

## **Richmond Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes September 5th, 2023**

**Members in Attendance:** Kirsten Santor, Sheri Lynn, Kate Kreider, Mark Fausel

**Community Members Present:** None

**Meeting started at 7:05 PM**

**Non-agenda items:** Sheri updated members that Kathy has officially resigned from the committee. Duncan inquired if Kathy would be willing to stay on the committee a bit longer. Sheri responded that Kathy is not willing to stay on longer. Sheri stated that Kathy expressed that she felt from the start that there is a lack of communication and understanding by the selectboard regarding our committee's work. Sheri mentioned that whenever members from other towns are appointed to our committee, people question what the purpose is of having committee members from other towns. Kirsten suggested that it may be very helpful if Kathy feels comfortable sharing her feedback regarding her experience on the committee with the community. Sheri stated that she will reach out to Kathy to make this suggestion.

**7:12 PM: Approval of August Minutes:** Kirsten motions, Kate seconds. No discussion. Minutes approved unanimously.

**7:13 PM: Recent Selectboard Meeting and ARPA Discussion:** Sheri summarized the discussion that occurred during the recent selectboard meeting. The selectboard passed a motion to earmark \$450,000 for recreation use at Volunteers Green and Browns Court. The selectboard also passed a motion to create a special committee that will be composed of Richmond residents to conduct public outreach and create a detailed plan for how to use the \$450,000. The special committee will have until March 2024 to create a detailed plan with cost estimates.

Kirsten raised some questions that came to mind when she watched the selectboard meeting. Her thoughts/questions include: How was the ARPA survey conducted and is it statistically valid? How did the ARPA committee come up with the suggested amount of \$450,000. What will that money be used for? Sheri stated that during the selectboard meeting an estimate of \$83,000 was mentioned for repairs and updates to the bandshell. Kirsten is also curious to find out what the community's perspective is regarding the playground and how long the community thinks it will last.

Members discussed that these decisions by the selectboard makes us feel that we (the Recreation committee) have been left out of the conversation after years of working towards securing funds to replace the playground and repair the other structures at Volunteers Green. Committee members also feel frustrated that this committee can no longer continue to work on improvements on Volunteers Green because the selectboard has decided that they want a special committee with only Richmond residents involved in this process. The decisions of the

selectboard made it feel as if the members on our committee who are from other towns and who contribute greatly to our committee are a detriment to the committee's work, which has been focused on Richmond as a hub where Huntingotn and Bolton neighbors enjoy recreation opportunities . Kate also noted feeling like there has been a general lack of communication and the ARPA committee and Selectboard have not made an effort to keep this committee involved regarding recreation-related decisions. Mark suggested that it may be helpful to talk with the selectboard members to give feedback and ask questions. Mark stated that he plans to talk with Josh in order to better understand what is going on and clear up any confusion or miscommunication. Kirsten also volunteered to be involved in discussions with Josh and/or selectboard members.

**7:33 PM: Recent Inspection of the Playground After the Flooding:** Sheri summarized the recent inspection. No additional issues or needed repairs were identified. The only identified repair that has been addressed from the inspection in the spring is the addition of more wood chips. There are many other small repairs that need to be addressed. Sheri suggested that this committee should review the inspection report with the selectboard and ask the selectboard what their plan will be regarding having these repairs completed. General consensus among committee members that the identified repairs should be completed in order to keep the playground safe. Sheri suggested that she could email Jay and Josh regarding the identified playground repairs and having them completed.

Kirsten raised that concern that this request may cause more confusion and miscommunication given the timing and the selectboard's recent decisions. She suggested that we may want to improve communication first before moving ahead with requesting repairs to be completed. Kirsten suggested the possibility of doing a small meeting between one or two committee members and one or two selectboard members, as long as we are following open meeting laws. Committee members discussed the process for asking the town to complete the identified playground repairs and questioned whether or not this committee needs to formally ask the selectboard or just reach out to Duncan. Sheri volunteered to email Duncan and ask him what the process is to have the identified playground repairs fixed. Kate mentioned that if the town uses its recreation budgets to pay for the repairs, then it may only need approval from Josh and it may not need to go through the selectboard.

**7:59 PM: Committee Work Plan and Vision for the Future:** Sheri shared that she is interested in having the Recreation committee host a snowshoeing event in February. It could occur on three different days and each day would be at a location in a different town (Richmond, Bolton, Huntington). It would be a guided/group snowshoeing event. It would be a fun community-building event that we can plan, promote/advertise, and run. We could probably use the library's snowshoes to lend to participants who don't own their own snowshoes. General consensus among committee members that this sounds like a good idea. Kate offered to help Sheri with planning the event.

Sheri also brought up the need to recruit more committee members, especially now that our Bolton member just resigned. With the selectboard's creation of a special Richmond committee

to decide how to spend the earmarked \$450,000, this may cause some competition and we may have a more challenging time trying to recruit members to our committee. The members also discussed that if committee members from other towns (Bolton and Huntington) continue to feel that they are unwelcome on this committee then we may not be successful recruiting members from these towns. Sheri suggested that we still keep recruitment as a high priority, while also seeking to improve communication with the selectboard and the Richmond community.

Kirsten mentioned a community-wide request recently from the fall rec soccer organizer looking for help. Kirsten suggested that this committee could explore the possibility of either supporting or taking over running the fall soccer program. The current person running the program is looking for someone else to take over, and it is always a challenge finding people willing to volunteer to run and support this program. Mark mentioned that he ran the fall soccer program many years ago and it is demanding and takes a lot of time, but he is very open to considering having the committee run or support the program. Mark suggested reaching out to the person who runs the program currently and invite her to our next meeting so that she can talk to us about the program and what it entails. Kate has the contact information of the person who runs the fall soccer and Kate volunteered to email her to invite her to come to our next meeting. Sheri mentioned that it would be a good idea to also think about other programs/activities that we can support that include other ages of people as well.

**8:20PM: Reviewed Park Use Events:** Reviewed events. Kate mentioned that she doesn't see a reservation for the fall soccer, but maybe that reservation was very recent and isn't listed yet. No other discussion.

**8:22 PM: Meeting Schedule and To-do List:** We will continue to meet on the first Tuesday of the month and the committee decided to skip January's meeting due to it being so close to the holidays. Next committee meeting will be on October 3rd.

Next meeting we will continue to work on the committee work plan: Sheri will revise the work plan based on input at this meeting).. Mark and/or Kirsten will provide an update regarding their conversations with Josh and/or selectboard members. Sheri will provide an update regarding the process for having playground repairs completed after she emails Duncan. Sheri will revise the work plan. Kate will email the fall rec soccer organizer and invite her to talk to the committee during our next meeting.

**Motion to adjourn 8:29 PM:** Kate motions, Mark seconds. All in favor, the meeting adjourned.