

BRUNSWICK RECREATION COMMISSION

DATE: January 16, 2019

TIME: 7:00 pm

ROOM 206, TOWN HALL

85 UNION STREET

MINUTES

Present: Chair, Mike Lyne and Commissioners Melissa Archbell, Brianne Weaver, William Wilkoff and Eric Foushee

Absent: None

Also Present: Director of Parks and Recreation, Thomas Farrell; Deputy Director, Troy Smith; Parks and Recreation Facilities Director, Jay Astle

Chair, Lyne welcomed everyone and then asked Commissioners and staff to introduce themselves.

1 MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 26, 2018

Minutes will be available for consideration by the Recreation Commission at an upcoming meeting.

2 CITIZENS INPUT AND CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Lyne noted the Commission had sent a letter to the town council. The letter, which originally came from Lyne, was regarding the Woodward Point property. Director Farrell advised that the date of the town council meeting had changed. He added that when a council meeting occurs on a holiday, the meeting will typically be held on the following Tuesday. Director Farrell mentioned that the coming Monday would be Martin Luther King Day and that the meeting was scheduled to occur that following Tuesday. Farrell then continued on to say that the council rescheduled the meeting for Thursday of the following week and that this topic, the request from the Land Trust and Maine Coast Heritage Trust for the council to take into consideration funding from the Mere Point property sale proceeds, would be discussed at this meeting. Farrell added that he was calling attention to the change in the scheduled meeting should anyone want to be in attendance. Farrell confirmed that the letter, which was signed by Chair Lyne and sent to the town manager for consideration by the council on December 24th, had been received by all after submission to the council. Director Farrell concluded his remarks by affirming that the topic would be up for discussion at the meeting during the following week. Chair Lyne followed up by stating that letter was in response to a vote taken during the previous Recreation Commission Meeting in support of the Land Trust's request for funds from the town for the acquisition of Woodward Point property. Chair Lyne continued on to mention that the council would be discussing the letter which did not include specify funds requested; rather it sought whatever level of support the town thought was appropriate.

3 ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Lyne explained that there were no changes to the agenda for the meeting tonight and

welcomed Deputy Director Troy Smith to give his remarks on the program report.

- 4 **RECREATION PROGRAM REPORT – TROY SMITH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR**
Deputy Director Smith presented the monthly recreation program report highlighting the program offerings that are currently in process for the winter season and those that were recently completed. These included;

- Youth(In-House) Basketball League – 127 3rd-8th Grade Participants
- Cape Elizabeth Travel Basketball League- 43 Participants
- Kids on the Court Basketball- 75 Participants
- Lost Valley Learn to Ski and Snowboard- 39 Participants
- Fundamental Basketball for Grade K- 25 Participants and 10 Volunteers
- Indoor Running Club- 71 youth participants
- Winter Vacation Camp- 66 different participants over 4 days
- Cross Country Ski- 19 participants
- Hip-Hop Dance Club- 11 participants
- Brick by Brick Lego- 20 participants
- Community Swim- 15 Family, 3 Individuals Participating
- Indoor Track Running Meets- 60 Participants

Smith then summarized the programs that are upcoming. These included;

- Co-Ed High School Basketball
- Start Smart Basketball
- Mad Science: Take a bite out of Science
- Pre-Season Youth Wrestling Clinic
- Youth Wrestling
- February Vacation Camp
- Mid-Winter Basketball Tournament
- Valentine Ball

Deputy Director Troy Smith then displayed a video advertisement for the Annual Valentine Ball. Smith noted that he is incorporating more interactive methods for advertising within the department and used this video to highlight his efforts with social media advertising. Smith followed-up the video by mentioning that all Brunswick daughters, in grade 1-6 and accompanied by an adult age 18 or older, are invited to the special Valentine's Ball on Saturday, February 9th from 6:30-8:30 at Harriet Beecher Stowe School.

Troy then updated the council on his efforts to prepare for tournament season. Troy noted that each year the Rec Department hosts close to 100 teams during tournament season and this upcoming tournament season marks the 18th year for the Annual Girl's Midwinter Classic, the 38th year for the Boy's Midwinter Classic Tournament and this year is also the 3rd Annual Boy's 7th Grade Basketball Tournament. These games are held at Harriet Beecher Stowe School from February 18th-22nd and features teams from all over Maine competing to be the best team in the state. Smith continued on to state that this year the Recreation department would be hosting a number of weekend basketball tournaments for kids in grades 3-6 located at the Recreation Department.

Next, Smith provided an update about the Preschool program for the Recreation Department. Smith noted that resident and non-resident registrations are being accepted for the 2-day, 3-day, and 5-day program.

The Deputy Director concluded his report by presenting an overview of the hours of operation of the recreation center, indoor track and Pickleball use schedule. He also indicated the recent implementation of 360 degree imaging used to provide snapshots of the Recreation Center for those who are unfamiliar with the Parks and Recreation Center.

Director Farrell also delivered remarks about the Valentine Ball as highlighted in Deputy Director Smith's report. He mentioned that there was a policy change with regard to the Valentine Ball and participant eligibility. Farrell also mentioned that this was discussed in a number of meetings after the previous year's event and prior to the appointment of the current recreation commissioners. Director Farrell went on to read a clause that states that all daughters are welcome no matter their gender identity or relation, whether biological or adoptive, in an effort to strive for an inclusive department. This was in response to community commentary, which sparked discussion amongst the commission with regard to the policy and the wording around who could attend the event. Farrell established that to his knowledge, there had not been any additional community commentary with respect to the inclusivity of the department and he welcomed folks who may hear commentary on this topic to pass this information along to the department.

Farrell then provided commentary related to the preschool report delivered by Deputy Director Smith. Director Farrell noted that many are probably aware that a new school building is now under construction on Jordan Avenue and it has been designed with an early childhood education wing. Farrell mentioned that he had been in contact with the school's superintendent, Paul Perzinoski, over the course of the project. Farrell noted that his most recent conversation with Perzinoski was a discussion about the number of children who would be served in the advent of the new school. Farrell outlined that the new school would open in the fall of 2020. It would feature 8 half day classes, 4 in the morning and 4 in the afternoon, with approximately 15-20 children in each. Director Farrell summarized that the school district is projected to serve 160 students, however this would not meet the demand for eligible children in that age group within the town.

Farrell continued on to mention that in the first year, it is likely that the budget would only allow for 4 classrooms initially and the additional classes would be added in the following year. Farrell added that the cost of adding these initial 4 classes was included in the budget for the project, but that the capital for staffing these classrooms represents an increase in the budget in order to pay credentialed teachers. Farrell analysis of this topic was that even though the school will eventually serve 160, it does not meet the needs of the town and yet will also take significant numbers of students away from longstanding public and private early childhood education centers who have been serving this population over the years. Farrell then noted that this topic is one that has been widely discussed by Recreation staff as they are trying to determine which niche within this demographic will need to be filled and whether or not it would be appropriate to continue to offer preschool programming as it is currently being offered.

Farrell stated that this topic is one that folks should be prepared to discuss as a determination will be made to continue a half day program or transition to an early childhood education program with day care services also provided. Farrell included that there will be children who do not gain entry in the Brunswick School Department program or may chose not to participate in order to avoid committing to a 5 day program. He continued on to note that in the past, families chose the Rec Department program because of the flexibility in scheduling, but that these days parents largely want their children in a 5-day program in preparation for K-12 schooling.

Farrell concluded by stating that questions are starting to be raised about what the future of the program would look like, but that answers are not currently available. He continued his conclusion by adding that within the next 6 months, these discussions would start to take place no matter what happens with the school and their decision to open either 4 or 8 classes at the beginning of the 2020 school year. Farrell then stated that this discussion would include the topic of the fee for the recreation center program, as the school will be offering this program at no cost. Additionally, Director Farrell that the Recreation Department would be operating as usual for the 2019-2020 school year and that a decision about the 2020-2021 school year would need to be made in advance of 2020. Finally, Farrell included in his remarks that the Recreation has been provided early childhood education service since the year 1950. He summarized that with such a longstanding history of providing this programming his intention was to start the discussion early.

Vice Chair, Eric Foushee, inquired how the school department settled on serving the number of students that Director Farrell had outlined. He continued on to question why they determined that they would serve only 160 out of all the children who would be eligible for this program.

Farrell replied by stating that he was not aware of the processes that determined this outcome and also proposed that it would be best for Perzinoski, or a representative from the early childhood education program, to be in attendance in order to answer any questions. Farrell continued on to state that he recalled reading an article about Learning Land Early Childhood Education center and their decision-making surrounding an upcoming site change and considerations they had with regard to the opening of the new preschool classes. Farrell added that to his knowledge, they were committed to providing their program for the coming years and are aware that there will be a void in both public and private early childhood programs when these classes open.

Foushee replied to Director Farrell by inquiring as to whether or not vouchers might be made available for children who may want access to a program, but do not gain access into the school department's program.

Farrell responded by noting that he was aware that discussions about vouchers have been prevalent, but that he does not know that answer. Farrell then proposed that this topic should be added to an upcoming agenda preceding the 2020-2021 school year. Farrell included in his remarks that the Recreation Commission may need to wait until the school department has determined their budget before having this discussion due to the budget impacts of the

proposed opening of 8 new classes.

Chair Lyne then thanked Deputy Director Smith for his report on the state of recreation programming and thanked Director Farrell for his update as well. Chair Lyne then inquired about the history of the Annual Valentine's Ball being located at the Harriet Beecher Stowe School. Deputy Director Smith followed up by mentioning that the Valentine Ball has been located at HBS since its opening or for about 6 years.

5

OLD BUSINESS

5a **UPATE OF JANUARY 8TH MEETING WITH DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE, TOWN HARBORMASTER, SUE STABLEFORD—VICE CHAIR OF RIVERS AND COASTAL WATERS COMMISSION, COMMISSIONER WILL WILKOFF, TOWN FINANCE DIRECTOR AND PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR TOM FARRELL**

Farrell began his remarks by asking for support from Commissioner Wilkoff as he informed the group that the meeting consisted of a very long laundry list of topics. Farrell noted that the driving force behind the meeting was a previous conversation with the Rivers and Coastal Waters commission and their request for the Recreation Commission to consider bringing forward fees associated with commercial launching, or at minimum charging parking fees for single vehicles, at the Mere Point Boat Launch Facility before the start of the next operating season. The conversation included the implications of how it would be administered, managed and enforced.

Director Farrell continued on to state that, after the conversation at the previous meeting, he subsequently sent out the memorandum of understanding that the Town has with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W), which is our agreement to maintain the facility and manage it. Director Farrell then noted that he also sent out the original Citizen's Advisory Committee report to the Brunswick Town Council that really framed recommendations on what informed the construction of the project. Farrell noted that these recommendations were the basis for the project and that this document was created with the active involvement of the IF&W. Farrell then stated that within the packet disseminated is the result of the first topic covered in that long laundry list of subjects.

Farrell outlined that it was the desire of both the Town and the IF&W to better manage the boats, which exceed the acceptable size limit, that are being launched there. Director Farrell continued on to state that, since day one, signage indicates that no boats greater than 24 feet should be launched there. Farrell then said that because the Town of Brunswick staff cannot be there round-the-clock in an enforcement capacity, there is no way of knowing who is launching boats at any given time and there have been some very large commercial vessels being launched. Farrell added that there was damage to the Mere Point boat launch during the previous season, but that there was no way of determining how it happened. Director Farrell's supposition was that the damage was created by one of these large vessels being launched or hauled through this area. He informed the commission about the damage and stated that a boat crashed into an elevated wooden walkway after not meeting the necessary turning radius and took the balusters and rails completely off. Farrell also noted that an additional issue is the weight limits of the ramp, as it is not designed to support the weight

of some of the vessels that people try to launch there. Farrell added that there has even been a history of private contractors hiring barges to haul things like dump trucks out to the smaller islands, like Birch Island, for work on homes out there.

Farrell concluded that they had a long discussion about this topic and that it resulted in the letter before the commission. Farrell added that it was co-authored by the Harbor Master Dan Devereaux, and Chief Planner, who have both been present in previous Recreation Commission Meetings. This letter will then be sent to contacts that Harbor Master Devereaux had compiled based on his knowledge of commercial boat haulers, or individuals whose vessels exceed this limit, that are using this launch site. This letter will serve as pre-season notification explaining that the rules will be enforced to the greatest extent possible in the coming season.

Farrell then shifted to discussing the enforcement of these guidelines and acknowledged that Chair Wilkoff had indicated that enforcement of this policy was going to be difficult and had questioned whether or not there was the possibility of using cameras as one way to be able to enforce the policy. Farrell followed this up by mentioning that he was told that the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife understands that this is the desire of the Town and that the money for this project had been added to the Marine Resource budget and was approved for cameras in that location. Director Farrell then stated that the IF&W would like a policy and asked that the Town of Brunswick provide them with a policy that the commissioner and staff can review to determine whether or not it is acceptable to them because they own the property. Farrell shared that Harbormaster Devereaux informed him that the policy is in development at the police department and there is an initiative on the part of the police department, as well as the Recreation Department, in terms of surveillance cameras at a number of other locations we operate (primarily the boat landings and outlying areas and a select number of other facilities throughout the town).

Farrell concluded that this document would be sent to the IF&W before the next boating season and the money is available in Dan's budget to outfit the cameras at the Mere Point Boat Launch. Farrell emphasized that he was confident that it would be in place by the start of the next boating season. Director Farrell then shifted his attention to focusing on the issue of fees. Farrell identified specific challenges that had been discussed, including putting together a system of how the town currently licenses or permits people and how they will be enforced and which department will be responsible for the enforcement. Farrell mentioned that there was a desire for the Parks and Recreation Department to be responsible for it because the Department is already responsible for many of the sites. Farrell added that the Recreation Department also has infrastructure, with regard to the office administrative support. Farrell continued on to mention that the Recreation Department has a software program that could be used to create a permitting section, similarly to how we set up programs. Director Farrell then mentioned the use of a sticker, similar to the ones used for the town landfill, which gets purchased annually and displayed on your vehicle.

Farrell then circled back to the issue of enforcement, stating that regardless of the cameras there will still need to be boots on the ground working to enforce this policy. Farrell continued on to mention the prospect of eliminating parking all together. Farrell added that it was the desire of the IF&W that no one should be parking at the Mere Point Boat Launch

unless it is directly related to use of the launch. Farrell supplemented this statement by adding that there have been requests, which typically go to Harbormaster Devereaux, for parking for events at Mere Point like a graduation or a wedding. In the past people have been able to park there for an event like that, but it was clear from the IF&W at that meeting that they would like us to discourage that use, would prefer to see us not do that, and have asked us to reconsider this.

Farrell then shifted to discussing another issue, revisiting the entire M.O.U. He added that the IF&W are billed \$10,000 annually for operations expenses we incur every year to operate the facility; however it usually costs us more than that to operate. Farrell elaborated on this point by including that perhaps the fees generated could go towards the additional cost, beyond what they currently reimburse for operation costs. Farrell explained that as long as the fees are going towards operations and maintenance, it could go towards things other than that. Director Farrell then directed his attention to Commissioner Wilkoff and inquired as to whether or not he missed any points from the meeting.

Commissioner Wilkoff added that there was a very clear statement from the IF&W that we were not to jeopardize the use by recreational fisherman. Wilkoff further noted that the decision about who to charge and how much needs to be taken into consideration. Commissioner Wilkoff included in his remarks that the plan the IF&W would like to receive should be in its very introductory phase and then it can be reevaluated, with questions asked in regard to how well it worked.

Director Farrell responded noting that the two major sources of funds for the project came from Lands for Maine's future (they helped to make the purchase for the land itself) and Sport Fish Restoration funds. Farrell detailed how fisherman pay excise tax when they buy things like equipment, gasoline for their boat or bait, and those monies funded that project. Farrell continued on stating that it is unusual for the IF&W to have a coastal launch, it is typically the Department of Conservation, and they have two IF&W coastal launches that the Director himself is aware of, with one of them being Brunswick's. Farrell concluded that this is the major source of funding for construction, but that the IF&W is mostly focused on inland fisheries and the Mere Point Boat Launch does not fit those criteria. Because the main source funds for construction are derived from recreational fisherman, that is the population of people that we don't want precluded from being able to launch there or have a space to park their vehicle and rig if they are going fishing.

Farrell then summarized this meeting, adding that an agreement was made to revisit this topic in one month and to take a stab at the M.O.U. and where we would like to see them consider some changes. Farrell added that one change the Recreation Department would like to see is more money towards operations costs and that the IF&W would like to see stronger language about the enforcement. Farrell added that he pushed back against funding to be for operations and maintenance, but not for personnel for enforcement. Farrell asserted that it was his opinion that enforcement is encompassed within the operations, but even so they are unwilling to pay for a park ranger or an attendant to be on site to ensure that only the people who are supposed to be there are there and doing what they are using it appropriately. Farrell explained that those present in the meeting found their stance to be odd, but they

were very clear about that. Farrell noted that he would take the initiative to try and put the park ranger position back into the initial budget request sent to the town manager, but that the position was cut from the initial budget in the previous year. Farrell concluded that aside from the funds that come from the IF&W, there will not be any additional funding to reestablish a park ranger presence there as it had been in the launch's first few years of operation. Farrell then asked the commission to stay tuned for updates that would likely come ahead of the next meeting. He noted that after the Recreation Department does their due diligence and the IF&W does theirs, Farrell would request a joint workshop with the Rivers and Coastal Waters and the IF&W to discuss the things that they are willing to support and the things they aren't. Farrell added that having both commissions present to ask questions and give answers will be beneficial for all. Farrell finished discussing this topic by reviewing his final notes that there would be an update provided in February and that he has requested a joint meeting to be held in March.

Chair Lyne responded by inquiring whether or not there had been mention of the available land adjacent to the boat launch and the potential for expansion. Farrell followed up noting that a brief discussion occurred and that the IF&W intentionally purchased the land next to the boat launch for parking if it were to be necessary at some point in the future because they knew that, as the boat launch became known to the public, parking would become an issue. Director Farrell also noted that he was unaware of any imminent plans to do anything, but that Harbormaster Devereaux has made mention of the concerns regarding single car parking.

Farrell explained that single car parking is the main concern as they are concerned that single cars are parking in the spaces designated for boat rigs and there are very limited spaces for single cars to park, or about 5 or so. Farrell elaborated on this point by adding that when people typically park there they are either going boating for the day or weekend or camping/visiting folks on the nearby islands for multiple days and have to request permission from Dan Devereaux in advance. When they are gone for a couple nights, Dan will double stack the cars in the parking spots for boat rigs. Farrell concluded that the concern is that someone looking to launch a boat with a rig might not be able to do so due to the lacking capacity for additional vehicles because the parking spaces for rigs are occupied by single cars or double parked cars. Farrell asserted that the IF&W discourages this practice and the only single cars that should be parked there are those in the 5 or so spaces, located near the ramp itself, which are allowed for those who have a physical impairment.

Chair Lyne summarized this portion of the meeting, noting that in his next steps Harbormaster Devereaux is working on the camera policy that the IF&W would like to see. Farrell also summarized that he, Finance Director Henze, and Devereaux would be going over the M.O.U., paragraph by paragraph, to discuss how relevant the document is after 10 years of being in operation; if there are aspects that are not present and need to be added since they have been discovered over time or if there are items that need to be removed because it is not relevant at all. Farrell repeated that these documents would go out ahead of the next Recreation Commission so that reporting on what had been done to date would be part of that upcoming meeting and that the following meeting is where Director Farrell would request a joint meeting to occur before the floats are installed (typically late April or

May).

6 **NEW BUSINESS**

6a **OUTDOOR WINTER ACTIVITIES MAINTENANCE**

Farrell introduced Parks and Recreation Facilities Director, Jay Astle, who would be speaking on the next two items on the agenda. Farrell outlined that Jay would be speaking on two different sites, as well as the additional work that is done beyond just the ice skating rinks and the trails, in terms streets and sidewalks.

Astle began his remarks by inquiring how many folks in attendance were aware of the number of ice skating rinks that the town manages. Three folks in attendance were aware of the rinks in town. Jay mentioned that, for those who were unaware, they would be able to access this information on the Parks and Recreation Department page of the Town's website and it mentions the status of the rinks. Astle included in his remarks that one ice rink is Coffin Pond. Astle noted that Coffin Pond is not simply the swimming pond frozen over, but is a developed ice rink in the parking lot at Coffin Pond. Astle also made mention of Lishness Park ice rink, which is a hockey rink, and the one on the Town Mall. Astle noted that both the Lishness Park rink and the Town Mall rink are currently operational. Astle continued on to note that all rinks are outdoor ice rinks are extremely difficult to maintain. Astle noted that it was particularly difficult to keep ice in the rink given fluctuations in temperatures. Astle concluded that these facilities are currently open and that folks may reference the website, which is updated frequently, for the most up-to-date information about rink closures.

Astle began discussing the efforts of the maintenance team, referencing their work to create "skate-able" ice by adding water to the rinks as temperatures allow. Astle mentioned that after there is a snow event, maintenance will either snow blow or plow the snow off of the rink within about 1 day after the snow event. Astle also mentioned that fresh water is added to the rinks late at night in order to allow for the new ice to freeze over before anyone goes out onto the ice to skate. Astle noted that staff must wear insulated suits due to the cold and it takes two Parks and Recreation employees about 3-4 hours to complete all three rinks or typically by mid-night or 1am.

Astle shifted to discussing the cross country trails in town by inquiring as to how many folks in attendance were aware of the number of trails that the town currently grooms for skiing. Astle continued on to note that there are groomed trails in two locations, one located at the Mere Creek Golf Course (at the back entrance of the Brunswick Landing). Astle explained that not only does the maintenance staff groom trails on the golf course itself, they also groom trails down on the Kate Furbish Preserve as well. Astle added that the work is extensive and patrons should plan on the trails being groomed two days after a snow event. Astle affirmed his awareness that folks are usually looking to get out on the trails immediately after snow storms and their team works to try and get this done within a day after the storm, but it usually takes two days before they are able to complete it. Astle welcomed members of the public to use the trails immediately after a storm, but establish that the trails will not be groomed. Astle asked that folks who chose to use the trails stay off the golf greens and tee boxes when recreating at the request of the golf courses

management.

Commissioner Weaver asked whether or not the trails are located in an obvious area. Astle replied that if you know what you are looking for, it is very obvious to find. He elaborated on this point stating that the cross country trails are usually located on the flat plateaus. He continued on to mention that there are a lot of undulating plains on the golf course, but that the greens are distinct and the tee boxes are flat and pretty distinct. Astle added that in the past, the staff at the greens roped off these areas to restrict access, but they have not been roped off yet this year and he is unaware of plans to do so because the ground is frozen and they cannot drive the necessary stakes into the ground. Astle concluded that the trails around these restricted areas are easily identifiable and folks will know where to go in order to stay on the trails and avoid the restricted areas.

Facilities Director Astle then shifted to discussing the other location at Crystal Springs Farm, which is a Topsham-Brunswick Land Trust Property and located on Pleasant Hill Road. Astle affirmed that this property also takes a day or two following a storm in order to groom the trails. Astle also said that there needs to be significant snow cover before the trails will be groomed for the first time in a season. Astle identified that the logic behind this practice is an effort to not rough up the trails and that the Parks Department might be more conservative than the public might like with regard to getting the trails groomed for the year and the need to wait for sizeable snow fall. Astle explained that in the past weeks there have been only about 1-3 inches of snow fall at one time and there needs to be considerably more snow fall than that in order to groom the trails.

Chair Lyne inquired where the parking is for those who would like to access the trails. Astle responded noting that parking is located by the Tom Settlemire Garden near the Bowdoin Medical Group professional offices. Astle mentioned that this parking lot is easily identifiable by signage and a visible kiosk with information about the gardens. Astle also mentioned that this property can be used by snowshoers and skiers, as well as folks who would like to walk the trails in the other three seasons. Astle concluded that there is distinct parking there and the parking lot is plowed by the parks and recreation staff.

Astle, in keeping with the discussion of plowing, began speaking on the Parks and Recreation Departments responsibilities to keep different areas of town clear of snow. Astle commented that maintenance staff is responsible for the parking lot at the Recreation Center, People Plus, Town Hall, 8 different trail head parking lots, as well as 10 miles of sidewalk which are located largely around the schools. Astle mentioned that the shoveling of the sidewalks is their main priority after a storm and it takes a substantial amount of time and man-power; typically two staff working for about 5 hours each. Facilities Director Astle also mentioned that this work is being done throughout the length of the storm in order to keep these spaces accessible, rather than after the storm has finished. Astle explained that the purpose for outlining the resources necessary for post-storm clean-up is to give folks an idea of the time commitment to complete this work, to establish that these spaces take priority over the many recreation areas and that this is the reason why it takes a couple days to get to them.

Director Farrell then spoke with regard to plowable snow and the need to staff full time folks for a significant amount of consecutive hours, sometimes as many as 16 hours in a row or longer.

Farrell affirmed Astle's assertion that the main priorities are the public parking lots and the secondary priority is the 10-mile sidewalk along school route, once we receive word from Public Works that all of the road plowing has been completed. Farrell mentioned that there might be a misunderstanding on the part of the public because folks, in their haste to be able to use the recreation areas, are unaware the Recreation Department is also doing work to ensure that kids have a safe path to walk to school. The recreation department has been doing this work for a number of years, Farrell noted, at the direction of the Town Manager. Farrell also noted that after they have been on duty for 16 or more hours, they cannot be transitioned to working on the recreation areas because they are in need of rest at that point. Farrell concluded that this is also a determining factor in the delays that folks are seeing with the recreation areas because the public is expecting the Parks Department to have the places accessible. Farrell added to his summation that the public might not realize that the bike path takes a considerable amount of time to keep clear. Farrell also added that due to the conditions at the bike path, if the parks department were to wait until a major snow event had ceased, it would take a long time to get that open because there would be hard packed snow and 8-10 foot snow drifts.

Farrell then established that the Parks department is not insensitive to the desire to recreate on the part of the public, but that there is a rationale to how the Parks Department tries to accomplish all of this work. Farrell then noted that the challenge in getting these recreation spaces open earlier is that the workforce is finite and they must get rest before they are called back in. Farrell included in his remarks that there have been conversations surrounding innovative ways that these places can be tended to earlier and that the Parks department is open to these conversations, but that this is a longstanding issue that arises every time there is a major storm. Farrell then elaborated on his point recognizing that every storm is different and presents different challenges, due to the condition of the snow fall, and provided the examples of how even small storms can require the same time commitment as large storms depending again on the condition of the snowfall and the remediation necessary in responding to the storm (including the type of snowfall, the need for ice removal, or sanding requirements).

Farrell identified that the purpose in outlining all of this work and taking the time for Director Astle to explain the resources necessary is that folks should be aware of the efforts and to date there have been a number of phone calls from the public about the lack of timely response in their opinion. Farrell gave the example of the different skating rinks and the inquiries from the public about wanting to skate, mentioning the challenges of creating embankments in order to hold the water, trying to create skatable ice, losing the ice due to mild temperatures, and the differences in efforts to prepare the rinks which have varying requirements. Farrell then re-stated his purpose for informing the commission about the level of work required, citing the number of calls from the public and their frustrations about not getting access to these recreation spaces immediately following a storm.

Commissioner Archbell inquired as to whether or not there is currently programming

scheduled for the Lishness Ice Rink or if it is open for general use. Director Farrell explained that the rink was built with joint funding from the Midcoast Youth Hockey Association and that there is dedicated time that the hockey teams use the rink. Director Farrell added that the rink is open for general use outside of those times, but that there are situations where a game or practice is underway and the general public tries to gain access to the rink. Farrell also added that the use of that rink is typically different than the mall as families don't tend to use this rink, but rather a group of folks organize between themselves to meet at the rink for a pick-up game. Director Astle interjected to note that the schedule for the Midcoast Youth Hockey is posted on the website and also noted that recreational skaters infrequently end up going there, but skate at the Town Mall more frequently.

Commissioner Archbell then inquired about the maps presented for the cross country ski trails. Archbell questioned whether or not the trails actually start at the parking lot of the golf course. Director Astle affirmed that the trails do in fact begin at the parking lot of the course. Astle added that, in conjunction with the course's management, they are able to provide trash barrels, a port-o-potty, animal waste, as well signage about the trails. Astle mentioned that this signage is not displayed as there has not been groom-able snow to date, but that it will be installed in the coming week. Astle noted that the signage looks exactly like what was displayed at the meeting and this current representation of the trails also includes designation of the tee-boxes and golf greens so that people may have the spatial awareness of knowing where these are located.

Commissioner Archbell then inquired if the trail map is available for the trails belonging to the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust located at the Crystal Spring Farm. Director Astle responded that these maps are not available on the parks website in particular, but have been given to the maintenance staff as a guide for their work. Director Farrell then added that he assumed it was located on the website for the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust. Astle then noted that if it is not available, he will make this available to the public.

Commissioner Wilkoff gave remarks next with regard to his efforts to explain to the public the rationale behind the priorities of the department. Wilkoff added that there will always be people, like himself, that go out and will just make a trail, but that when a trail is groomed by skier or machine, it can be ruined by folks walking or taking dogs through the tracks and not everyone is aware of that. Wilkoff then noted that the majority of users throughout the early-late morning are elderly folks who rely on the tracks for increased stability. Commissioner Wilkoff surmised that well-groomed trails allow for a broader age group of folks to use the recreation area. Wilkoff then detailed how his concerns, including folks walking or taking dogs through the tracks, are a problem for trail users and invited folk who want to walk to do so in the spaces outside of the groomed tracks.

Director Farrell then segued into a related concern he has received with regard to the Six Rivers Chapter of the Northeast Mountain Biking Association. Farrell explained that he has been sent photos of a group of "fat-bike" riders, or bikes with real wide snow tires, and this group totaled anywhere from 15-25 people. Farrell further explained that he has previously met with this trail stakeholder committee and had assisted in bringing the director of the Northeast Regional Mountain Biking Association to this area to discuss the benefits of

creating a local chapter. Farrell added that this effort has been incredibly successful and the town of Topsham had allocated 100 acres of land, which with the appropriate insurances, can be used to create trails for these bikes. Farrell also added that the Town of Brunswick's insurance would not have permitted this type of work, but that this group will have the permissions in Topsham, including using chainsaws to cut down the trail, since they have now acquired this land.

Next, Director Farrell made reference to a Snow Dog machine. Director Astle explained that the Snow Dog is a narrow piece of machinery, similar to a snowmobile, that is essentially an engine on tracks with handles and this machine can either be driven on a seat or ridden in a sled. Astle further explained that it drags across the snow meaning that it could be used to groom a trail with the correct apparatus or simply for transportation throughout the woods.

Farrell resumed his remarks with regard to the bike riders, stating that there have been a number of inquiries from folks looking to maintain bike trails on the Town of Brunswick's property. Farrell identified that both he and Director Astle have received numerous pieces of correspondence, including a request to fix a trail crossing at a wetlands in the commons as a result of one of these large group rides a couple weeks past. Farrell detailed the message he received, which was a photo of the ruts left behind by these bikes with very wide treads, after they rode on a small amount of snowpack. Farrell further detailed that this recreational pursuit is only going to grow in popularity, but that these concerns are going to prevalent due to the tracks left behind by their treads. Farrell then asked for Astle's input on the matter, as Jay had personally responded to fix these ruts left.

Astle outlined the dimensions of the fat bikes stating that they are about 4 inches wide. He also outlined how two fat-bikers might only leave two 4 inches tread marks, as they do not typically ride on top of the same tracks, but large group rides result in tread marks that can be worn to about 24 inches wide. Astle further outlined that as these trails are worn down they have the potential to freeze over, leaving the skating-rink type conditions that were recently reported at the Town Commons. Due to these conditions, Astle noted that folks are forced to walk on either side of the trail in the brush. Astle concluded that he had historically noticed tracks here and there outside of the path, but that these particular tracks are much deeper and glazed over, making the path very inhospitable for walkers.

Farrell added that he was informed that the land trust has given them permission to groom the trails using the snow dog machinery in Neptune Woods, an area in which the Town had originally partnered in efforts to create trails on the MRRRA Property (across from the coastal landing), as well as the trails in Topsham. Farrell added that it is the desire of the group that they may be able to use this machinery to maintain trails on Town lands. Farrell also added that a definitive answer had not been given and that research into the implications of this project, with regard to insurances and discussions with town staff, is currently underway. Farrell concluded that even if something were to work out, the question of the compatibility of fat bike riders, cross country skiers, dog walkers, and snowshoers utilizing the same spaces, would remain because they are using the same corridors. Farrell established that there aren't any true recommendations to offer at this time and noted that the only way that all of these populations would have the conditions they prefer, is to limit usage at different

locations and enforce those limitations, however that is an unrealistic solution.

Farrell again made reference of Commissioner Wilkoff's concerns about the cross country ski conditions, noting that while the Town could allow the bikers to use a machine like a snow dog, that machine would not set the same standard of tracks as the one that is currently used to set tracks for the cross country skiers. Farrell concluded that this type of use is new for these particular recreation areas and the popularity will grow, recognizing this is a recreational use issue that unfortunately does not have a solution. Farrell included in his remarks that in the past 24 months, there has been a serious uptick in usage and these bikers are now highly visible in the town where there are trails. Director Farrell also recognized that this discussion will likely happen again at next month's meeting. Farrell anticipated that this will become a larger issue throughout the winter as there will be more evidence of fat bike riders at recreational spaces that they had not frequented in the previous years. Farrell questioned whether or not the Town will see an increase in the challenges they've had in the past, but that this needs to be flagged as a potential issue.

Commissioner Foushee identified the possibility for conflict between bike riders and dog walkers, noting that dogs are not comfortable with fat bikes. Foushee added that he has witnessed dogs barking and going after folks on fat bikes and then the bikers will get upset with the dog owners. Foushee established that he was aware that this conversation is primarily about the grooming of the trails, but that this conflict in usage is likely to arise.

Commissioner Weaver affirmed Foushee's suspicions, noting that even the difference in speed of these usage populations can have the potential for conflict. Weaver expounded upon her notion stating that those who are biking will be operating at a much higher speed than those skiing or walking. Weaver also noted that with the trail being so narrow, there may be competition for space as individuals come upon one another on the trail.

Director Farrell then asked Commissioner Wilkoff, previous member of the Bike-Ped Committee, if he had been aware of the advent of fat biking during his tenure there. Wilkoff stated that the discussion of fat bikes had not yet been introduced. Chair Lyne added that he was aware of these discussions taking place at Sugarloaf, as they are working to groom trails for fat biking, skate-skiing, as well as Nordic skiing. Chair Lyne noted that he is unaware of the length of the trail or the maintenance efforts, but identified that the folks at Sugarloaf are at the forefront of the trend.

Wilkoff, along with the agreement of many other commission members established that it is their anticipation that the Town would eventually have to dedicated spaces to these different groups. Wilkoff also established that it is his hope that the different groups using these spaces will be comfortable policing the spaces themselves. Wilkoff noted that he is confident that many of the folks choosing to recreate on these lands share the same mentalities and should be able to share the spaces without issue.

Chair Lyne added that it might be reasonable for different folks to share these spaces, no matter their choice in recreational pursuit. Commissioner Foushee noted that a solution could be to designate a bike lane and a walking lane, similarly to track designations for

walking and running. Farrell responded to Foushee's recommendation noting that Commissioner Wilkoff's concern about equal usership is not encompassed in that solution. Farrell further stated that there are designated lanes on the Bike Path for example and people generally stick to them to the best of their ability, but, at the golf course in particular, people do not honor these designated lanes.

Wilkoff responded to Director Farrell's point noting that in the past it has been the dog walkers that are causing the most damage. Wilkoff clarified his statement adding that one or two dogs will not cause severe damage, but in conjunction with snowshoers, there is the potential for greater levels of destruction and the same goes for these fat bikers. Wilkoff also made the argument that skiers do become fairly upset by this level of misuse.

Wilkoff then inquired about what would stop a private group from grooming the trails, aside from the need for money and the manpower to do so. Director Farrell established that the Town is looking into this currently and using the model that the town of Topsham had established with this group as a basis for this project. Farrell added that inquiries have been made to the Town's insurance carrier, specifically mentioning the bike group, their desired plans beyond the use of the snow dog machine for grooming, as well as the agreement they have with Topsham.

Farrell also added that mountain bike trails like these have popped up in towns all over Maine on both public and private property, but without permission and this is a major issue in this region. It is the opinion of many folks that it is the Town's responsibility for providing these trails across town, but for the folks who are riding on these trails, they are largely unaware of the property lines they are crossing as they are enjoying their ride. Farrell clarified his point noting that the town is unable to create vast trails throughout the Town at the desire of the public, but that the Town is in a position to create and maintain trails only on Town owned land, to work collaboratively with land owners to try and reach agreements, but the town can't dictate that trails will go across private property. Farrell continued on to note that these trails have historically existed and people have been riding on these trails for a long time, but folks are most frustrated that we do not have a way-finding system because it is not currently something that the town can do. Farrell re-stated his assumption that riders are unaware of property boundaries, are enjoying their rides, and aren't being told that they need to leave private lands as they do so.

Director Farrell looked to Deputy Director Smith and Facilities Director Astle for input with regard to these issues. Astle affirmed that these challenges are quite significant.

Commissioner Wilkoff inquired as to whether or not the snow dog could be used to make tracks as well, citing that there could be a future of negotiation between the bikers and skiers if the biking folks were aiding in maintaining the ski trails. Wilkoff also noted that perhaps the bikers could then have their own designated spaces for biking. Astle added that it is possible to add a ski tracker for cross country ski trails.

Commissioner Weaver mentioned her awareness that the town of Bethel designates where dogs and snowshoers can go versus skiers. Weaver mentioned that the town is looking for

a model; this might be one to reference. Farrell inquired as to whether or not Weaver has had first-hand experience with the trails. Weaver affirmed that she had been on the trails before. Farrell further questioned whether or not folks were honoring the designations during her visit. Weaver noted that she had not witnessed fat bike tires on that particular trail, but also noted that she was aware of recreational spaces in Bethel specifically designated for fat bike riders.

Wilkoff spoke next with regard to the Nordic skiing training center located up in the “county” of Maine and highlighted a specific area within their facility that is designated for dogs and dog owners. Wilkoff then segued into questioning whether or not there had been research into the cost of a different system for creating the ice rink on the mall, which would not rely on natural snow production.

Lyne jumped into the conversation noting that he was aware of a system of large liners that can be put down, which allows you to start the rink earlier and retains ice further into the season. Lyne also noted that it helps to not lose skatable ice during events where there’s freezing and thawing. Lyne added that they are expensive and hard to maintain especially in a public setting. Lyne explained that if one were to have one of these liners in their backyard, it can be policed, but a public rink is another thing because they can tear easily.

Farrell contributed to this discussion that years ago 2 liners were purchased for the rink at Coffin Pond. Farrell noted that the Coffin Pond Rink is large square footage area. Farrell outlined problems with these liners, in particular the freeze and thaw cycles and the resulting undulation of the liner as the ice freezes and thaws. Farrell highlight that folks will then skate across the liner and cut it with their skates, resulting in the liners needing to be repaired or patched every year. Chair Lyne affirmed this notion, mentioning that even the smallest pinhole can ruin a liner. Farrell further explained that if there is one place where water is escaping, even if the liner has been patched, it becomes a problem. Farrell concluded that liners have been used in the past and then invited Chair Lyne to speak on a future project to erect a skatable surface on the Landing Property.

Lyne introduced that there are several groups looking to create a rink on the Brunswick Landing Property. Lyne explained that one of stakeholders is in the process of getting things started as soon as next year with a temporary facility. Lyne continued on to note that even before that happens, they plan to put a liner on a piece of land to see how it works out there. Lyne also noted that this will be sizeable and will require some fundraising and volunteer maintenance. Chair Lyne concluded that after seeing how that goes, it could be a good test model for how things might go down at the Mall.

Farrell, in an effort to answer Commissioner Wilkoff’s question, added that, with regard to the Mall, the Town Manager has asked for a list of stakeholders who should be involved in a discussion about moving the market. Farrell explained that he has had meetings with Director Astle and the leadership of the Farmer’s Market, the last one being in January with the full membership of the market. They have discussed moving completely off the mall, to Maine Street or to a side street with the idea that it would be closed down to traffic. Farrell further explained that there are many municipalities that will do that for their farmer’s

markets and that they have even discussed closing down part of Park Row in order to accommodate the market. Farrell concluded that they have talked about many solutions, but they have not been well received. Farrell then identified that the third solution proposed, the most expensive solution, was to re-sod the ice rink area annually. Farrell added that this had been done in the past, in 2012, and cost \$14,000.

Farrell then noted that the market's membership wants to stay on the mall so badly that they want to talk about this as an option and what the potential cost might be because they used to be located on the rink area. This group, Farrell added, is also aware of other collaborative programming, like Music on the Mall, that occur there and the members inquired about the possibility for cost sharing so that the Town of Brunswick would re-sod that area every year, keep people off it for the 4 weeks after re-sodding and finding them another offsite location early in the year. Farrell detailed how, in early April when the market first opens, there are only about 4 vendors for the first month and then another 10 vendors arrive approximately one month later.

Director Farrell concluded that they are willing to work out some creative solutions. Farrell expressed surprise at their willingness to talk about an annual cost sharing agreement of that magnitude because it would require a major fee increase in what they currently pay the town to be there.

Farrell then returned to his previous mention of providing Town Manager Eldridge with the list of recommended stakeholders that should be part of the committee. Farrell further noted that it was his understanding that it is Eldridge's intent to take this matter to the Town Council and he will create a committee to look at this issue because where the market has been located for the past number of years is also having an adverse effect on the trees and the market members will need to be moved.

Director Farrell then invited Director Astle to speak on this matter, as he works primarily with these landscaping type concerns. Astle began to introduce a concern with regard to using a liner. Astle noted that one of the considerations is that currently the sod underneath the rink is getting destroyed because it takes a while for the ice to melt off, and all the while it is depriving the new growth underneath. Astle further noted that if a liner is installed it will create a big mess. Director Astle mentioned the process for re-seeding next, highlighting Director Farrell's mention of the fact that the Town would need to keep people off the Mall for at least four weeks. Astle included the concern that this process abuts Memorial Day Weekend and the Town would need to have the Mall ready for that event. Astle concluded that there are a lot more concerns aside from just the rink, in terms of the timeline, that forces the Town's hand with regard to what they can and cannot do.

Chair Lyne responded to this new information noting that there isn't even a liner in production that could possibly be as large as the rink that has been historically on the Mall. Farrell agreed, noting that when the ice is skatable, there is an enormous sheet of ice to skate on.

Chair Lyne gave the floor back to Director Astle to speak. Astle informed the group that the 300th anniversary of the Town Commons was coming and that it was the anniversary of the original 1000 acre Commons. Astle clarified that the official date of the anniversary is May 19, 2019, which is a Sunday. Astle recognized that there is a Town Commons Committee and they have been charged with is what remains of the original Town Commons, which is 71 acres. Astle gestured to his PowerPoint presentation and pointed out, it was the light shaded portion of the map. Astle further explained that the dark shaded portions of his projected map are called the Greater Commons by some, but the original Town Commons or what remains of it (the 71 acres) is managed by this Town Commons committee and they are also planning for the 300th.

Astle explained that one of the events that they are planning is a 12-15 panel travel travelling exhibit that details the history of the original 1000 acres over the 300 years. Astle outlined that there are also interesting aspects of its history as it relates to Bowdoin College and the Navy Base. The exhibit, which highlights what a big milestone this is for the town, will be ready in time for the 300th and will make its way around town throughout the Summer and into the Fall, spending a month at the Pejepscot Historical Society for a month and at the Curtis Memorial Library for a month, as well as the high school, town hall, and recreation center. Astle mentioned that there will be a 5k on the day of the celebration and the course, which is still being delineated, that will take runner throughout parts of the common. Astle continued his remarks noting that there will also be guided walks before and throughout the summer that focus on the flora, fauna, and historical aspects of what remains of the original Town Commons. Finally, Astle added that there will be a planting of 300 undetermined species of trees in conjunction with Arbor Week, which kicks off on May 19th as well. Astle concluded that there are a lot of great things coming up to celebrate that and draw attention to the fact that there is an original Town Commons with a historical importance.

Director Farrell incorporated relevant information he identified was missing from Astle's remarks, highlighting that town committees are all staffed by a Town of Brunswick staff member and that Jay Astle is the staff liaison to Town Commons Committee, in addition to assignments to many others.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair Lyne noted that there was no additional business.

8. The next meeting is scheduled for February 20th, in the Town Hall at 7:00pm. Commissioner Foushee identified that the meeting is scheduled for February School Vacation Week. Farrell inquired if member of the commission are aware that they will not be in attendance. Commissioner Foushee confirmed that he will not be in attendance and Commissioner Weaver expressed uncertainty with regard to her attendance at the next meeting. Director Farrell concluded that the Recreation Commission meeting should proceed as long as there is quorum, but that it is good to know that some members might not be in attendance. Director Farrell and Chair Lyne were both in agreement that there should be space on the

agenda for a vote since the minimum necessary attendance will be met. Farrell proposed that the Recreation Commission members update their availability status in 2 weeks. Farrell also proposed that an alternative date, outside of school vacation week, could be selected as well. All members of the Recreation Commission agreed that they were available to adjust this meet to the week before or after school vacation week. All members agreed to move the meeting to the previous week, Wednesday February 13th, 2019.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

COMMISSIONER WILKOFF MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING; SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FOUSHEE; VOTE 4-0 UNANIMOUS OF THOSE PRESENT.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.