

Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes
April 4th, 2022, 7PM

Members Present: Kate Kreider, Sheri Lynn, Mark Fausel, Chrissy Keating

Community Members Present: Linda Parent (Town Clerk), Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner), Jack Lazarowski (Representing the Senior Center), Duncan Wardwell (Assistant to the Town Manager, Jessica Brodie (Vermont Recreation and Parks Association Executive Director), Lisa Miller (Representing the Planning Commission)

Call to Order: 7:05PM

Public Comments: No public comments

Non-agenda Items: Sheri received an email from Joy Reap. Joy and her husband offered to make a donation to the park for a Gaga ball pit. Sheri asked what the process is when someone wants to make a direct donation to the park. Duncan stated that he is already aware of the donation. Duncan and the town manager are looking into the details regarding putting in a Gaga ball pit, such as what is needed regarding maintenance, insurance, ground base for installation, and location possibilities to see if it is feasible. Duncan or another town employee will follow up with Joy Reap once they figure out these details.

Vermont Recreation and Parks Association (VRPA) Presentation by Jessica Brodie, Executive Director: Jessica provided background and general information on the VRPA. Jessica took over as the executive director in 2017. The VRPA is a non-profit organization and it provides resources and training to its members. The VRPA works with both professionals and volunteers in many different sectors. The association is a state affiliate with the National Recreation and Parks Association. Recreation committees can become members for a fee. VRPA provides many different trainings, including a statewide summer camp training. The organization also runs a state track meet, holds an annual conference, and hosts other meetings. There is a 9 person board that oversees VRPA. The executive director is the only paid position at the organization.

Sheri and Duncan shared a brief history of the Richmond Recreation Committee and some projects that we are currently working on. Jessica shared that different areas in VT have very different recreation structures and there is no magic structure. It depends on your community. Recreation is so important and the pandemic has shined a light on how important it is. Jessica also shared that she has seen multiple towns that work together

and it is great, but it can become complicated if you want to go in different directions. Jessica stated that specific grants may only apply to a parks and recreation commission. Sometimes the name of the group makes a difference.

Jack asked what some of the themes are that are coming up around the state and other rec committees. Jessica stated more staff and more money are the biggest needs. She stated that she is seeing a nationwide issue regarding staff shortage in recreation. There's a push to promote these jobs. Also the jobs are underfunded. Programs and parks take time and money to operate, but they are extremely beneficial to communities. General advocacy is needed, which is one of the VRPA's roles. Jessica works with many different departments to make connections and to advocate.

Sheri asked Jessica if she could talk more about the training that is available if the Richmond Recreation Committee decided to join the association: Jessica stated that VRPA has many different certification programs, some related to playgrounds and parks. The VRPA also holds meetings that include different trainings and these trainings count towards continuing education hours for professionals who have certifications. The organization takes feedback from its members regarding what training they would like to see. The VRPA tries to follow trends and provide information and training depending on what is needed. The organization shares events happening and grants available that they are aware of. The VRPA helps support recreation committees and provide resources.

Sheri asked Jessica if the VRPA ever does a formal mentorship program for a recreation committee. Jessica stated that the VRPA doesn't currently do that but she does feel that the organization is lacking in information and resources for new recreation committees. Jessica feels that there is a need for this. Jessica stated that this committee is welcome to reach out to any of the VRPA board members. One board member named Rob lives in Richmond. Jessica stated that the VRPA does meet monthly with recreation directors from around the state. Jessica suggested that it may be worth reaching out to the Mad River Valley Park District to learn more about their structure and what they do. This group is a multi-town Recreation department and the woman to contact is Laura. Sheri stated that the Richmond Recreation Committee is still finding its feet but we do have some structured goals. Jessica stated that parks and recreation departments are the glue that connect all the different town departments. Jessica stated that if you start small and have enthusiasm and interest then you can figure out what works for your community, but the logistics of getting started can be overwhelming.

Approving minutes from March: Kate motioned to approve the March minutes, Chrissy seconded. Passed: 3 in favor, one abstained. No discussion or edits.

Park Use Form Update: Duncan: Duncan stated that he has finished updating the park use form. Duncan and Josh will approve events as they receive completed forms and they will keep the Recreation Committee informed of reservations. There is a google calendar with reservations that will be available for the Recreation Committee to view. Duncan shared a spreadsheet with current reservations coming up. Sheri stated that we can reach out to Duncan if we need anything or have any questions. Duncan takes care of processing park use requests.

Mark asked if there is any requirement of a deposit to cover if an organization doesn't leave the park in the condition in which they found it. Duncan stated that the town does not collect a deposit, just a usage fee. Duncan stated that he tries to communicate with the organization directly, and if they are large then they are required to have their own insurance coverage. Duncan stated that most people are respectful and responsible when using the park, but if we have issues in the future then we can look at how to deal with that. Mark mentioned that he didn't see any youth sports activities listed on the spreadsheet. Duncan stated that only the baseball little league has done a reservation so far, but soon he will probably receive requests for soccer.

Sheri asked if there is a special rate for residents of Huntington or Bolton: Duncan stated that the price varies depending on your residence and if a group is for-profit or non-profit. Duncan stated that the fees are small and the main purpose is to keep up to date on what is going on in the park and provide usage for all community members. Sheri asked committee members how we would like to communicate with Duncan regarding the park reservations. All members agreed that we will look at the google calendar reservations and reach out to Duncan with any concerns or questions. Duncan stated to not hesitate to contact him if committee members have any questions.

4th of July Update: Linda: Linda gave the following summary of the plans for Richmond's July 4th celebration so far. She stated that she is in charge of making it happen this year because the parade and fireworks committee decided they couldn't handle it this year. Set up will be July 3rd in the afternoon, and there will be at least two tents to set up. There will also be portalets and a trash dumpster. The activities that Linda has planned for the 4th so far are: a parade, BBQ chicken, other food vendors, a Richmond band concert, a climbing wall (Petra Cliffs), fireworks, and a fun run. So far for vendors there are: two food trucks, two ice cream vendors, a bake sale (Richmond Senior Center), a chicken BBQ, lemonade (Richmond Land Trust), other drinks (Boy Scouts), fried dough, cotton candy, flowers, and vegetables. There will also be a car show. Clean-up will be on July 5th. The theme of the celebration is resilience. Linda would like to have free games and activities for kids, such as: a water balloon toss, tug of

war, corn hole, egg and spoon races, etc. The town also has a misting tent that can be set up. Reliable volunteers are needed to set up, clean up, and run activities for kids. Linda would also like to do a coin drop to raise funds for the costs association with the July 4th celebration and she needs volunteers for this too.

Sheri asked what the timing is regarding helping with children's activities. Linda stated that 11AM until 3PM or so on July 4th is good. Sheri asked what happened to the bin of games that the Recreation Committee purchased. Ravi stated that the games were purchased and they are somewhere in the town office. Ravi stated that he will find them and let the committee know what games there are. Mark stated that he hopes that the Planning Commission can host a booth with information about different town organizations and groups on the 4th of July. Sheri suggested asking Radiate to set up art for kids to do on the 4th. Linda stated that she contacted Radiate and was told that they most likely will not be able to do that. Linda mentioned that the Girl Scouts may do face painting. Linda also suggested that some simple art activities could be set up, such as rock painting. Sheri stated that she will contact the Huntington Boy Scouts to see if they are interested in volunteering.

Sheri offered to set up a digital sign up list for Linda that can be used for volunteer sign-ups. Linda agreed and thanked Sheri. Chrissy stated that she will check with RiseVT to see if they have any stuff that they can donate. Mark asked about marketing for the Richmond July 4th celebration, such as reaching out to other communities to let them know about the event and including a solicitation for vendors. Linda stated that she does post to the Front Porch Forums of surrounding towns already, but she would be fine with more marketing too. Jack asked if anyone has a guess of how many people have come to Richmond's celebration in the past. Linda stated that she doesn't have a specific number, but it's hundreds and hundreds. Sheri stated that this committee will revisit this topic during each meeting leading up to July 4th. She added that the main plan right now is to work on recruiting volunteers and contacting Linda if we know any interested vendors.

Update to Park Ordinance: Ravi: Ravi stated that all of the Recreation Committee's edits were incorporated and the final version of the park ordinance was approved on March 21st. Ravi stated that the hours of operation for the Volunteer's Green Park were updated as follows: Spring to Fall open dawn to dusk, Winter open dawn until 6PM with the exception of later hours allowed to accommodate ice skating.

Update on membership: Sheri stated that she reached out to Kirsten and she is thinking of rejoining the committee. Sheri put in her reapplication to stay on the committee. Sheri stated that Chrissy will be leaving the committee and Kate is done for

now but she may come back in the future. Sheri mentioned that Harland hasn't been able to attend due to his work schedule and lack of ability to attend virtually.

VOREC Grant Update: Ravi stated that he did receive an answer regarding the VOREC grant application and Richmond will not receive the grant for Volunteers Green. Sheri stated that she will include discussion regarding finding other funding for Volunteers Green on next month's agenda.

Next Meeting: May 3rd. Discussed options for holding the next meeting (virtual, hybrid, in-person). After brief discussion it was decided that this committee will either meet outdoors in-person or hybrid in the town office.

Motion to adjourn: Mark motioned, Chrissy seconded. Motion passed. Adjourned at 8:33pm