

**LACONIA PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
**August 17, 2020**  
**Laconia Community Center- Parks & Recreation Office**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Commissioner Mitch Hamel called the meeting to order at the above date and time.

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Secretary Liza Kelleher recorded this meeting.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Mitch Hamel called the roll with the following Commissioners in attendance: Tony Pederzani, Rodney Roy and Arthur Kirk. Absent- Deanna Guyer.

**PARKS AND RECREATION STAFF PRESENT:** Director of Recreation and Facilities Amy Lovisek, Asst. Director of Recreation and Facilities Matthew Mansur and Secretary Liza Kelleher.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:**

1. Regular meeting minutes of July 20, 2020

Commissioner Rodney Roy moved to adopt the minutes from July 20, 2020. Seconded by Commissioner Arthur Kirk. The motioned passed unanimously.

**I. FACILITY USE REQUEST FORM:**

- A.** Belknap Mill Society- Rotary Park- October 3, 2020 from 8:00am to 5:00pm for BMQG Mystery Quilt Show. Commissioner Roy motioned to accept the request upon submission of the certificate of insurance for Mystery Quilt Show. Commissioners waived the special event fee. Seconded by Commissioner Pederzani. All were in favor.
- B.** Belknap Mill Society- Rotary Park – Saturday, October 17, 2020 from 10:00am to 6:00pm for Riverside Duck Derby. Commissioner Kirk motioned to accept the request pending upon submission of the certificate of insurance and final approval from the City Council in making money in the City property for the Duck Derby. Commissioners waived the special event fee. Seconded by Commissioner Roy. All were in favor.
- C.** Real Life Church NH- Rotary Park & River Kayak Launch- September 6, 2020 from 9:00am to 12:00pm for water baptism. Commissioner Pederzani motioned to accept the request and waived the special event fee. Seconded by Commissioner Kirk. All were in favor.
- D.** Lakes Region Mental Health Center- Opechee Track & Smith Field- August 20<sup>th</sup> through October 29, 2020, Monday & Thursday from 9:00am to 10:00am for Full Body Fitness Group. Commissioner Roy motioned to accept the request pending upon the payment of \$100.00 special event fee payable to Laconia Parks and Recreation. Seconded by Commissioner Pederzani. All were in favor.
- E.** Navigating Recovery of the Lakes Region- Bartlett Beach picnic area- Monday, August 31, 2020 from 6:00pm to 7:15pm for International Overdose Awareness Vigil. Commissioner Kirk motioned to accept the request and waived the users fee. Seconded by Commissioner Pederzani. All were in favor.

- F. The Lance Reason Basketball Tournament- Wyatt Park- Saturday, September 19, 2020 (rain date September 26, 2020) from 11:00am to 5:00pm for Lance Reason Basketball Scholarship Fund through Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation. Commissioner Roy motioned to accept the request with the understanding that mask will be required by all the attendees. Social distancing required and if COVID 19 situation worsens and the Governor's recommendation is to limit contact sports this event will be cancelled. It was also requested that a member of this group attend the next Commission meeting to update the Commission on the plans. The user's fees have been waived and the request is required to have City Council approval for raising money in the City property. Seconded by Commissioner Kirk. All were in favor.

## II. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. Laconia Middle and High School- Bobotas, Robbie Mills, Smith Field, Cross Country Track, Opechee Park, Memorial Baseball field- September 8<sup>th</sup> through June 30, 2021, Fall of 2020 and March 22<sup>nd</sup> Spring of 2021 for Football, Soccer, Field Hockey, Cross Country, Softball and Baseball. Commissioner Roy motioned to accept the request pending upon the submission of the certificate of insurance and payment for lights and key deposit if needed. Seconded by Commissioner Pederzani. All were in favor.
- B. Muskrats Contract- The 5 years contract has been signed by both parties the City and the Muskrats. Commissioner Roy motioned to remove the item from the old business. Seconded by Commissioner Pederzani. All were in favor.
- C. Expectations for clean up after events.
- D. Election of Officials
- E. Administrative Approvals with regards to Coronavirus- Weirs Action Committee asked the City Council to approve the request to fundraise at Weirs Beach during bike week. This was granted. The department still has staff working during bike week, 1000 capacity for the beach is still in effect.
- F. Coronavirus updates
- G. Weirs Community Parking Lot- There was a request made to allow property owners on Lucerne Avenue to purchase a "parking pass" to keep cars at the Weirs Community Park overnight. Commissioners will need more clarification from the City's insurance company in regards to the liability issue. Commissioner Roy tabled the discussion for the next Commission meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Kirk. All were in favor.
- H. Beach capacity update- Weirs, Opechee, Bartlett beach

### Bartlett Beach

A resident from the Winnisquam Avenue neighborhood attended the meeting to express his gratitude for all of the steps that were made by many departments in the City. He noted that 99% of the issues have been handled and the neighbors are very pleased. The resident wanted to thank the Commissioners, Parks Department, Police Department and DPW for acting to the complains from last month.

### Weirs Beach

The Weirs beach is having a capacity of 1000 people and this help to ease the surge from other in-town beaches. There are still complaints in regards to excessive trash and goose poops in the beach. Alcohol and smoking are also a big problem, although the Police presence helps a lot in easing the issue. Commissioners listened to Weirs residents

complaints and explained that steps and rules are being made to help solve the issues in regards to our Parks and beaches.

**III. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS-ROTARY PARK, BEACHES, WEIRS  
AMPHITHEATER & PAVILION**

1. Lakes Region Tennis Assoc.- Memorial Tennis court- August 15, 2020 Saturday 9:00am to 11:00am for Team Tennis.
2. Laconia Adult Co-Ed Slow Pitch Softball- Memorial Softball Field- June 16 thru December 30, 2020 Wednesdays and Thursdays from 6:00pm to 11:00pm, for Slow Pitch Softball.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Free Library at Torrey Park- Beca Bayken donate a Little Free Library at Weirs Community park years ago and wanted to donate another one for Torreys Park. Commissioner Roy motioned to accept the donation for a Little Free Library to be installed at Torrey Park. Seconded by Commissioner Pederzani. All were in favor.
2. No Cooking at the park- Pictures were received from Laconia resident of charcoal dumped on the ground, garbage everywhere, broken glasses and needles are found in the ground also. Adults and kids are swimming in the channel and feeding the ducks. Commissioners agreed to put more sign in the parks. Commissioner Pederzani motioned to approve to prohibit any cooking at any parks and beaches effective January 1, 2021. The Commission will accept requests through the Facility Use Request form to allow cookouts. Seconded by Commissioner Roy. All were in favor.
3. Prohibiting Hookahs at the parks- Commissioner Roy motioned to prohibit hookahs from all the parks and beaches effective immediately. Temporary signage will be put out to notify people. Director Lovisek will notify the Police Department of the changes. Seconded by Commissioner Pederzani. All were in favor.
4. CIP- Director Lovisek presented the CIP to the Commissioners. She asked the Commission to look over the list and let her know if they would suggest any other Capital Improvements to the parks or facilities. The CIP requests are due in September.
5. Protocol concerning non-profits using Weirs Parking lot for fundraiser- The Commission asked Asst. Director Mansur to draft a proposal for the Commission to review at the next meeting.

**V. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**VI. NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS & ELECTIONS:**

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**VIII. COMMUNICATIONS:**

**IX. OTHER REQUESTS REQUIRING COMMISSION ACTION:**

1. Laconia Rotary Club Invoice for Rotary Park Landscaping. No representation.

X. **PARK ASSOCIATION REPORTS:**

- A. Leavitt Park Association- No report.
- B. Weirs Community Park Association- No report.
- C. Tardif Park Association- No report

XI. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- A. Directors Report submitted by Amy Lovisek

The department has almost gotten into a COVID 19 rhythm. We are staying as fluid as we can in order to change what needs to be changed in this environment.

After the Commission voted to increase the capacity at Weirs Beach to 1000 instead of 400 we have seen a significant change. The in-town beaches are being relieved of some significant attendees. Ahern is also reopened so that is helping us as well. We have seen the Weirs reach capacity, but not very often. If we do hit capacity, the lines on the boardwalk are not significant at all.

The Bartlett Beach area had seen a surge of guests once the Weirs was closed with the 400-person capacity. The neighbors came to the Commission with legitimate concerns for their neighborhood. I firmly believe that the city has alleviated those concerns. The new parking lot at Bartlett Beach has been lined, delineating the spaces with field chalk. This has provided us with 2 handicap spaces, about 40 regular spaces and a no parking zone for emergency vehicles to park or turn around in. This should resolve some of the parking issues. DPW helped install 22 new boulders along the parking lot closest to the water to keep anyone from launching their boats. The Parks department is staffing the beach on weekends to ensure rules are followed as well as safety measures are met. This staff member is also keeping track of vehicles and whether they are parking outside the facility. If they park outside the park, they are making sure the people are parking legally. Matt and I along with Commissioner Hamel and Roy met with Police Chief Matt Canfield about the situation down at the beach. He promised and has made good on said promise to provide extra patrols at the beaches (all of them) with an emphasis on Bartlett. This has helped the neighborhood significantly. It is also great to have the police available when they are needed at any beach. The police are starting to really enforce some of our rules at the beaches and we appreciate that immensely.

Fall sports are starting up. The school are on this month agenda to begin September 9<sup>th</sup> and Laconia Youth Soccer is starting August 15<sup>th</sup>.

I have been working on the CIP and getting prices for items. This has been an interesting project. We are looking at a few different things this year and will be discussed at the meeting.

There is a new sign out from of the Community Center that looks great. Check it out.

This month has consisted of putting out a lot of fires that come up. There have been a number of complaints about anything from excessive trash to goose poop. We are working on all of them, but staff is still low and going to get worse now that schools are starting back up. We will lose most seasonal

staff soon. As always, we will do our best.

## B. Assistant Director's Report submitted by Matt Mansur

### **Beaches Update**

We'll jump right in. The start to this beach season went a lot better than expected, but it has gone downhill from there. One of our biggest issues is that with all of the "family fun attractions" in the Northeast limited or closed, more people are discovering Laconia, NH. I can't help but wonder how many people are coming up here vs years past – I would theorize that we are seeing more this year. So we could possibly be seeing more people come to Laconia for one of the only open beaches, get turned away from the Weirs, and then discover beaches like Ahern, Bartlett, and Opechee. Ahern has closed its gates.

#### *Weirs*

Social distancing was followed pretty well initially, but recently we've had more patrons just setting up on the grassy area in between the beach and the parking lot. This hurts two-fold because 1) social distancing no longer happens when everyone is on that grassy area and 2) the beach is wide open, yet our capacity is "full," this makes it difficult for people waiting in line.

The line itself is something that we did not anticipate. People are waiting in line to go to the beach, sometimes for as long as 6+ hours. Since the Boardwalk is not a park, we have no legal permission to require anything of people choosing to wait in line.

We do have one staff Caretaker that experienced a high fever over the weekend. They believe it may be because of a bad meal that they had had the night before, but the doctor's decided to test them for Covid, in part, because of their exposure to many out-of-staters at the Weirs. The results will not be back for almost a week so that Caretaker will not be in to work our beaches until we have received the results.

We will also lose our first staff member to returning to college in the beginning of August. So we need to hire more staff just to replace some of what we have, on top of any additional staffing we are hoping to do.

With each weekend that passes we are finding patrons are becoming increasingly bold as to how they can get onto the beach. It began with passing wristbands to one another secretly. On the fourth there was one incident where a family blasted through the gate while our employees were handling a medical emergency on the beach. Yesterday I heard reports of people swimming over from the public docks and "hopping" the fence while our staff were occupied.

Furthermore, our patrons are becoming bolder in terms of breaking rules regarding alcohol and tobacco smoking devices. We keep asking them to put it away, they say they will, then they pull it back out when we leave. When the police come, they play the same game.

Finally, I have had numerous staffs tell me at this point that they have had multiple instances of patrons "yelling" at them for long periods of time on weekends.

#### *Bartlett*

Many people are discovering Bartlett Beach. They have filled the parking lot and are parking along the nearby side streets. The parking lot is getting trampled as well as the stake & twine barrier has broken

down in a number of areas. People are clearly running through the grassy areas to get to their cars faster and I've heard of people carrying their boats over the berms. DPW says they have some "more robust" barriers that we can use.

Today (Monday) we received notice that Bartlett beach has high levels of bacteria from samples taken on Thursday. We have posted this advisory on Facebook, our website, and hammered signs into the beach itself. Bartlett was the only beach whose bacteria levels reached "advisory" levels.

It is difficult to tell if the Bartlett Beach patrons are practicing social distancing guidelines. I drove through on Saturday and it was chaotic.

Finally, I heard one report of a woman finding "eight needles" at Bartlett on Saturday morning.

### *Opechee*

This past weekend was the biggest weekend that Opechee saw. Most people went up to the point vs going into the cove. The fact that Ahern was closed probably displaced many beach visitors.

One of our Maintenance guys came in this afternoon asking if there was a way to limit the amount of people that are going to Opechee. He said he was approached by seven separate individuals asking that we limit the amount of people that are going to Opechee. He also said that he collected and trashed charcoal grills that had been left, numerous broken glass bottles, and "half a hookah".

### *Capacity Limitations / First Come, First Serve*

What we've seen at the Weirs is that more and more people are driving hours to be AT the Weirs AT 7am when it opens. We have been meeting our capacity quicker and quicker. Furthermore, we have people getting more brazen and creative as to how to get around our system, while people have been more and more vocal about their displeasure with the capacity. We should keep this in mind if we choose to create a capacity at Bartlett and/or Opechee – it will most likely be met very early morning by out-of-staters who are driving early hours to be here for 7am.

### **Community Center**

We have had one group come in to use the indoor pickleball courts. Most of our Community Center program participants are at-risk and prefer to not come and expose themselves to the possible risks. Given where we are with the beaches, I am not complaining about our lack of programs in the community center at the moment.

### C. Foreman's Report submitted by Tim Ford

- Bathroom Cleaning – Daily
- Loose trash pickup – Daily
- Mow and trim parks, athletic fields, cemeteries – Weekly
- Clean -up storm damage at various parks
- Prep fields for tournaments, playoffs, regular season games
- Weed plant beds and tree rings
- Start mulching tree rings
- WOW Trail brush cleanup
- Measure and line soccer fields, install goals and nets

Draw out parking lot lines at Bartlett Beach  
Irrigation repairs  
Graffiti clean up  
Install “No Swimming” sign at Messer St. boat launch  
Replace broken sink at Opechee Point bathroom  
Put playground equipment out of service at Leavitt Park  
City Hall – replace signs, assemble new desk, repair light covers, repair leak in ceiling

XII. **PRESENTATIONS**

XIII. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner Roy motioned to adjourn at 8:50pm. Seconded by Commissioner Kirk. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Liza Kelleher  
Secretary

Mitch Hamel  
Commissioner Chair