

1 Recreation Commission Meeting

2 Wednesday, September 11, 2019 - Stowe Arena

3 The regular meeting of the Stowe Recreation Commission was held Wednesday, September 11, 2019 in
4 the meeting room at the arena starting at 5:00 P.M.

5 Members present: Lynn Altadonna, Adam Rice, Ben Novogroski, Candace Elmquist, Adam Rice, Brett
6 Loomis, Dave Rogers. Absent: Mike Loughran. Also in the audience was Terrie Wehse, Josh O’Gorman,
7 Jed Lipsky, Adam Davis, Kelly Hickey, Scott Keys, Ian Smith, Nifer Hoehn, Pete Teubert, Dominick Donza,
8 Tiffany Donza.

9 **The agenda was approved.**

10 **Minutes of 7.3.19:** Date needs to be changed. Adam moved to approve as amended, seconded by
11 seconded by Ben with all in favor.

12 **Intro to Arena Task Force:** Lynn asks for a moment to remember 9/11. Lynn starts by presenting the
13 Rec dept mission and recognizing the quality of the Arena and thanking all those responsible. He then
14 outlined the expectations and purpose of tonight’s meeting. Explained the primary purpose of the task
15 force will be for the Recreation Commission to ultimately make a recommendation to the Selectboard as
16 to whether or not there should be ice next summer and why or why not.

17 Terrie Wehse discussed the results of her time in 2017 when she was contracted by the Town for sales
18 and marketing outreach and research and presented her final report which was presented to the
19 Selectboard in December of 2017. She indicated that some of the challenges were that many
20 tournaments seek more than one sheet of ice, lodging is more expensive in Stowe and there is lack of
21 capacity during peak times, businesses are reliant on local market for participation, there are not all
22 inclusive opportunities for ice time/lodging/meals packages. She concluded that everyone who does
23 come loves Stowe and the Arena and staff. She said that the Arena should be viewed as a tremendous
24 asset and value to the community but there is not a market for profit.

25 Lynn invites comment from the audience. Brett Loomis said that the Arena has not underdelivered
26 rather it was oversold prior to being approved. Jed Lipsky said the Arena serves young and middle aged
27 but also serves an older population locally. He echoed the mission of the department and said that the
28 Town has always been clear that this would be a municipally owned and operated facility. He
29 mentioned that going forward, involvement of stakeholders is crucial. Adam Davis spoke about the
30 various roles and involvement he has served and both Adam and Jed indicated they would like to
31 participate. Kelly Hickey asked if the Town has ever considered only having ice in the fall and winter.
32 Kelly, Nifer Hoehn, and Tiffany Donza all expressed that they think there should be one staff person to
33 sell and market the Arena. Tiffany asked about the decision for the Town to discontinue afterschool
34 program. Matt described the process that took place in which led to the school making their facility
35 available for a licensed childcare organization to provide the program which was a legal requirement.
36 Matt explained that if the Town obtained a license to continue to provide the afterschool program it
37 would have limited the summer camp program to 30 kids. Tiffany asked if the Town could use the
38 school in the summer and Matt said only sparingly due to their scheduled maintenance. Nick Donza
39 suggested that programs are growing at the Arena and in the summer and need more time to establish.
40 Ian Smith runs Kellian hockey programs and echoed Nick’s statement saying that he plans on expanding

1 each summer as his business grows. Scott Keys says closing next summer would eliminate future market
2 not only for summer but also for fall/winter because people would go elsewhere. Tiffany says Stowe is a
3 recreation destination and Stowe Arena is the best ice in the state. She says it was sold to community as
4 year round ice and that there should not be any expectation for the Arena to make a profit. Jed agrees
5 and adds that it is not profitable but it is an economic driver. Ian and Nick suggests trying additional
6 programs such as curling and broomball. Ben says new adult hockey league in the works and says what
7 he is hearing is that people want to see summer ice continue so that growth opportunities can be
8 explored. Brett asks what does Selectboard really want? Adam says to break even. Lynn says there is
9 not an expectation to make a profit. Adam Davis says schools should be charged.

10

11 **Assign Task Force:** discuss forming a task force or addressing as the Rec Com with outside participation.
12 Adam motions to address the issue as the Recreation Commission with the additional involvement of
13 Jed Lipsky, Adam Davis, Scott Keys, Nifer Hoehn and Dominick Donza. Ben seconds the motion, all in
14 favor. Schedule meetings for 9/16 and 9/23 at 7pm.

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16 **Other Business:**

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18 Motion to adjourn by Lynn, seconded by Dave, all in favor at 6:57 pm

19 Respectfully submitted,

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21 Matt Frazee