

City of Concord, NH
Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes from March 20, 2025 5:30pm

Committee Members: Althea Barton (Ward 1), Sarah Beauregard (Ward 4), Nick Kotkowski Zoey Murphy (Ward 5), Councilor Michele Horne, (Ward 6) Brian Sartorelli (Ward 7), Paula Bowers (Ward 8), Chair Mary Miller (Ward 10), Councilor Nate Fennessy and Kenny Edwards (Merrimack Valley School District)

Absent: Barb Higgins (Concord School District), Robert Kleiner (Ward 2), Jim Figueira (Ward 3),

Staff Members: Laura Bryant, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director, Anne Marie Skinner, City Planner

Meeting was called to order at 5:31pm by Chair Mary Miller

Minutes approved as written from the February 2025 meeting.

New Business:

Keach Park Athletic Field Light Project: David and Bill Hickey from the Turner Group presented a power point presentation highlighting the steps that have been taken so far in the project. Items reviews included cost estimates, public meeting feedback and usage plan. RPAC members asked about possibility of a larger field, David let them know that would require lights being placed in the softball outfield and would be about 150K over budget. RPAC had a robust discussion about the need for lighted playing surfaces and whether or not Keach Park is the right location. Concerns expressed for Keach Park were limited parking, overuse of the grass field, increased trash and how many groups/leagues would actually use the lighted field, making it difficult to reach the estimated income. Brian made a motion not to move ahead with the project of installing lights at Keach Park. Mary seconded, unanimously approved. Copy of PowerPoint and information on CIP is online at: <https://www.concordnh.gov/1942/Keach-Park-Athletic-Field-Lights>

Resident concerns about the condition of the White Park rink: Ted Wing and his son spoke to RPAC about their concerns for the condition and safety of the rink at White Park. Ted talked about his disappointment that the rink that replaced the old one is smaller and no longer falls in the light from the basketball court for evening play. Most importantly he expressed concern that the fencing at the end of the rinks is no longer there offering protection from flying pucks. Ted also shared his frustration that the ice on White Park pond was not maintained after Black Ice. David addressed Ted's concerns sharing first he agrees the rink that was received (donation from Black Ice) was not what staff expected when they put it together they tried to made due the best they could. Secondly David addressed the issue of maintaining White Park pond in which he shared that he made the decision to stop maintenance after the wheel of a city vehicle went through the ice. The pond was open 35 days this year and was opened for a week after black ice tournament.

Youth Scholarship Overview: David explained to RPAC that we would like to review our current scholarship process to see if we are missing anything. He asked for 1-2 volunteers to meet with him and Laura to review and report back to RPAC. Brian and Sarah volunteered.

Review CIP Projects: David asked RPAC what details and information they would like for each major CIP project. Nate shared that he is on the Memorial Field committee and will report back to RPAC on what happens at those meetings. Sarah mentioned her concern over the condition of the track at Memorial Field mentioning it will need to be closed in a year or so. David said he will compile financial data and what stage of the process we are in for all large CIP projects to next month's meeting.

Rolfe Park Community Meeting: On March 11th David and members of Concord Police Department held a safety meeting to address resident concerns about Rolfe Park specifically kids hanging out in the parking. Surprisingly the meeting participants were more concerned with the speeding that happens to and from Merrimack Valley High School. Police agreed to have more of a presence before and after school. Kenny reported they have been true to their word as they have been there and have been ticketing daily. Over all the meeting was a success.

Staffing Update: Laura shared staff turnover at the front desk has been challenging, they are currently in the process of onboarding 3 new staff to work at the Community Center and Merrimack Lodge. Staff is currently interviewing and hiring for Lifeguards, Camp Counselors and Water Safety Instructors. Splash Pad and Laborer positions with Parks and Cemeteries are all filled.

Zoey asked about the Middle School Strength Squad and if it would be continuing, Laura shared that Dan (Parks & Rec staff) has been working closely with Tim (2Home Fitness) to advertise and get more participants enrolled. The class is listed in the spring brochure that came out middle of February.

Mary asked about the SPARC program and reported she had heard good things. Laura shared that the program was going very well. The "teen time" has been continuing to grow over the last few weeks and seem to be a hit. The SPARC staff has been amazing and they are planning a fun end of season party for Sunday March 30th the last day of SPARC.

Motion was made by Mary to end the meeting at 7:03am and seconded by Paula and approved.

Next RPAC meeting will be held Thursday April 17, 2025

Submitted by Laura S Bryant