



# City of Auburn, Maine

## Recreation Department

Sabrina Best, Director

48 Pettengill Park Road | Auburn, Maine 04210

[www.auburnmaine.gov](http://www.auburnmaine.gov) | 207.333.6601

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### **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 6:30pm

Room 204, Auburn City Hall

**Members Present:** Sabrina Best, Mike Thurston, Dana Staples, Tim Cogle, Rick Martel, Paula-Curtis Everett, Misty Edgecomb, and Suzanne Roy

1. Approval of February Minutes: **Motion to accept Misty Edgecomb/Rick Martel, Unanimous.**

### **2. Department Update**

- a) Programs and Special Events: Sabrina provided a quick recap of the following programs and special events:
- Winter 2019/2020 Program Brochure has been completed and sent to elementary schools.
  - February's storyboards feature "The Community Lens": A Collection of works from local Auburn Photographers. March's storyboards will be featuring 2D work from local artists with the theme of Maine Women's History.
  - A family from out of state will be vacationing in Maine this summer and the children will be attending Auburn Recreation Summer Camp. There is currently 100+ signed up for summer camp which is high for this time of year and a sign of potentially high numbers this summer. Staff is working on establishing more STEM related activities and curriculum into camp.
  - A new water fountain has been installed at Hasty Community Center. A Cell Phone Boast was installed in the ASCC.
  - Maine Special Olympics will be using Hasty Community gym for training for their competition to be held in May
  - Auburn's very own Christy Gardiner was picked to stay at the Olympic training facility in California! She has been practicing her throwing at Ingersoll Turf Facility. Her training contract is through March 31st. If she shows progress in that time she will stay and go to the Paralympics!!!!
  - The boys' and girls' soccer recruiting event for Dartmouth University, Sunday February 16th, is completely full at this point. Colleges attending will be Dartmouth University, Bates College, UMass Amherst, UNH, Colby, Trinity, Cal State LA among many others.
  - Girls indoor softball league has 210 girls, 19 total teams. Season is halfway through and things are going very well, and the girls are having a blast.
  - Multiple Sclerosis Society will have their annual MS walk fundraiser on Saturday May 2nd. Event will start in Ingersoll, for sign-ups and the kick-off, then walk will take place outside before coming back to Ingersoll for the ending. Last year they raised over \$30,000 and had 290 participants.



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- Seniors Plus – We are working with Seniors Plus to conduct another round of educational sessions including Matter of Balance, Living Well with Diabetes, and Living Well with Chronic Pain. Past Matter of Balance and Living Well with Diabetes classes had 20 and 14 registrants respectively, and the upcoming Living Well with Chronic Pain class has a waitlist.
- Walking, Yoga, Chair Yoga, and Tai Chi – We looking to offer fitness programs at the Senior Community Center to include Yoga, Chair Yoga, and Tai Chi. Ingersoll has also added an additional walking time to compliment Senior Drop-in Mondays. Seniors can now take a break from their games and crafts to walk from 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM.
- Drop-in Mondays – These Mondays are taking off and we have extended the hours from 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM to accommodate our group. We started out in December with only 3 attendees but was up to 38 participants last Monday. These numbers could change in March when the New Auburn Seniors start their meetings again. A couple things driving our higher numbers are seniors learning to play Cribbage and Mahjong. A member of our Thursday Night Craft group solicited the help of other Majong players and we now have a group of 6-12 to come each week to play.
- The Auburn Senior Community Center now has a portable wheelchair charging station (picture attached)
- Thursday Craft Group – Our Thursday Night Craft group continues to grow, with attendance of 15 people last week. On January 30th the group met in the small side of the Senior Community Center while a Chamber Afterhours event was held on the other side of the building with live music, food and beverages. Holding two events at the same time went well and noise from the live music could barely be heard on the other side of the wall.
- Senior Trips – Recent trips have had a waitlist. Our upcoming shopping trip to North Conway has a waitlist of 10 people so we are adding a second trip meet the need and utilize our minibus since it is the preferred mode of transportation for the seniors.
- Citylink Bus Lunch and Learn – The City Link Lunch and Learn and bus trip was a huge success. The Age-Friendly Committee, Auburn Recreation, and Lewiston/Auburn Transportation collaborated on a lunch and learn adventure. Marsha Bennett provided and information session about how to ride the bus and Italian sandwiches were provided through Age-Friendly. 38 participants came for the info session and 25 rode the bus to try it out.
- The first Sunday public skate of every month will feature a different character (mascot) from a family favorite movie or show!
- The 2020 MLS (Major League Softball) Draft League will launch its 4th season Friday March 6th at 7:00pm. The night consisted of 65+ players, coaches, umpires and rec staff gathering at the Auburn Senior Community Center. The 12 coaches held a live draft to determine who will be on their teams from 144 players. Once the draft is completed and teams are selected games will be played Monday and Thursday nights this summer at Pettengill Park. The Senior Draft league night will be held in April.

- New Year's Eve event was a success, approx. 1,500 in attendance!
  - Staff continues planning for: Maine's Bicentennial Parade (May 16, 2020).
  - Staff continues to work with School Department Staff on a joint use agreement.
  - Staff is in full prep for affects from the COVID-19 Virus and is preparing for any cancellations or shutdowns that may come.
  - Staff continues to work with School Department on transitioning Middle School Football and Lacrosse from Rec to School for the FY21 budget year.
- b) Re-Branding Efforts: Sabrina talked about the request in FY21 for a new software system, Vermont Systems RecTrac. This system would eliminate the use of 4 different systems throughout all divisions of Recreation (NSBA, Ingersoll, Rec). There is a new logo in the works and is hoping to be done by June.

### 3. Work in Progress

- c) General FY21 Budget Update: Sabrina discussed the Recreation and Sports Tourism department budget presentation for the City Council will be on Thursday April 16. The board is welcome to join. Tentatively the City Manager is scheduled to provide the council with the budget by April 6. Overall, Sabrina felt supportive of the proposed budget impacts so far mentioning a big impact was the ASCC opening and making sure the appropriate needs for staff and utilities was made in the budget.
- d) Mount Apatite: Rick Martel sent the meeting minutes to the board and highlighted that since the meeting FOMA has been able to secure poop bag stands to be put up in the next month. Along with outdoor flier holders to be secured to the Kiosk which will have fliers and handouts about the leash law, cleaning up after pets, etc. Rick talked about focusing on Small Rd. entrance as the main access point, due to Garfield entrance and the National Guard situation may impact losing the trail head on that side of the mountain. Bates students are doing a GIS assessment at Mt. Apatite and accessibility needs assessment. Suzanne mentioned using the trade schools to help making signs, Rick will investigate this, or any local sign stores. Rick talked about needing to create a final sign design, map of all the trails, and names before moving forward too far.
- e) Park Improvement Discussion: There is some confusion on where parks should fall when it comes to boards and committees; Conservation Commission or Parks and Rec. Suzanne and Paula have been doing some research in trying to find out what the CC is charged with in their responsibilities. Sabrina updated that the Mayors Ad Hoc committee was formed to evaluate all the boards and communities and they will hopefully solve this problem or provide guidance. Rick talked about trying to find out where the money and responsibility for updating and maintaining the parks falls within City Departments. Dana talked about the history behind the Dept. being Parks and Rec and then Parks being placed with Public Works. When this change was made it was not reflected at the Parks and Rec board level. Therefore, it is Public Works responsibility to maintain, upgrade, fund parks. Suzanne questioned by Rec was the only staff representation at the PR Advisory meetings when they do not oversee parks. Paula mentioned that Parks is all throughout the Strategic Plan but there is no dedicated department for Parks

CITY OF AUBURN



DEPARTMENT

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nor does there seem to be much if any funding supporting parks in her research. The group focused on three recommendations or solutions; Either the board needs to change to not include Parks, Parks need to become part of the Rec Dept, or a staff rep from Parks needs to be at the meetings. Rick talked about how this current structure of parks under public works is confusing to the public because they see recreation as part of parks because you go to a park to recreate and so the public sees that area as a recreation space. Suzanne and Paula think the board should request a workshop on Parks and bring these concerns to the Council. This should happen now before they get into the budget. Misty talked about how the bare minimum of maintenance of the parks is being done but no replacement, upgrades, expansion etc. Sabrina talked about how if the request from the board to bring Parks back then that would mean the funding needs to come some place and that Public Works cannot afford to lose any resources or staff. Rick made the point that if that's the case then clearly there is no funding in the whole budget dedicated to parks. The Strategic Plan was created by 90% community input and if Parks and Recreation is a focus then it should be reflected in the budget and CIP. Tim talked about the needs for improvements at Spring Rd. which is another major recreational place, but whose going to be responsible for requesting and addressing those items. **Motion: "Request a Workshop with City Council to Discuss Parks. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board plans on expressing their concerns on park improvements and funding and will provide some recommendations." Rick Martel/Suzanne Roy; Unanimous.** It was discussed that the board's top recommendation would be to bring Parks back to Rec for the FY22 year. Pending the discussion at workshop the board would be willing to take the charge of researching and working with staff in developing a plan, budget, etc. to bring back to council.

### 3. New Business/Open Session for the Public

- a) Sabrina talked about the Council tour of the various facilities on Monday. It went very well and had positive and supportive responses overall on CIP requests, Building needs, program aid etc.
- b) Recreation and Sports Tourism Department presenting their budget to the Council on Thursday April 16<sup>th</sup>. The Board is welcome to come and support.

### 4. Next Meeting

- a) April 8, 2020 6:30 pm at City Hall Room 204
- b) Items for next meeting
  - a. Sabrina will talk about FY21 Proposed Budget
  - b. COVID-19 Response and Impacts

### 7. Adjourn

**\*\*Motion: to Adjourn by Rick Martel/Tim Cogle unanimous**