



## City of Auburn, Maine

Recreation Department

Jeremy Gatcomb, Director

48 Pettengill Park Road | Auburn, Maine 04210

www.auburnmaine.gov | 207.333.6601

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

Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 6:30pm Zoom Meeting

**Members Present:** Jeremy Gatcomb, Scott Holland, Rick Martel, Misty Edgecomb, Haley Warden, Suzanne Roy, Paula Curtis-Everett and Tim Cogle

**Absent:** Mike Thurston

**Meeting Minutes: January – Rick/Tim; all in favor.**

### **Department Update:**

**WinterFest** - Jeremy reported that WinterFest was supposed to be the weekend of January 28<sup>th</sup> the bad weather on Saturday did hinder the events no word on Sunday. Most events were cancelled Friday and Saturday. Usually there is not enough snow this year was too much snow. Androscoggin Land Trust did hold the snowshoe event at Sherwood Heights on Sunday and that went well. United New Auburn's skate was rescheduled to the following weekend and that was also cancelled due to bad weather. The two skating rinks will stay open outside for the public. Hopefully next year the whole weekend will go off w/out a hitch.

**Winter Programming** – Jeremy reported that youth basketball is winding down. One of the weeks can not be made up due to already scheduled programs (a few Saturdays were cancelled because of bad weather). Ingersoll programs, baseball will run through March into the beginning of April. In the planning stages of spring activities. Summer camp is planned year-round.

**Recreation Specialist Position** – This position was given the green light to replace after Dawna Daigle's promotion to Deputy Director. First round of Interviews were held. Second rounds to be held February 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. The hope is to have an offer out on Monday February 14<sup>th</sup> for starting the beginning of March.

### **Work in Progress:**

- **Tot Lot workgroup** – Haley reported that there are good things happening with Tot Lot behind the scenes work. She reached out to Cooperative Extensions she was referred to Lynn Holland from the Androscoggin County Office they have a Zoom call set up on Tuesday the 15<sup>th</sup>. Lynn has info on soil sampling, they have master gardener volunteer program who could possibly assist with type of plants and help with the actual planting.



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Lynn also has contacts for landscape design firms (they can give ideas about designs and costs). Misty said getting a budget would be key. Misty has a meeting scheduled with the Sustainability Director, Aaron Witham from USM (moving to the Lewiston campus). She will be doing a site walk with him, he said even with the snow he would be able to tell what the land will sustain. There is a group of students that work with him at the College and they would like to help as much as they can. Misty found a grant through the Governor's office and Haley listened to the webinar. The umbrella for the grant is Climate change but there are several subcategories of one of them being community gardens and food forest. (72 approved subcategories). This is not a matching grant. The city would be applying for it and Haley asked if there was a dedicated grant writer who would be responsible for it. Rita Beaudry's name was given, Misty and or Haley will reach out. Scott attended a meeting w/City Manager and Assistant City Manager, the \$50,000 that was discussed was approved. The caretaker has signed a lease for another year (running through October of 2022). Work can still be done (parking, new entrance etc). there is a meeting of the Tot Lot sub-group on the 23<sup>rd</sup>

- **Lake Grove Park Workgroup** – Misty emailed the assistant a while ago while he was on leave and she has not heard back as of yet (her next step is to possible go there). Scott mentioned that he had a meeting with him on Feb 8<sup>th</sup>. Dan Goyette is in the process of writing and RFP to go out for the water quality stuff (fountains, bubblers to make water quality better) \$150,000.00 was approved. Playground equipment will be discussed at the 22<sup>nd</sup> council meeting but that meeting is very full, if it is not discussed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> it will be March 7<sup>th</sup>. Side note Misty asked why the Advisory Board wasn't invited to the council meetings and would like to possibly attend to talk about the board and all of the cool things they do. Liz Allen (city staff that was running the Zoom meeting) said that the Advisory Board could call and get on the agenda any time.
- **Festival Plaza workgroup** – Tim, nothing to report at this time. Scott stated that there is possibly CIP money allocated but will confirm.
- **Mt. Apatite** – Rick provided an update the park is busy w/cross country skiing, snowshoers, snow mobile trails etc. There was a snowman built that needs to be removed because it is in the middle of a trail. There was a Zoom meeting the week before WinterFest to discuss doing a snowshoe hike but the hike was cancelled because of the weather.
- **LWCF** – Scott spoke to John Blais from the State and all is quiet for now. Jeremy said they will reach out to Doug Beck to set up a meeting. Misty said she would love to attend to get informed.

- **PAL** – Jeremy reported that PAL is staying busy it is the slower season so not as many kids. When the futsal court newly open the kids would go play until 10:00 at night because of the lights. Grab N Go is still going strong it is getting tougher to get food as there is now a charge for the food. Jeremy said that the largest reason for the food cost is that it is now tougher for the good Shepard Food Bank to get food. We are now getting bulk meat and are able to store it because of the new walk-in freezer at PAL. CMCC and the criminal justice program have 12 or 15 kids that go to the PAL and do their classwork (providing extra eyes). CMCC also will be sending 8 to 10 student athletes that need to have 15 hours of volunteering before they graduate. Bates has not replied as of yet. Paula Curtis-Everett took a bunch of kids (15 – 20 between the ages of 10 and under) out to snowshoe (these snowshoes are the Rec's). Paula also asked if the Rec and ALT could do a collaboration w/the snowshoes. Jeremy stated that Josh from ALT came to get snowshoes for WinterFest. Misty asked if there was a possibility of getting ice skates for kids to use at the outside rinks. Paula asked about the skates that PAL had years ago Jeremy informed the group that they were tossed as they were old.
- **Playgrounds** – No new updates beyond what was discussed above
- **Subdivision Projects** – Jeremy mentioned that there are talks to have a trail system (Mt Auburn Ave) to connect to Pettengill Park. Misty asked Jeremy to reach out to the planning board. Susan said that she and Paula took a walk to the contraction of housing development on River Road and that there were no green space. Misty and Tim thought that they were supposed to put a trail in there. Susan said that the \$30,000 should be put into the Rec's budget so that these green spaces can be created or kept. The concern is that these buildings (apartments, housing developments etc.) are being constructed w/no green space. Misty suggested to invite John Blais to the next meeting (March) so more information can be given and ordinances can be discussed. Tim mentioned that the Mayor should also be invited to the meeting. Misty thought it would be best to have one or the other there. Paula asked about the \$30,000 being earmarked for trails one of the major goals was for trails to be developed. Haley mentioned that she saw a snow-plow make a small snow bank on Spring street and kids were playing there which again marks the importance of green space. Homework for the next meeting is for the committee members to come up with questions for the next meeting about the subdivisions.
- **Conservation Commission** – Misty had a meeting with Sam and he was talking about recreation on the little Androscoggin River and about the dam that needed to be removed. Sam had talked about collaborating with the committee to do something and with help getting the dam removed.



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**New Business:** Tim mentioned Skating with a Cop on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at the two outside rinks. Susan thought maybe it would be a good idea to write into “Sunspots” in the Sun Journal asking for used ice skates to be donated. Jeremy told Tim to ask Dunkin for hot chocolate donations

**Meeting was adjourned, Tim/Scott; all in favor unanimous.**

Next meeting will be held Wednesday March 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm Zoom Meeting (hopefully it will be the last Zoom meeting)