduced herself and gave a brief overview of her experience at South Portland Community Center/ Recreation Department over the past 8 years. She primarily focused on youth sports, adult leagues and managed their outdoor Wainwright Athletic Complex that has a portion of the green belt going through it which is a part of the eastern trails. She said trails and open spaces is her forte and that she is excited to be in Auburn.

Parks & Recreation Departments

There was discussion about the parks and recreation departments being separated 4 years ago and the overlap between them. Sabrina said they are closely related and she has met/spoken with Dan Goyette about remaining separate entities for now and how communication and collaboration is going to work moving forward.

Mt. Apatite

Sabrina was asked if she has spoken to Dan Goyette about the trails grant, what her thoughts are, and what it is going to be used on. Sabrina said Dan mentioned the trails grant but they did not get into details about it. She will follow up with him to get more information on what his thought process is, the amount, what it is going to be used for, and what we're looking to do at Mt. Apatite. She plans to look around at Mt. Apatite and then reach out to contacts she made with the Eastern Trails Alliance to get ideas, thoughts, how they attacked it, and what we could do in Auburn. She said it sounds like it is underutilized and we need to make sure everyone knows it is there. It was suggested Mt. Apatite could be the first park the Parks Subcommittee creates a work plan for and can work collaboratively with the recreation department to help get

people to use the trails. Rosemary from GIS has a map of the trails for Mt. Apatite but it cannot be obtained from the website. They agreed any brochure, program literature, maps, and trails if on 8 1/2 x 11 or 8 1/2 x 14 paper ought to be a PDF file easy to find on the web site and Mt. Apatite would be the perfect one to start with. The Community Forest Board is interested in the potential for harvesting parts of Mt. Apatite for the community cords program. Forest maintenance has not been done and there is a need to work with the Forestry Board. It was suggested that Mt. Apatite could bring everyone together and demonstrate that while we are separate we are all collaborative and that Parks could be the subcommittee that brings them together.

Web Site

The web site recommendations given to the city manager were discussed. An example was that the River Walk & Festival Plaza is not mentioned under the list of parks. Sabrina said she feels like the River Park and Festival Plaza is underutilized. Some ideas were to have a 5k bike/walk run, a fat bike race, or summer festival and to incorporate Mt. Apatite, and other parts of the city such as, fishing at Lake Grove, the Tot Lot or Pettingill Park. Bob Sipe said he is hoping Sabrina will help advocate for making the web site better and getting more information on there. She said she would look into the River Park and Festival Plaza. Another recommendation was that they should be able to link to the GIS maps from the parks page, that it is more complete and better than Map It, but that they are hidden somewhere under businesses.

Other things mentioned was that the website indicates there are 3 golf courses in the city but it doesn't name them and that they should be listed with an easy link to their website as well as disk golf courses. Under Art & Culture half the places are in Lewiston; however there were/are things in Auburn not listed like Lost Valley and Androscoggin Historical Society. It was suggested that on the recreation page the Team Sidelink link to the programs and registration forms be hidden and replaced with City of Auburn Recreation.

Dam Relicensing at Barker Mill – River Day

The Conservation Commission has not heard anything from the City Councilors regarding the River Day. Sabrina said she has a meeting to discuss it this week. The understanding is that they want to look at recreational opportunities and use their influence and the need to have relicensing to bring that forward. One of the ideas was when they do release the water once a year to make a big deal of it with a festival. The Conservation Commission was under the impression that if there was a River Day they were going to direct it, although they thought it would make more sense that recreation would do that maybe in collaboration with them. It is believed that River Day was a result of a positive interest group. There was discussion about how there are multiple positive interest groups with good recommendations just no organization or communication and they hit dead ends. They believe it is the Conservation Commission's job to take the lead on the areas where they do have a piece and develop lines of communication and structure that can harness all the individual interest groups and put some energy into it to make good things happen. *They will add Sabrina to distribution list for Conservation Commission agendas and minutes.*

Universal Playground Equipment

Misty Edgecombe reviewed her ideas with Sabrina for a universal playground at the Old Lake Street School on Lake Street that is now being used for kids who have trouble in traditional

schools. She explained that there is currently no playground there. During her research she found there are no playgrounds for kids with disabilities in the Lewiston Auburn area. They want to build a universal playground so that all kids with all abilities can play together and one group is not being singled out. There is also additional land adjacent to the school that would be available for this project and is a beautiful area with trees and grass for a neighborhood park with picnic tables and plenty of space for parking. *When asked about the bid request for new playground equipment Tizz Crowley said she never got an answer and that she needs to follow up on that.*

Dog Park

Misty Edgecomb said she has done extensive reading from research done in 2001. Currently the City of Auburn shares and allocates funds for a dog park in Lewiston, however the Parks Subcommittee feels Auburn should have a dog park of their own. There was a lot of research done and there was a dog park association but they never got a park. She is wondering why it wasn't done before now, has anything changed, and if they will be able to get it accomplished any better. There is nothing that says why it stopped but they suspect it is due to money. Corporate sponsors were suggested. They need to put together a report that would include pricing and that whatever they propose, they need to be able to cover the cost and offer to make some of the contacts. The report should include how much Auburn is spending, how many people in Auburn are using Lewiston's that would use Auburn's, and who those people are. *It was recommended to use the Say It feature on the city web site to reach out to the public to let them know they are thinking about making a dog park, telling them what we think, and asking them what their thoughts are and if they would use it.* They would probably get more input from people from social media. A recommendation for the website is that whatever is posted to the website should also post to social media. Chuck Lafean composed an email to the Conservation Commission and city manager about raising money for signage at Mt. Apatite through corporate sponsorship. He suggested they start there and see how it goes. Another idea is to get funds from a vendor. *Tizz will give Misty the name of a woman who has shown interest in a dog park.*

Maurice Keene suggested a recommendation that would involve communication between recreation and parks that would develop positive lines of communication with the school department and hopefully start that as a model for future lines of working relationships. Tizz Crowley said they would need to go to the city manager to find out how to communicate with the school and get his permission to go directly to the school and also find out if he has an interest in delegating staff for this particular project and get a plan together.

ACTION: Misty Edgecomb seconded by Tizz Crowley moved to recommend communication between recreation, parks and the school department and to contact the city manager to find out how to communicate with the school and get permission to go directly to the school and also find out if he has an interest in delegating staff and putting a plan together. The vote was unanimously approved.

Park Watch

Larry Pelletier said a Park Watch was established shortly after the River Walk was built 3-4 yrs ago. The expected outcome was a reduction in negative incidents, reduction in repair & restoration costs to facilities and equipment, increase safety for children, increase community pride and they ask participants be alert, aware observant, and caring. Each park has a sign

posted with information on where to report any non-emergency issues. Dog feces are an issue and are getting out of hand. He has a neighborhood watch meeting and is going to talk to the lieutenant and ACO. There is also going to be a joint meeting with the neighborhood watch groups in March and they are going to discuss it. It was noted that there are currently no signs at Mt Apatite. An idea to get people on the River Walk is to partner with local pet stores and/or organizations and have a Dog 5K. It could be used to incorporate cleaning up along the way or promoting the rules and it creates another support group. There could be multiple walks that could be geared towards something different each time like adoption or a fundraiser.

The understanding is that the YMCA was considering a dog park on Stetson Road. Interest was expressed in finding out more about it and giving them support or to partner/collaborate with them. *Misty Edgcomb will ask the YMCA what their plans for a dog park are.*

How to address graffiti was briefly discussed. Giving the individuals a place to do graffiti was suggested. This will be discussed further another time.

New Business

Cemeteries

Tabled to the next meeting. They need to get a list of cemeteries in Auburn both owned by Auburn and not and start an inventory.

Annual Report

Tabled to the next meeting. It is due the 3rd Tuesday of June. If anyone has pieces that they think need to go into the report add it to the agenda material for next meeting

Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 30, 2016

Unfinished Business

Update From Misty & Leroy on Signage Project

Leroy was not present – It was not discussed.

Dog Park Project Update

Discussed above with Guest: Sabrina Best – Recreation Director

Tizz Update on Auburn's Naming Procedure

Tizz handed out some information.

Open Session - None

Adjourn

ACTION: Larry Pelletier seconded by Chuck Lafean moved to adjourn at 8:44 pm. The motion was unanimously approved.

Submitted by:

Tammy Thatcher