

Recreation Commission Regular Meeting
Wednesday, November 4, 2020
DRAFT

2 The regular Recreation Commission meeting was held Wednesday, November 4, 2020 via Zoom starting at 5:02 P.M.

3 Members present: Lynn Altadonna, Dave Rogers, Adam Rice, Ed Sthal, Ryan Thibault, Art Shinnars, Matt Frazee. In audience: Kelli Millick, KC Chambers

4 **5:02pm called to order. Agenda Approved.**

5 **Welcome and Introductions of new members**

6 Ryan, Art, and Ed each took a moment to share their backgrounds and why they joined the Rec Commission.

7 **September Minutes**

8 Lynn confirmed with Matt that new members are not able to vote due to not being able to approve/disapprove since they were not in attendance. Matt also shared that with that being the case, we did not have enough members present to approve them tonight. Of those members present at the September minutes, no one had questions about them.

9 **Basketball Court Lights**

10 Matt shared that the basketball court lights have historically been on from dark to 11pm. Matt has been in discussion with KC Chambers, a local resident, about the effect the lights have at his residence. Last winter the Rec Department shut them off for the winter, the result of that was no complaints or concerns with the lights being off. The lights were planned to be addressed during the tennis court replacement project. That project was approved as a capital project but it has been delayed as the Town explores the requirements for stormwater treatment. KC has approached Matt about finding a short term solution in the meantime. Matt reached out to Sarah McShane, Zoning Director, and was unable to locate any information as to anything that was set in motion previously about the timing and usage of the court lights. Matt also reached out to other communities and found that the majority of them a set to turn off no later than 9-9:30pm. All communities close their courts during the winter. Matt also contacted Jim Carien, the VLTC risk manager, and he suggested unless we are routinely managing the courts, clearing them of snow on a regular basis, unless their heated courts, you're essentially inviting risk by not closing the courts and not posting that the courts are closed. If you post the courts are closed and you don't have the lights on a people still use the courts then they are doing so at their own risk. Matt also meet with Marcel from Gould's Electric to discuss alternative solutions. The existing lights do not provide a lot of options that could be done to minimize impact as far as adapting them or adding downward shielding. Motion sensors and user controls also did not seem as a viable solution due to cost. Gould's is providing a quote for 6 new lights that follow guidelines as a long term solution. Shorter-term solutions, the Rec Department is looking for feedback from the Rec Commission as to 1.) should we designate the courts as closed in the winter and 2.) what is a reasonable hour to turn the lights off in the spring/summer/fall seasons.

11 The Rec Commission had some questions for Matt about the usage of the courts after 10pm and in the winter. Matt stated there is occasional usage in the summer after 10 or 9 o'clock and depending on the

snowfall, the courts are used occasionally in the winter. Art asked how long it would take to get a permit. Matt said the money for the project has been approved and it's reserved for that purpose but there's not a specific timeline since it was delayed. Once those permits are filed for the stormwater treatment its unknown if the space is still going to be viable, but we won't know until we get to that point. Art asked if the tennis courts, fence, and lights is one whole plan. Matt responded saying we have rough plans and we have estimates, the courts were scheduled to be replaced and they would be replaced to the same footprint they currently have. Lynn added that the stormwater runoff is a requirement of the State legislature for every town to look at their stormwater run off to prevent it from running into streams, including all roads. Adam asked if there was any downside to shutting the lights down except for occasional usage. Matt said he thinks it's very reasonable that the courts should be closed in the winter. At one time the lights were serving a dual purpose, lighting the courts and the roadway leading to the Arena, but that has since been addressed with the exception of two light poles which need to be addressed. Lynn asked to hear from the homeowner, KC Chambers. Mr. Chambers shared his experience from his residence he liked the timer or motion sensor ideas and would like to find a middle ground. Lynn mentioned considering calendar dates between when the courts should be closed. Adam asked Matt is the Stowe PD provided input about the lights from a security standpoint. Matt said the Stowe PD had been consulted in the past and the streetlights along the road provided illumination, Matt said he would reach out to them to make sure there wasn't a conflict. Matt said that most other communities were consistent with closing November 1st- 15th and reopening around April 15th. Adam made a motion to close the basketball and tennis courts for the winter from November 15th to April 1st and keep the lights off during that period except for special request and subject to Stowe Police Department concurrence. Dave seconded. KC Chambers questioned the dates in the motion. Adam amended the motion: to close the basketball and tennis courts for the winter from November 1st to April 15th and keep the lights off during that period except for special request and subject to Stowe Police Department concurrence. Dave seconded. All in favor.

12 Matt asked if the Rec Commission would like to weight in on specific timing for the lights to be on for. Lynn suggested finding other alternatives for the lights i.e. motion sensor or timer. Matt said there are no modifications for the existing lights without it being a capital project. Dave asked if there has been any discussion about a way to block the light and has there been any thought to when teens utilize the courts. Lynn said it might be worth looking into it to see what the usage if after hours and revisit in the spring. Matt said we don't have any data at this time other than the Arena staff observations during their open hours. Lynn asked if the timing of lights could be revisited in March to give us time to gather data. Matt suggested deciding prior to March due to the timing of the bi-annual program guide, possibly during the January meeting.

13 Wildlife Proof Trash/Recycling Receptacles

14 Matt gave an overview about the bear occurrences along the rec path. The Rec Department supplies trash and recycling bins along the path and in the parks. This year we did reduce the number set out, we had 12 sets of the large bins (55 gallon drums) and 15 smaller trash cans in place through the path and parks. Three of these locations, in particular, have been gotten into by bears/wildlife. Our staff empty trash cans three times/week. Bruce reported that these three bins have been gotten into almost every single time. Matt reached out to Forrest Hammond, Wildlife Biologist with the State of Vermont, he was very aware of the issues with bears in Stowe and said this summer there were more reports of bears in Stowe than any other town in Vermont this summer. The Town Selectboard has determined that they support and they want to do what is reasonable to try to find solutions for this issue. The Conservation commission is also looking at the issue and they have indicated that they may be willing to contribute some of their funds toward a solution. Matt did a study on what products are available and the best one that he found was from Bear Safety. Matt is was looking for feedback from the Rec Commission on if they recommend continuing to look into bear safe receptacles as a capital request. Lynn asked what the deadline for capital requests is. Matt said we may be looking 2-3 years out given the current circumstances, but we can submit capital requests this year with the

understanding that it may be difficult to get it approved. Dave agreed that it is an important issue to address and suggested contacting a local fabricator to see if it's something that could be built. Ed asked if there was any other device out there similar to an alarm. Ed also asked about the cost. Matt said right now all of the issues have been at three locations so the idea was to get three units to start, but it's inevitable that the bears would find the other locations quickly. The example to follow is the National Park Service, as they've been working on this issue for years. Matt said there are two primary solutions for this problem; making the parks 100% carry in/carry out and to provide bear safe receptacles. Ryan added that most businesses along mountain road have upgraded to bear proof dumpsters and local homeowners have had to adjust how they took care of household trash. Lynn thanked Matt for letting the Rec Commission know about the issue and putting it on the radar. Matt added that it was something we need to consider as the Rec Commission analyzes their priorities. Adam asked about the deadline for capital request submissions. Matt said sometime in December and those are things he'd be working on now through mid-December. Adam suggested to look at some other options but consider making a recommendation in December.

15 10 Year Recreation Plan

16 Lynn acknowledged the 10 year recreation plan. The current rec plan was published in 2005 by a contractor. Some of the goals outlined in the plan was accomplished. Lynn expressed the importance of having a plan that feeds into the town plan. Matt pointed out that the plan had a lot of good information and obtainable projects which have gotten done but it was purposefully not adopted by the Selectboard due to the scope and cost. The biggest challenge as the Rec Commission, Matt and the Rec Department staff try to put something together over the next year or two with the goal of truly assessing what the need, desires, and demand of the Town and the community is that we can come out with a product that will be supported and achievable. Lynn referenced a couple of key points from the plan's executive summary: 1. The plan states the Rec path is an important asset for recreation in Stowe. 2. Memorial Park and the Arena are gemstones in our Town. The recreation building is another gemstone in Memorial Park, but the next most expensive project and it should be built into a plan, and that starts with a detailed look at the requirements. 3. The plan's author highlights the 1% room and meals tax and says some of it may be added to our town budget. Ed said the 1% was thought to be a separate fund that the town would not otherwise fund and it quickly changed to become part of the capital budget. Looking ahead, Lynn suggests looking into the boom in biking and think about the facilities around biking are included. Lynn also drew attention to the Mayo Farm fields.

17 Youth Basketball

18 Matt shared that our basketball season will not be able to take place this winter. The school's guidelines currently prohibit community use of school facilities and since our program is administered through us and not directly through the school, we are not able to run it.

5:54 Adam motioned to adjourn meeting. Dave second.

Respectfully Submitted

Kelli Millick