

BRUNSWICK RECREATION COMMISSION

DATE: September 23, 2019
TIME: 7:00 pm

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL
85 UNION STREET

MINUTES

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

Absent: None

Also Present: Parks and Recreation Director, Tom Farrell; Deputy Director, Troy Smith; Carrie Kinne, of the Regional Trails Initiative and Executive Director of the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust; Lee Cataldo, Director of Programs at Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust

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

1 **MINUTES**

1a **MINUTES OF AUGUST 21, 2019**

Minutes up for consideration were included in packets disseminated to the Recreation Commission in advance of today's meeting. Chair Lyne stated that all were present except for Commissioner Smithson before calling for a motion on the minutes.

COMMISSIONER FOUSHEE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES; SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ARCHBELL. VOTE 4-0 UNANIMOUS OF THOSE PRESENT

2 **CITIZENS INPUT AND CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

3 **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

Chair Lyne informed the group of an adjustment to the scheduling noting that the program report is going to be delivered after new business.

6 **NEW BUSINESS**

6a **REGIONAL TRAIL INITIATIVES**

Cataldo began by introducing herself, as well as Carrie Kinne. She prefaced her remarks by noting that they would have a short address for the Recreation Commission and acknowledged that some word had gotten out about the proposed legislation that the two of them would be speaking about this evening. Cataldo, stating that the legislation was submitted in the spring, expressed the importance of the Recreation Commission remaining in-the-know about the status of regional trails. The goal today, Cataldo added was to provide an update on the trails centered in and around Brunswick and provide an opportunity for the Recreation Commission to ask any questions.

Cataldo established that she has been involved in the trail initiatives project for about 3 years, whereas Carrie Kinne has been involved for a longer period of time and noted that there are things that she is not aware of. Cataldo provided the example that, as she has been working with the trail initiative, she learned that Brunswick was a hub for activity. Cataldo then joked that Director Farrell informed her this was old news since Brunswick has been a major hub for activity for some time now! Cataldo emphasized that Brunswick really is a hub where three trails come together and all three of these trails are part of the East Coast Greenway. Additionally, Cataldo added that Farrell informed her Brunswick is the only place along the East Coast Greenway where there is a fork in the trail that extends inland while the trail also continues along the coast.

Cataldo detailed that the three trails are the Casco Bay Trail which goes south toward Portland and the other two trails are part of the same Capital to the Coast Trail and includes the Merrymeeting Trail that goes up towards Augusta. Cataldo noted that some folks might be aware of the Kennebec Rail Trail, which connects Augusta and Gardiner, and the Merrymeeting Trail would complete the section from Gardiner. Cataldo explained that there is some confusion about where the trails go. Cataldo continued on to detail that it was easy to say that the Capital to the Coast Trail goes from Augusta to Gardiner and the Merrymeeting Trail goes from Gardiner to 'Destination X', but currently the section goes from Gardiner to Topsham and then continues on from Brunswick to Bath along the Androscoggin River. Cataldo summarized that the confusion stems from the fact that there isn't clear delineation that one trail goes to Brunswick and the other continues on to Bath; all three trails connect, but there is a river in the middle. Cataldo then noted that the third section of trail is known as the A2K and is the section of the trail that goes from the Androscoggin in Brunswick to the Kennebec in Bath.

Cataldo then switched gears to speak more about the East Coast Greenway which is a proposed 3,000 mile trail system from Florida to Maine. The Greenway, Cataldo added is about 1/3 of the way finished and intersects the most densely populated areas of the United States. The economic impact and health impact analysis conducted in communities where the trail system has been completed suggests that the impact is really significant so the promotion of this in Maine is based on the clear value that has been proven in other communities.

Cataldo then directed everyone's attention to a projected graphic that shows the proposed routes in Maine and highlighted that the solid lines drawn on the map represent the completed sections of the trail, while the dotted lines represent the incomplete sections. Cataldo continued on to explain that the largest completed portion of the trail is the Eastern Trail which was met with a huge amount of success in those communities. Cataldo then segued into discussing the three sections in Maine, specifically focusing her remarks on the Capital to the Coast section of the trail, which would go from Augusta to Bath, and when complete, Cataldo added, it will total 38 miles.

Next, Cataldo introduced valuable information learned from an economic impact study that was completed in order to show the economic impact that the trail would have on the communities it would travel through. With 100,000 visitors along the trail each year,

Cataldo detailed, it would result in between \$1.6- \$2.7,000,000 in economic impact each year. Cataldo continued to detail how this analysis is based on the numbers of people who might visit. Cataldo then explained that the projected numbers for trail usage are much less than the actual usage already noted for one section of the trail, like the Androscoggin River Bike Path which is already complete and sees much more patronage than the projection for the Eastern Trail. To that point, Cataldo explained that such a small section, when compared to the larger trail and the sheer number of tourists who would come to use it, there's a lot of potential that more people would be coming to visit the trail.

Cataldo then introduced a larger map that included the entire Capital to the Coast Trail and welcomed Carrie Kinne to speak with regard to this representation of the trail. Kinne explained that this map shows the trail connecting with Gardiner, coming along the Kennebec down to Topsham, connecting with Brunswick at the Androscoggin River Bike and Pedestrian Path, before continuing on to Bath along Route 1. Kinne expressed that she was unsure where else the trail will go, but noted that the trail is between 50-55 miles in total and is pretty amazing. Kinne also expressed how interesting the proposal is and noted specifically that the Merrymeeting section of the trail from Gardiner to Topsham is the rail corridor feature. To that point Kinne added that this particular section of the trail is the most scenic and is just spectacular right along the Kennebec through there because of how little development that area has seen.

Kinne then segued into discussing the section of the trail that connects Brunswick and Bath along Route 1. Kinne mentioned that it is a shorter distance at only 9 miles, but the New Meadows River presents a rather large obstacle and is in the DOT making this really two separate projects, covering two different distances and dealing with two separate issues. Cataldo added to this point that the Merrymeeting Trail is already signed and currently runs along roadways. Cataldo expressed that some may be confused about whether or not one can ride along the trail because of this, but people are able to ride along the trail. To that point Cataldo added that the ultimate vision is to have this trail off of the roadways which is safer and will provide a more pleasant experience for walking and biking.

Cataldo then acknowledged the challenges Kinne mentioned with regard to the A2K trail crossing the New Meadows River. Cataldo then asked Kinne to speak with regard to the changes happening with the Maine DOT. Kinne stated that the A2K trail was on the DOT work plan and \$40,000 was raised in match funds to get to the next step which is the engineering design. Kinne continued on to note that the DOT changed the rules many years ago, but after this project was already on the work plan. The change included a stipulation, Kinne said, that required all funds to be in hand in order for work to get underway so this put the project on hold. Kinne noted that the group had raised the money to meet the DOT match requirement at the time for the engineering design, but certainly not for construction. Additionally, Kinne noted that the engineering and design information is necessary in order to even get to the construction phase. Kinne added to this point that she is hopeful that DOT will re-open the door for construction given that the funds are raised and still available. Kinne then acknowledged Director Farrell's

interest in connecting these sections for the benefits for wellness and health. Kinne also noted that discussions have occurred between Director Farrell, herself and the Town of Bath about the possibility for using federal dollars. Kinne summarized that this was always a priority project for the DOT and when this project was originally proposed about 10 years ago there were 2 or 3 projects at top priority, including this project. To that point, Kinne mentioned that before the Androscoggin Bike Path was even completed, the value of this corridor was already understood due to the amount of usage anticipated. Kinne also mentioned that it is clear that people would really be able to go somewhere in the state if this trail was extended. Kinne reiterated the fact that this was always a priority and likely still is or would be a priority project.

Director Farrell asked for a moment to provide context for folks who were not present during the process earlier in the decade. Farrell stated that the group has requested funding 3 times for this project that would connect the path from Cook's Corner to Bath. Farrell continued on to note that the last time that the cost estimate, which is based on design, was updated was three years ago and totaled 11,000,000. Farrell summarized that this project is not an inexpensive proposition, but Federal Highway dollars were the main source of funding sought by the group. Farrell explained that the DOT identified this project as one of the trails of state-wide significance and, while they do not use that terminology any more, this is one of the top 3 corridors they wanted to complete.

Cataldo then directed everyone's attention back to the slideshow and spoke about the Merrymeeting section of the trail that already has an on-road route completed. One issue with regard to construction, Cataldo established, is the DOT rules regarding the maintenance of railways corridors and the choice between using the rail corridor itself and covering it for preservation or having to build a completely new trail next to the rail system. Based on those challenges, Cataldo added, the Merrymeeting trail group called a meeting with the Maine Trails Coalition to learn more about other groups' success, like the Eastern Maine trail. Of that meeting, Cataldo explained that they learned of the successes of other groups and made the decision to submit legislation LD1141.

Kinne directed everyone's attention to the legislation that was handed out to those present. To provide some background to this legislation, Kinne mentioned that Frank O'Hara, the former owner of Planning Decisions, Inc in Hallowell, met with Representative Warren, also from Hallowell and O'Hara expressed that he would like legislation submitted for the construction of the trails. The two of them, Kinne continued on to state, devised some wording for the bill directing the Department of Transportation to construct the Merrymeeting Trail from Topsham to Gardiner. O'Hara had not expressed this to the Merrymeeting Trail committee, Kinne noted, and, after some time in percolation, it is now coming alive. As a result, Kinne explained that the group is attending a lot of session in the legislature and it was in fact carried over, which the group considers to be a big win because they weren't necessarily expecting it. This process, Kinne continued to explain, resulted in committee members meeting with legislative sponsors, as well as members from the Department of Transportation and the next step of conversations are occurring. Kinne then expressed that she would have submitted the legislation differently and would have included the entire Capital to the Coast trail, but

acknowledged that O'Hara also had not been involved in the discussion about the A2K portion of trail. Kinne then established that the cost of construction is far less expensive to construct the trail on top of the existing rail system, but this is a big decision to make and speaks to the importance of continued conversations.

Next, Kinne directed everyone's attention back to the packet disseminated this evening, which also went to the commissioner of the Department of Transportation. Kinne then explained that over the course of 3 weeks individuals from surrounding towns could sign up to be involved in the process and almost 400 people signed up, speaking to the support for the project. Kinne also acknowledged that there are some concerns and those will be discussed, but right now the focus is on where the legislation will go next.

Kinne then introduced the new Casco Bay Trail organization which was just organized and the group recently met with representative from the Town of Freeport. What is interesting about this trail system, Kinne introduced, is the fact that it starts in Portland on the rail system and then splits in Yarmouth, where the rail continues on to Berlin, New Hampshire. Kinne explained that this would mean that the trail has to go off-road somewhere near Freeport in order for it to get to Brunswick. This group's main goal, Kinne established, is being able to get from Portland to Brunswick off-road with partial rail and non-rail sections. The Casco Bay Trail group is interested in speaking with representatives in Brunswick about this opportunity and, as a result of this interest, Kinne then made the assertion that all roads seem to be leading to Brunswick. Kinne concluded that this alliance is alive and gaining support, as well as the fact that they are also attending some of the Merrymeeting Trail meetings because of their interest in getting everyone to work together.

Kinne then reiterated that the Merrymeeting Trail Group has been meeting for ten years trying to make progress, but highlighted that at one point, the group questioned whether or not anyone else in the state of Maine was experiencing the same challenges. Kinne explained that the group and the project has an energized base standing behind it, but was looking for partners that would be looking to collaborate. To that point, Kinne mentioned that in October of 2018 the group put out an email requesting a meeting at the Maine Municipal Association for anyone who was interested in collaborating around regional or long-distance trails systems. Kinne explained that 60 people, like representatives from the Land Trust, recreation advocates and Town Planners, from all over the state met and it was a fascinating meeting that will have a follow-up meeting on October 30th. Kinne then explained that it is clear there is not enough funding for the trails so this will likely be the driving force of the group. Kinne then provided the example of a conservation representative who was at a meeting in Texas and learned that there are some private foundations that are funding thousands of dollars' worth of trails in Michigan and New York and they are making unbelievable progress which speaks to the importance of enlisting anyone who might be interested. Kinne then highlighted that Lands for Maine's Future has fantastic funding opportunities and the premise is that the lands just need to be open to the public. Kinne summarized that wherever one might look, trails are important to towns and making these connections is important. To that point, Kinne mentioned that she went to a Midcoast Planning meeting and all of the towns identified that they would

like to have a Bike-Ped connection and questioned how they could all work together to make that happen, including the resources necessary.

After being prompted by Cataldo, Kinne circled back to the meeting that was held last October and pointed out Carolann Oulette, Director of Maine Outdoor Recreation, who has been a huge driving force within the Department of Tourism. Tourism, Kinne explained, has made a commitment to outdoor recreation and there is a lot more enthusiasm and understanding about the importance of the future outdoor recreation in our state. Kinne then detailed that there are a lot of moving parts with regard to this project and highlighted this evening are just two of those projects, the A2K and the Merrymeeting trail which combine to make the regional project. That regional project, Kinne continued to detail, is making other connections and is helping to make things happen on the state level. Kinne then directed everyone's attention to a map provided by Tom Reeve, a retired Maine DOT official. Reeve, who always wanted to know where the long-distance trails in Maine are, produced this map showing trails that total more than 10 miles in length, like the Appalachian Trail.

Director Farrell, acknowledging that he was not present at the meeting, then inquired if any other state agency representatives, like from the DOT, were present at the meeting. Kinne replied that Doug Beck from the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ACF) was there, as well as a representative from the DOT, although Kinne could not recall who exactly the representative was. Kinne added that Patrick Adams was also there, as well as one more representative from Scenic Highways. Director Farrell then asked Kinne to speak about the meetings that have occurred on a smaller scale with regard to the A2K trail because some of the commissions present this evening were not commissioners at the time. Farrell added that it would be important because the Town of Brunswick has been working closely with Merrymeeting Trails and the City of Bath, as well as the fact that funding has been secured to contribute to the local share of that financial burden.

Kinne explained that the A2K project is unique in that the greatest distance of the trail is in West Bath when compared to the small portion in Brunswick and in Bath. Kinne highlighted that this poses a challenge because Brunswick and Bath are larger municipalities than West Bath. Kinne also highlighted that West Bath has frequently had changes in their representatives at meetings and while the group has not tried to meet with them more recently, Kinne acknowledged that they should try to meet with them again. Kinne then expressed that she has met with Bath's representatives often and they are very interested in the A2K project. Kinne established that these meetings will start to occur with more frequency, especially as Merrymeeting trails continues to talk to the DOT. Kinne then mentioned that the messaging from DOT is that each section should present to the DOT on their own merits and not combine too much. Kinne clarified that if each section of the trail, like Casco Bay trails and Merrymeeting trails, goes to DOT separately then they will see that this is important to many people, many sections of the state are important, and the consensus is that the collective wants DOT to move this project forward for off-road trails. Kinne then concluded that the A2K group needs to meet soon a result of the messaging from DOT about advocating independently for each

different section.

Director Farrell followed up these remarks by inquiring what this messaging means in Kinne's opinion and noted that feasibility studies have already been completed to DOT standards. Kinne replied that the door needs to be reopened for the engineering and design piece of the project in order to get updated cost figures and to get the design finalized. Farrell replied that one application was submitted to take the path from where it ends in Cook's Corner to the New Meadows Lake and proposed a connection to a road that parallels the New Meadows Lake, which cannot be seen from the highway, but is a legitimate connection. The cost of this section, Farrell establish, was about 2.8,000,000 for all of this work in Brunswick, but the majority of the cost is the crossing of New Meadows Lake itself as well as the longest section of land through West Bath. Farrell continued on to state that West Bath has had a difficult time over the years that this project has been mobilizing representatives from the community and has not provided the same voice as a representative at meetings. Additionally, the two towns have talked about strategically fundraising in Bath and in Brunswick and what the mechanism will be for local private fundraising in a town like West Bath, which speaks to the challenges discussed. Farrell added that when they met as a group, State of Maine DOT representatives and Federal Highway representatives where there and gave some pretty direct answers to the direct questioning from the group. Farrell then summarized that what will move this agenda along is the collaboration, organization and unification from a larger number of stakeholders in order to get the attention of policy makers because there are advocacy groups around all of these trails and they really want to see them happen.

Chair Lyne followed up these remarks by inquiring when the \$11,000,000 cost estimate was established. Director Farrell explained that he believed it was completed when the opportunity arose for a Tiger Grant, but the grant application was ultimately not submitted based on the evaluative criteria because the group knew that the application was not going to be competitive enough. Farrell continued on to explain that the Town Engineer at the time, John Foster, took the numbers from the original feasibility study and updated them around the year 2014. Kinne then added that the original feasibility study was completed in 2004 so at the very least, the engineering study would bring the project up-to-date and bring the cost estimate back to life with updated numbers. Kinne reiterated that these are big projects and even though they are small sections, they represent large undertakings. Kinne continued on to state that when looking at the map, it is clear that this work can be done, but preparation is key because groups, like the Downeast Sunrise Trail were "shovel ready" had their projects completed because they had their engineering design and were ready to start construction.

Farrell responded to Kinne by establishing that she has been the most active voice in this effort since its advent before asking Kinne to provide the Recreation Commission with two overarching themes are important for the progression of this project and for the Town of Brunswick. Kinne replied that one of the groups was looking to Brunswick for a support letter, but they are not looking for this support letter right now. Kinne also expressed that she found it important that all of the different sections support one another

so that some sections are not being completed while others are not. At a different time, Kinne explained, a letter of support from the Town of Brunswick for any one of the different proposals, whether for a grant or for the DOT, will be important given that Brunswick has been identified as a common hub for all of the different trail sections. Aside from that call to action, Kinne established that the A2K portion of the trails needs specific support from Bath and Brunswick in order to move forward.

Director Farrell then addressed a member of the audience from the Bike- Ped Committee and asked if they have had any discussions with regard to this. The audience member replied that they have been very supportive of these efforts and have looked at the 1141 legislation. He continued on to assert that his presence at the meeting tonight is to gain information that can then be shared at their upcoming meeting. Farrell followed up these remarks by establishing that in order to move this project forward and, considering that A2K was a small group formed strategically, there will need to be a representative from the Bike-Ped committee in order to resurrect this effort. Kinne agreed and added that it would be important for the Town Planners from both Bath and Brunswick to be in attendance as well.

4. **RECREATION PROGRAM REPORT – TROY SMITH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR**

Deputy Director Smith presented the monthly recreation program report highlighting the various recreation programs being offered by the department throughout the upcoming fall season. Smith noted that school is back in session and that brought with it the return of Fall programming which began about 3 weeks prior. Smith then segued into detailing the programs are underway or just recently completed. These included;

- Brunswick Youth Soccer League (BYSL)- 375 Participants
(Up by approx. 50 participants from 2018)
- Start Smart Soccer- 15 Participants and their guardians
- Cross Country Running Club- 25 Participants
- Cross Country Trail Biking- 22 Participants
- Youth Field Hockey- 25 Participants
- Youth Field Hockey Travel Team- 12 Participants
- Hip Hop Dance Club- 10 Participants
- Teen Hip Hop/ Jazz- 10 Participants

Smith then summarized the program offerings listed above show just how busy the summer and just how many kids were involved in summer programming. Smith added that there were also a number of great comments received in response to a successful summer. To that point, Smith noted that the goal each summer is to offer as many programs as possible and, while the Recreation Department sometimes competes with itself, the Recreation Department really does try to provide a great number of offerings and to make summer special.

Next Smith highlighted programs that are upcoming for fall season and these included;

- Start Smart Soccer

- Cross Country Running Club
- Cross Country Trail Biking
- BYSL Grades K-8
- Youth Field Hockey
- Youth Field Hockey Travel Team
- Teen Hip-Hop/ Jazz Combo Class
- Hip-Hop Dance Club
- Mad Science Brixology
- Brick by Brick Lego Program
- Fall for Arts and Crafts Afterschool Program

Finally, Smith introduced programs upcoming at the end of the fall season and these included;

- Goblins Parade and Creepy Creatures Party on Halloween
- Jr High Dance
- Halloween Window Painting

Up next, Deputy Director Smith spoke at length about the 52nd Annual Ski and Skate Sale held at the Brunswick Recreation Center on November 3rd from 1-4pm. Smith explained that this annual sale is very popular and is a great opportunity to get great deals on gently used equipment. Additionally, Smith noted that there would be 6 vendors selling new equipment from the 2019 ski season at a reduced rate. 20% of the proceeds, Smith added, go towards youth programming in Brunswick. Finally, Smith concluded that this is also a great opportunity for the public to sell their items. Equipment drop-offs, Smith mentioned, are on the Friday and Saturday before the sale and this will be an opportunity for community members to either make some money or to upgrade equipment.

Deputy Director Smith then delivered remarks about the Preschool program and Smith added that the Recreation department is currently accepting registrations for the 2019-2020 school year for the 2-day program for 3-5 year olds, but the 3 and 5 day option is currently full. Smith further explained that anyone who is looking for a preschool program to look into the recreation program which offers a 2, 3 or 5 day option from 9:00-11:30am. Deputy Director Smith then encouraged folks who were interested to get on a waitlist for spots if they are not currently available.

Next, Smith established that as the winter season approaches, a number of sponsorship opportunities have become available in order to support winter programming like basketball leagues. Smith explained that there are a number of Brunswick businesses and organizations who have supported in the past and any interested organizations who have not received our literature yet should reach out in order to learn more. Additionally, Smith noted that these sponsored programs will be announced in greater detail at the coming Recreation Commission meeting. Smith also noted that information about all of these programs is available on Facebook and on the newly renovated Town of Brunswick website.

Finally, Smith encouraged folks to visit the Recreation Center, adding that the center is

open Monday through Friday from 8:30-8pm. It is closed from 10:30-11:30am Monday through Friday and closed on the weekends Smith mentioned as well. Deputy Director Smith highlighted that the center is a great place to come for walking, basketball or the ever-popular Pickleball programming times, as the weather conditions deteriorate.

Parks and Recreation Director, Tom Farrell, then spoke with regard to the preschool program as mentioned by Deputy Director Smith. Farrell advised the Recreation Commission that a discussion about the future of preschool would occur after the start of the calendar year. Farrell explained that, based on enrollment right now and the fact that the public school has started its pilot Pre-K program which will expand to full capacity next year, it has become clear that there won't be a market for preschool any longer. The Parks and Recreation Department has become aware of this anecdotally, Farrell further explained, and there has also been a great deal of renovation work being completed on the Brunswick Landing at the site of the old Wild Oats and New Beet Market in order to make way for a daycare.

To that point, Farrell established that the Recreation Commission would be discussing how the space would transform and what other valuable community uses could come into that space after the preschool has vacated the rooms. Farrell continued on to add that he was present in a meeting between himself, Deputy Director Smith, Preschool Director Susan Toothaker and the State of Maine Licensing Representative during the yearly, unannounced inspections. In those meetings, Farrell noted, the inspectors view files, witness operations of the program and speak to program leaders. From this year's meeting, Farrell stated, they all learned of the viability of daycare as an alternative. Farrell included in these remarks that the licensing representative told them stories that he characterized as unbelievable, of parents driving multiple counties over in order to get their children into quality early education programs, like people from Portland driving north of Brunswick to Wiscasset for daycare for example. In addition to the lacking opportunities for care, Farrell also included, that she was highly impressed with the quality of the program operations, including the fact that the program rarely has a licensing area that requires improvement. Because the program, facility and staff continue to meet and exceed expectations of quality, the licenser encouraged those in the meeting to think about switching to a daycare model Farrell expressed.

Farrell voiced that he was unsure if this was the correct calling or role for the Parks and Recreation Department, but reiterated that he desired to speak about these items at the meetings next year. Farrell added to this point that, if the conversation was not about daycare or preschool, it would become even more important to discuss proper use for the space. Farrell also reiterated that no decisions would be made, but he felt strongly that it should be mentioned since the licensing meeting was held back in August. Farrell added to this point that with current enrollment numbers, along with the advent of the new Pre-K offerings, there still may be a need for day care for kids who cannot get into the school system, but it is clear that there wouldn't be a large enough remaining population of youngsters necessary to run the classrooms that we have historically operated. Farrell continued on to add that the Preschool program currently functions by meeting its expenses, with the exception of overhead like Directors' salaries and utilities, so it would

be costly to continue to run the program for a smaller number of children. Farrell concluded that this is something that the Town of Brunswick is likely going to sunset, but this is a discussion to be had before the decision is made.

5 **OLD BUSINESS**

5a **UPDATE ON THE SMOKE-FREE ORDINANCE**

Farrell introduced his remarks by first establishing that this item is on the agenda due to a meeting that recently occurred in response to an email received from Elizabeth Sokolov, a schoolboard member. Elizabeth was involved with Joy Prescott, also from the schoolboard, on the committee the originally drafter the smoke-free ordinance and its many components. Farrell continued on to state that the group was reassembled prior to the Recreation Commission meeting in order to address the email where she stated that smoking was still occurring at school bus stops and questioned what the committee would do with regard to continued publicity and messaging about the ordinance that is now in place.

To that point, Farrell assured the Recreation Commission that signage has since been erected at all Town of Brunswick owned and operated parks so there should be a noticeable sign at the entrance to all parks. In addition, Farrell stated that all the public bus stops like the Breez and the Explorer have been inventoried and will be signed, but that will be in the coming weeks because those signs have not been received yet. Farrell continued on to explain that there will not be any signage posted at the school bus stops, but Elizabeth's email prompted him to visit the school department's website where neither the new ordinance nor the bus stop locations were posted. Farrell followed up this discovery by calling the superintendent and explaining to Paul Perzinowski that it was not present on the website. Farrell noted that within about one day Karen, the head of transportation for Brunswick Schools, posted all of the bus stop locations as well as the ordinance on the school department's website. Farrell also noted that this measure was included in the ordinance and was to be updated annually as the bus stop locations were populated each year when school starts. Farrell then restated that the intention had not been to post signage at the bus stops so signs will not be posted at the individual bus stops. Farrell expressed his opinion that the bus stops should not be signed after witnessing the enormous number of bus stops that are included in the bus routes and added that, to complete a process like that, it would be labor intensive and cost prohibitive.

Alternatively, Farrell communicated that Melissa Fochesato was able to access a \$2,500 grant for promotion of the ordinance. The group spoke today, Farrell stated, about the potential for a banner to be hung over Maine Street periodically throughout the year which would call people's attention to the ordinance and explain that Brunswick has a smoke-free Maine Street corridor. Additionally, the group spoke about doing work with the websites for Midcoast Health, the school department, the Town of Brunswick and specifically the Parks and Recreation section of the web. One more piece of this, Farrell added, is the signage for Maine St because there is now a smoking restriction during certain times of the day, but no signage has been posted. To that point, Farrell said that there is a follow up meeting at the Brunswick Downtown Association and Councilor

Millet, who is on the Smoke-Free Ordinance Sub Committee, will call for a meeting in order to come up with what the signs in the downtown should say and then they will be ordered and installed.

Farrell emphasized that there hasn't been any push back from the public with regards to the signs that have already been posted at the parks. In addition to the lack of complaints from smokers, Farrell explained, there also haven't been calls from the public reporting that someone is smoking in a particular location. Farrell acknowledged that he is unaware of what that really suggests in terms of the public's acceptance of the ordinance, but also acknowledged that there hasn't been fallout either way in favor or against the ordinance. The group, Farrell concluded, has agreed to meet in another two weeks to follow up on the completion of these action steps, but the work is underway and the messaging is getting out there in a significant way.

5b **REVISITING THE LANDING COMMUNITY CENTER- MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING- REQUEST TO THE TOWN COUNCIL**

Director Farrell introduced this topic, first noting that the Recreation Commission took a vote at the meeting in July to support a draft memorandum of understanding or MOU. Farrell reminded the group that there was also an exhibit A, which included a listing of all the stakeholders who have participated in informal meetings over the last few years. Farrell then explained that Chair Lyne has been in contact with the Town Manager to determine when they would be able to get this topic on the agenda for a Town Council meeting. Farrell further explained that he was supposed to draft a memorandum that was to go with the draft MOU and exhibit A, but was out of work for about 3 weeks. Farrell then stated that he spend substantial time revisiting the original conveyance process, and looking at when Community Ice first approached the Town of Brunswick. This all began Farrell summarized, back in 2005 and Community Ice came to the Town of Brunswick in 2010 and now it is 2019, which speaks to the amount of time that has elapsed.

Farrell concluded that he put this item on the agenda today to make sure that everything is clear now that the Recreation Commission has heard back from the Town Manager and have a request from him for a cover memo, which will be completed and submitted this week. Farrell then expressed his assumption that this item will go on a Town Council agenda within the next month, but that has yet to be determined. Farrell added to these remarks that, while it has not gone to the Town Manager yet, Chair Lyne and Director Farrell spoke and will get it out by the end of the week. Director Farrell then invited Chair Lyne to deliver his remarks on this topic. Director Farrell then welcomed Chair Lyne to deliver remarks on this topic, but he stated that he did not have any remarks to offer. Lyne then opened the floor up to discussion, but there weren't any additional comments or questions so Director Farrell moved into other business.

7 **OTHER BUSINESS**

Director Farrell stated that he felt it was important for the Recreation Commission to be aware that the Parks and Recreation Department has been asked to play a role, which the department has taken on conservatively and carefully, to support the Asylee families here

in Brunswick. Farrell outlined that the department has been asked to support in three ways. One of those ways, Farrell detailed, is by providing a space every Wednesday from 1-5pm for the Asylee families to meet with different resource and service providers as it pertains to things like food stamps, medical care, and transportation. Farrell continued on to detail how the Town of Brunswick hired a Cultural Broker, Nsiona Nguizani, who is there coordinating for all of these non-profits to come and meet with the families to try to provide them with assistance that they need. This is occurring, Farrell stated, in the preschool wing of the building where anywhere around 30 people could be waiting to meet out there on any given Wednesday from 1-5pm. Farrell then established that these meetings are not disruptive to the building. Farrell also stated that the non-profits were interested in more time, but due to the licensing of the Preschool, that section of the building has to be locked down and secured when children are there. Because they cannot occupy the space at the same time, Preschool gets out at 11:30 and these meetings begin at 1pm.

In addition to that, Farrell explained, the Parks and Recreation Department was asked to assist in locating laundry services because only a few of the units on the Brunswick Landing include appliances for families to do laundry where they live. Farrell acknowledging that that all of the Town of Brunswick staffers are working in different ways to try and assist, added that he has been working with the Town Manager's awareness to assist in finding laundry services. To that point, Farrell noted that he reached out to SMCC to make use of the washers and dryers that are in the dorms, but there were a number of security concerns. Jim Whitten, Dean of the Midcoast Campus explained that each of the residence halls operate on a card system so to even get onto the floor they would need an access card. Farrell summarized that this resulted in some safety and security issues that would not allow this to happen. Farrell then mentioned that he reached out to Mitch Rousseau, owner of Coastal Landing to see if there might be some opportunity there, but, after speaking with his staff, Mitch called back to say that they just could not do it because there would be too many issues with respect to the people who are living at Coastal Landing as it poses a similar security issue as far as people coming and going throughout the building. Farrell then went on to detail that in response to that meeting Town Manager, John Eldridge, began working with Chris Rhodes, owner of the apartment units that Asylum seekers are residing in to see if some machines could be installed where they are living in order to help in this regard.

Finally, Farrell announced that the biggest issue the Recreation Department is assisting with, which happens to be a lot more involved than it may seem on the surface and more involved than the laundry piece, is the issue of transportation in order to get to medical appointments or buy groceries for example. Having been aware of an existing Volunteer Transportation Network of drivers at the People Plus center, Farrell reached out to them for assistance with this issue. Farrell explained that volunteers sign up with the People Plus center and, after providing proof of insurance and passing a criminal background check, make their cars and their time available on a volunteer basis to take folks who don't have transportation to the same types of places as the Asylum seekers who need assistance. Farrell further explained that the hope is to utilize the model from People Plus in order to assist in this fashion, but also acknowledged that these conversations with

Stacy Frizzle, Director of People Plus, will continue.

Since learning of the Asylum Seekers coming to Brunswick, Farrell stated that he learned of community members emailing the Town Manager's office offering certain assistance like language support, translation services and food donation. As such, a list of about 80 people has all been compiled into an access database. Additionally, Nsiona, the cultural broker, held a meeting at a local church and compiled a list of about 100 additional folks who volunteered, but did not list specifically how they would like to help. This additional list, Farrell said, was given to Deb Blum, John Eldridge's administrative assistant, who added it to the original database. From there, Farrell said, the Parks and Recreation Department is going to take that list and, as a first step, ask all of those people specifically if they would be willing to help out with transportation. To that point, Farrell highlighted that is currently the extent of the work being done by Parks and Rec because dedicating someone to do this becomes a resource issue for the department. Farrell continued on to highlight that if a critical number of folks were interested in helping out, the issue then becomes communicating back and forth, arranging the rides, etc.

Farrell summarized that he wanted the Recreation Commission to be aware that the Parks and Recreation Department, in addition to other departments, are being asked to assist and these are the areas in which we are working to try to help. Farrell added that he intends to keep the Recreation Commission informed and has been directed by John Eldridge to indicate if this assistance becomes too burdensome. Farrell then made the assumption that the real hard work has yet to be undertaken and it is unclear how much effort it will take, but the department will take a stab at it initially.

In response to Farrell's remarks, Commissioner Foushee inquired if Farrell has been in contact with The Emergency Action Network (TEAN). Foushee specifically named Sarah Singer, one of the leaders of TEAN and referenced a number of personal emails he has received about supporting Asylee families with their transportation needs. Foushee explained that, based on Farrell's report, it seems that a lot of people are jumping in to try and help and noted that there may be a little overlap in this support because there are so many people trying to help.

Farrell replied that, when he had spoken with Stacy Frizzle, Sarah Singer had already met with her about the Volunteer Transportation Network. Troy Smith, Deputy Director, also exchanged emails with Sarah Singer and was made aware of an application that Sarah was using to assist with translation. Farrell explained that the Recreation Department is now seeing families at the building for recreation purposes, rather than strictly being here for the afternoon informational sessions with the non-profit service providers. As a result, the staff at the Recreation Center is being challenged to be able to communicate with them. To respond specifically to Foushee inquiry, Farrell noted that once the list is winnowed down, he planned to call a meeting with folks Foushee alluded to, like Melissa Fochesato and Dana Bateman, in order to assist with the process.

Commission Wilkoff acknowledged that the process may not have reached this point, but asked whether or not car seats were an issue. Farrell responded that stakeholders are

aware that it is going to be a huge issue. Farrell explained that he spoke with Melissa Fochesato at an unrelated meeting and it seems that getting the car seats will not be an issue, but making sure that people know how to install them correctly is. Farrell continued on to explain that one caveat to the Volunteer Transportation Network as it pertains to People Plus is the policy that drivers do not transport anyone under the age of 18. In this case, Farrell stated, there are a lot of children that comprise these families and, while the Town of Brunswick is looking to do a background check on all the drivers, a questions remains about what the Town of Brunswick is going to require. Farrell added to these remarks that during a meeting in the previous week it was agreed upon that if the adult responsible for the child was present then they would be able to be transported. Farrell summarized that the Town is looking into doing these background checks, but some of the implications of this process include the very nuts and bolts that Commission Wilkoff highlighted and are necessarily easy to remedy. Farrell then asked rhetorically how they would ensure that they are installed correctly and whether or not the seats would remain with the volunteer driver before establishing that there are many questions like these that will have to be figured out. Wilkoff responded that the Brunswick Police Department will likely know how to help. Farrell replied that Tom Garrepy, Patrol Commander, was at the meeting earlier and was involved in the discussion. To that point Farrell explained that the department often does fittings and, if one goes to the Brunswick Police Department, they will show community members how to install them correctly.

Farrell concluded that something as simple as this is actually a lot more involved than it looks like on the surface. When someone says, "Isn't there any way we can help with some transportation?", Farrell explained, it's actually a much larger undertaking than people realize. Farrell then reiterated that it was his intention to make the Recreation Commission aware of the additional tasks being done at the Recreation Department.

Commissioner Smithson added that she has looked online and is aware that there are other refugee communities in the State of Maine. Smithson then questioned whether or not there is a model out there in terms of how other communities have addressed the issue. Farrell responded that he was unaware of a specific model, but indicated that he asked Nsiona what they did when they were in Portland at the Expo. Farrell continued on to detail that, based on where they were located, this wasn't an issue because they were within walking distance of the direct services that they required. Additionally, Farrell detailed that they had access to laundry services while at the Expo and were not challenged in this way. Farrell identified that many of these Asylee families have gone to communities other than Brunswick, but, while he could not speak for certain, also identified that Brunswick seems to have the largest number of relocated Asylee families. Smithson responded she was aware of a group in Lewiston called Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services of Maine and questioned whether or not they have tackled some of these same challenges.

Chair Lyne inquired of Farrell if there are laundry facilities at the Recreation Center complete with vents and hook-ups. Director Farrell gave Deputy Director Smith the floor in order to respond to that question. Smith explained that the Recreation Department does have laundry facilities. Smith further explained that an older commercial grade washer

and dryer was left from when the Navy was active on the base and the Recreation Department has used it to wash about one load per day. Smith added to these remarks that, when the commercial unit failed recently, the department has downgraded to residential grade unit and the space has been fixed to accommodate that style of unit. Smith concluded that, while there is the ability to wash laundry at the Recreation Center, they could not accommodate the capacity of need. Chair Lyne followed up these remarks by inquiring if the YMCA has laundry services. Farrell indicated that he was unaware of the answer and had not reached out the YMCA himself. Additionally, Farrell emphasized that the unit at the Recreation Department is in an area that families would not be able to access because it is behind the concession area in the janitorial area where products are stored for cleaning. Farrell concluded that he is hopeful that John Eldridge will have some luck with regard to the laundry piece of the puzzle. Farrell then stressed that he believed what would make it easier for the families would be having some place on Brunswick Landing for them to go because they could walk there instead of needing a ride all the time. Farrell added to these remarks that the list of Asylee appointments Nsiona shared with him was pretty lengthy and, on any given day, the number of requests Nsiona tries to accommodate is amazing.

Chair Lyne stressed that there really is a lot going on with regard to this topic and there are a lot of volunteers out there. Lyne concluded that a mobilization really needs to take place in response and hypothesized that perhaps something like Red Cross support would help with the logistical portion of the response and organization effort. To that point, Lyne emphasized that there is no shortage of volunteers out there or donations to be made, but the question remains with regard to how to get everyone on the same page without everyone getting burnt out. Farrell's final remarks on this topic were acknowledging Smithson's recommendation to reach out to officials in Lewiston as they have tackled resettlement populations already.

8 The next meeting of the Recreation Commission is scheduled for October 16, 2019 at 7:00pm in Town Council Chambers at the Brunswick Town Hall.

9 **ADJOURNMENT**

COMMISSIONER WILKOFF MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING;
SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ARCHBELL; VOTE 5-0 UNANIMOUS OF
THOSE PRESENT.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm.