

**TOWN OF BRATTLEBORO
RECREATION & PARKS DEPARTMENT
BOARD MEETING
June 9, 2014**

All minutes are draft until approved at the next meeting.

The Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Board and the Skatepark Site Selections Committee met on Monday, June 9, 2014 at the Gibson Aiken Center in the Senior Center.

Attending Board Members: Bonnie Carr, Peggy DeAngelis, Renee Woliver, Bob Neubauer, Marty Rancourt, Betsy Gentile and Sam Rowley.

Attending Staff members: Director Carol Lolatte, Assistant Director Jessy Cudworth and Administrative Assistant Kim Isaacsen.

Attending Skatepark Site Selection Committee Members: Elizabeth McLoughin, Joe Bushey, Martin Fitzgerald, Andrea Watkins, and Dan Sontag.

Others attending included: Tim Johnson representing WTSA, Howard Weiss-Tisman representing the Brattleboro Reformer, Janet Dickerson for ASL interpretation, Patty Fitzgerald, Richard Gutherie, Simrun Socci, Brenda Carr, Francine Vallario, Les Montgomery, Ann Wright-Parsons, William McCarty, Ken Vitale, Joanne Roberts, Demitrum Latihis, Melissa Clark, Jeff Clark, Jane Sontag, Adam Hubbard, Gwynn Yandow, Tom Robertson, Jennifer Powell, Jeff Carlton-Newton, Andy Davis and others who did not sign in.

The meeting was called to order by Peggy DeAngelis at 6:00 p.m.

Motion to approve the May 12, 2014 minutes was made by Bob Neubauer and 2nded by Renee Woliver, all members voted in favor.

Carol Lolatte recognized 3 Board members Peggy DeAngelis for 18 years of service on the Recreation and Parks Board, Betsy Gentile and Marty Rancourt for 9 years of service on the Recreation and Parks Board.

SKATEBOARD SITE SELECTION UPDATE: Elizabeth McLoughin the Skatepark Site Selection Committee Vice Chair presented the History of the Committee, they have held 14 meeting, all meetings were warned, all meetings were open to the public, agendas and minutes have been posted on the town's website. The Committee's mission was to identify and evaluate sites within the community that would be appropriate for a skatepark and the Committee established criteria and rank each site setting weighted values for each criteria. The Committee was provided with information from BASIC, The Tony Hawk Foundation and The Recreation and Parks to assist with the process. The Committee was very committed to review any site in town that could possibly house a 6,000 sq ft Skatepark. The first few meeting focused on developing the criteria and ranking system that the Committee would use to evaluate each of the sites. The criteria

included categories for size, location, safety, cost and topography. After significant review the Committee determined that they would visit 9 sites and evaluated these sites for suitability for a Skatepark. The sites were visited, evaluated and rated, the Committee ranked all the sites they visited. The top four sites are:

1st Elm Street (1,819)

2nd Crowell Lot (1,518)

3rd Living Memorial Park (by the pool) (1,458)

4th Living Memorial Park (upper hill) (1,428)

All sites have pros and cons, the Committee compiled a list of pros and cons for all sites and reviewed the list for everyone present. The Recreation and Parks Board thanked the Committee members for all the work involved in the site selection process. Board Member Renee Woliver felt that noise in the Elm St. location from a Skatepark would be minimal given the business that already operate in that area and lack of residential properties in the area, she also brought the Elm St. hill to the attention of the Committee as it was not mentioned as a concern. Board member Sam Rowley did not feel the skaters on Union Hill from Crowell Lot was a concern, Crowell Lot has a fountain during the summer and this was not listed as an amenity, Crowell Lot already has a basketball court which is considered gray to gray not green to gray, he also feels that flooding in the Elm St location is a concern. Board Member Marty Rancourt asked if the town would be losing revenue from parking at the Elm St. parking lot, Committee members spoke with the Interim Town Manager about this the town currently has an agreement with the co-op for parking in the lot and currently only 14 of the 44 permitted spots are in use and not all parking would be taken for a Skateboard Park. Board member Betsy Gentile feels that the Elm St. location may bring more traffic into the retail area of Flat St. At this time the Recreation and Parks Board asked for public participation.

Richard Guthrie – a former Brattleboro Police Chief highly recommends the Elm St. location, it will cause less of a disruption to the community at large.

Brenda Carr – Stated that she is concerned about safety at the Crowell lot location, there have been three adult fatalities on Western Ave near the Crowell lot, and feels that Elm St. location is more suitable and that flooding will not be an issue because hurricane Irene was a 100yr flood. – Brenda spoke again after all who wanted to speak had a chance she feels Elm St. is the best location and neighbors don't want the Skatepark at Crowell lot location.

Jane Sontag – Concerned about noise carrying up to the Brookside Condos from the LMP basketball/pool location and that it would not be appropriate to mix playground kids with the people using the Skatepark.

Adam Hubbard – Skaters are kids and families with kids, and a multiple use park would be the best location for a Skatepark. He did not think that the Elm St. location would be a safe place to leave his kids with no supervision. He said that Skateparks located within multi use parks were successful and it gives families with multiage users more options. He feels the Elm St. location could work however single use parks tend to fail. He was also concerned with flooding, limits on bowls and soil.

William McCarty – Was concerned about noise that the Skatepark would create in the neighborhood, safety and traffic at the Crowell Lot location.

Jeff Carlton-Newton – His family uses the Crowell Lot daily. He questions how many people in the community a Skatepark would really serve. He does not feel a Skatepark is a resource that everyone would use. He has concerns about damage to the bank on Union Hill side of Crowell Lot and feels a Skatepark will take away from the beauty of Crowell lot. He likes the Elm St. location because it's more central to down town and the Boys & Girls Club the current location used by skaters.

Simrin Socci – Reading a letter by Wendy Kreeger – In favor of the Elm St. location safe parking, it's already paved, ease of policing and could have temporary ramps in place while BASIC continues to raise fund to build Skatepark. She also was in favor of LMP Upper Hill location because it's expandable. Her concerns about Crowell Lot were traffic and safety.

Les Montgomery – Questioned if the Elm St. location is expandable? He feels that the streets surrounding the Elm St. location would provide a buffer to noise. The Elm St. location is also close to amenities in the Transportation Center and the Brattleboro Food Co-Op. What LMP upper hill has the Crowell lots does not have bathrooms, expansion, good topography, noise buffers, it would respect neighbors, safe from traffic, open site lines for policing and parking for all.

Andy Davis – Elm St. location is good because it's near New England Youth Theater and the Boys and Girls Club. He thinks the Skatepark will be an asset to the town. A large group of clients that use the Skatepark live near the Elm St. location. He doesn't want us to pave more green space and we should find a place that people will come to.

Jeff Clark – Supports the Elm St. location because it's near the New England Youth Theater and the Boys and Girls Club. He also supports the Crowell Lot because it's a multiuse park. He does not think LMP upper hill will work because it's out of line of site.

After a brief discussion Recreation and Parks Board member Bob Neubauer made a motion to recommend the four top sites as presented by the Skatepark Site Selection Committee to the Selectboard, Board member Marty Rancourt seconded the motion. Board member Renee Woliver requested to amend the motion to only include only the top three locations, the amended motion was voted down 2-5. After a brief discussion the original motion to recommend the top four sites as presented by the Skatepark Site Selection Committee to the Selectboard was voted on with a 7-0 vote the motion was carried.

Carol Lolatte will notify the same community members of the date when the Skatepark Site Selection Committee will make presentation at the Selectboard meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

PUBLIC PARTICPATION: Dick Gutherie spoke to the Board about some concerns he had with bushes and hedges at Crowell Lot and some repairs needed to the Prospect Hill and Morningside Cemetery. Carol will follow up on the issues raised and asked Dick to call her office in the future with these types of concerns.

WEST RIVER PARK UPDATE: The next Committee meeting is scheduled for June 16th. The Bids for the restroom/concession building were between \$42,000 and \$72,000 higher than anticipated Committee. The WRP Committee will need to discuss solutions at the next meeting. At this point 30 bricks for the Buy a Brick fund raiser have been sold.

POOL ENGINEERING SERVICES: Engineers will look at pool issues after it open for the season on June 21st.

ESTEY GAZEBO: The repair work will be completed by June 30th. It will take 2 or 3 days to complete the repairs.

GIBSON AIKEN CENTER ROOF: The roof has been repaired and there has been no leaking since the repair. They need a few dry warm days to fully evaluate and determine if further repair is needed.

NEW BUSINESS

PROGRAM REPORT:

- Spring sports are finishing with season ending parties scheduled for the week of the 16th.
- Enrollment for camps is moving along.
- Swim Lesson registration is scheduled for June 21st, 26th & 27th.
- Track & Field program is taking off due to support from BAMS.
- Pool Party is scheduled for July 16th.
- At the Senior Corp meeting Jessy will be asking for a new Grill to be used for senior picnics at Living Memorial Park.

SWIMMING POOL: The pool is scheduled to open June 21st and staff training is scheduled for June 19th.

DUCK DERBY: The Duck Derby is scheduled for August 6th. Board members took prize assignments due by July 14th.

OTHER BUSINESS:

SUMMBER BBQ: The Board summer BBQ is scheduled for Friday June 27th.

STAFF CHANGES: Our Program Coordinator Tom Cote has given his notice and will be leaving on August 16th.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 14th at 6:00p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Bob Neubauer, 2nded by Bonnie Carr at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Isaacsen

Kim Isaacsen, Administrative Assistant