

Minutes
Alton Parks and Recreation Commission
September 14, 2022
6:00pm, Pearson Road Community Center

Members Present: Kristin Thomas, John Markland, Ken Roberts, Megan Stanley

Board of Selectmen Representative: Not present

Public Present: Jill Houser, Kelly Sullivan, Andrea Caruso

Staff Present: Kellie Troendle-Parks and Recreation Director

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by member Ken Roberts, and the public was welcomed to the “Friends of Alton Parks and Recreation Group” meeting.

Meeting Summary:

K. Troendle noted that Christy Painchaud was not able to attend the meeting but suggested the volunteer group be formed as a sub-committee and not a non-profit Friends Group due to the work and commitment involved with its creation through the Department of Justice, Attorney General’s Office, Auditor, etc. K. Troendle said the Town Administrator advised to set up an escrow account under the Town Treasurer, with approval from the Board of Selectmen, and collect donations in that manner, similar to the Pearson Road Community Center Expansion and B&M Park projects. K. Troendle also noted that the recreational facilities are on Town Property and the Town would need to give permission for the non-profit Friends Group to do any work or improvements because the group would be a private organization and would not be part of the Town.

K. Roberts reported he spoke with the Town Administrator about the formation of the Friends Group and was advised that instead of the Friends Group that the Commission look at forming a volunteer group that would be interested in making improvements to recreational areas and Town property. K. Roberts further stated the volunteer group would need to set goals and get costs for the projects they would like to complete. The volunteer group could raise funds to be deposited into a Town escrow account for recreation projects. The formation of the escrow account would need to be approved by the Board of Selectmen and the purpose would need to be clearly defined. K. Roberts stated the purpose of the group would be to raise funds to offset taxes and do the leg work for projects.

K. Sullivan suggested taking on projects and making improvements to the properties the Town already has like the Playground at Jones Field before creating new facilities or amenities. K. Sullivan suggested personally inviting people to be on the committee and suggested organizations to reach out to.

A. Caruso suggested reaching out to organizations and inviting them to an informational meeting about the volunteer group and inviting their members to participate, and let people know the time commitment. Suggested setting up an email list of people that would like more information on programs or that may want to join the committee. Suggested setting up a Face Book Event for the meetings.

J. Markland stated his concerns with the new group being dissolved and their funds re-purposed by future Selectmen because of his past experience with the lack of support and dissolving of the Recreation Facility Committee by the Board of Selectmen.

Questions to review with the Town Administrator:

How does the volunteer committee get formed? Is it a sub-committee of Parks and Recreation or another committee? How is the escrow account established? Would the escrow account be for all projects or do the projects need to be specific like a Playground, Trails or Skate Park or can all items fall under projects? What type of things will need to go before the Board of Selectmen or a Public Hearing? Do the Board of Selectmen need to accept all donations of materials and money or can the committee accept them? What are the steps to get started?

The Friends Group Meeting was closed by member, Ken Roberts and the Commission meeting continued.

Approval of Agenda

K. Thomas made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented, motion was seconded by M. Stanley and passed.

Approval of Minutes 8/17/22

M. Stanley made a motion to approve the Minutes of August 17, 2022 as presented, motion was seconded by J. Markland and passed. K. Thomas abstained.

Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per person- agenda items only)

There was no public input.

Old Business

Friends of Parks and Recreation Group- recap- The Commission discussed the meeting comments and wanted to proceed with forming a volunteer group to fundraise and help with recreational programs and facility improvements. The next meeting where community members will be invited to learn more about the volunteer committee will be November 2, 2022. K. Roberts will request to speak with the Town Administrator and Selectmen about the Commission's interest in forming the volunteer committee and establishing an escrow account and to get directions on how to proceed. Invitations to the November 2, 2022 meeting will be sent by email to community leaders and organizations with information about the group's goals.

New Business

Fall Programs- K. Troendle reviewed the scheduled programs being offered in the fall/winter including: Pickleball at PMHS and ACS; Scarecrow Spree; Light Up Night; Winter Carnival-Children's Warming Hut; Pre-School programs; Line Dancing; Weight Training Classes; Yoga

Classes; Community Clothing Swap; Trick or Treat Hours; Paint Nights; Monster Mash Runway Photo Parade; Teen and Middle School events, Holiday Craft and more.

Recreation Revolving Fund Request- The Department received the annual dues notice of the Mt. Major Snowmobile Club. M. Stanley made a motion to approve \$35.00 for the Snowmobile Club dues, motion was seconded by K. Thomas and passed. J. Markland opposed.

Other Business

Roberts Cove Beach- K. Troendle had forwarded an email she received from the property owner/abutter of the Roberts Cove Beach to the Commission members for their review and information.

Public Input II (limited to 5 minutes per person on any Governmental/Town Business)

K. Sullivan suggested generating an email list of contacts to send information to about Parks and Recreation events and volunteer opportunities.

M. Stanley suggested the Town offer an app for payment of recreation programs like Venmo for convenience and also that the Town offer online registration or a more convenient registration process.

Adjournment

K. Thomas made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:32pm; motion was seconded by M. Stanley and passed. The next meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2022 at 6:00pm at the Pearson Road Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kellie Troendle, Certified Park and Recreation Professional
Parks and Recreation Director*