



City of Auburn
Recreation Department
Dawna LaBonte', Director
48 Pettengill Park Road | Auburn, Maine 04210
www.auburnmaine.gov | 207.333.6601 ext. 2105

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

Wednesday February 12, 2025, at 4:30pm (Senior Center)

Members Present: Misty Edgecomb, Haley Warden, Dawna Labonte, Julia Bergeron-Smith, Jeremy Gatcomb, Corey Kinnan, Tim Cogle, and Philip Savignano. Guest Speaker; Tiffany Giguere

Absent: Elisabeth Collier and Sara Parker

Meeting Minutes: January minutes approved Phil/Tim; all in favor unanimous

Department Update:

- **Youth Sports Update:** Youth basketball is finishing up. Program coordinator Zach Boyd is taking a group of 5th & 6th girls to a tournament in March. Dawna said This is a great opportunity for the girls in our community, as this is the age when girls decide to quit sports. Our youth cheering team competed for the first time and came in 3rd place out of 12 teams, Dawna said that we are so proud of them! Little Eddies (Pre-K-K basketball) ends this weekend, February 15th and unified basketball starts up. Clinics: Recreation is partnering with Greene Youth Lacrosse to offer skills and drills this winter. Little Eddies Softball and Little Eddies Volleyball (new program)
- **Staffing Updates:** We have lost our Senior Recreation Specialist – Dawna said that staff are currently in the interview process, there are hopes to fill the position by end of March. Dawna said the new PAL building will need volunteers starting this Fall - if you know of anyone who would be interested in helping serve our high-risk youth people, please feel free to contact us. Corey asked what the process was to volunteer. Dawna told the committee that there is a need to just spend time with the kids, there is also a background check that is needed. Dawna will work more closely with the staff to come up with a concrete plan as far as what volunteers will look like.
- **Building Updates:** Dawna notified the committee that the new PAL building is well on its way, and it is set to open its doors for Fall 2025. The design for the basketball court is officially completed so it is now feeling real. Dawna said that there was no approval for additional staffing in FY26 so she will be moving down there for 6-8 months (or longer) to aid staff in operations of the building.

Looking Ahead:

- **Budget/CIP Process:** The Recreation budget has been completed, and CIP items have been submitted for review. These have been approved by the City Manager and are waiting to be approved by the council.
- **Spring/Summer Brochure:** The brochure will be released on March 3rd.

Building Closure:

- Please note that Recreation Main Office will be closed on Monday February 17, 2025.
- Dawna notified the committee that she would like to add to the March agenda to review the cooling and warming center policy (for all recreation buildings).

New Business/Open Session for Public:

- **Park Idea W/Grant Option:**

- Tiffany Giguere works at Park Ave School and attended the committee meeting to discuss National Fitness Campaign. She would like to see a fitness court in Auburn (like the one located in Lewiston). She said that there are only 2 locations in Maine, Lewiston and Hampden. Tiffany met with Darcy from the National Fitness Campaign and explained that there are steps needed to start this process.
 - Find leadership support (a committee/board much like this committee).
 - Find sight location
 - Find fund matching (write the grant)
- Tim asked how long we had to submit application, and it is a year. Tim also said that he felt that the committee would be the logical group to take this on as has been discussed in the past.
- The group discussed locations
 - Walking trails, Bonney Park, West Auburn (115 North Auburn Road), Norway Savings Bank Arena, Lakeview Park and South Auburn (New Auburn)
- There was a motion made that the committee take the lead on this project
Tim/Phil; all in favor unanimous
- Tiffany will pass Darcy's information from the National Fitness Campaign along to the committee so that they can reach out to her and get the next steps. Work with Rita to write the grant.

- **Walton School:**

- Haley was speaking w/someone that is on the school committee and she said that the fate of Walton school has taken a backseat as they are trying to get all the 6th grade students moved into Middle Schools. She also said that all elementary schools will need to have a designated location for children with special needs (currently they all attend Walton).

Work in Progress:

- **Food Forest Planning Work Group:**

- Misty said to be sure to review the RFP and if there need to be changes made to let her know. She also said that Phil sent an e-mail stating that they were looking to do something with the old Whiting Farms. The question she posed was should the food forest be moved there. If yes, she said that there is still a need to update Tot Lot. Phil thought that it would be a good idea to have the Land Trust get involved.
- There was a discussion about Tot Lot and what the plans are for it moving forward should Whiting Farms be the new location of the food forest.
 - Should it be closed
 - Should it be repurposed (turned into a facility)
- Hayle asked if Whiting's were to be where the food forest, could there still be an

outdoor visitation center, outdoor classrooms, or a welcome center (which were some ideas for Tot Lot). The committee will plan to visit Whiting's location

- Jeremy also reminded the committee that Doug Beck (Land & Water Conservation) should be involved before anything is purchased by the city.

Other Business:

- Corey asked if the Auburn Recreation had a policy for incidents, most specifically head injuries during games (are they stopped, what are the protocols).
- Phil shared with the committee the road map of the ten-year outdoor economy plan from the convention that he attended.
- Jeremy did give the committee an update on the dog park, he said that the City Manager has asked Scott Holland (Director of Public Works) to start checking prices on fencing.

Meeting was adjourned, Corey/Tim; all in favor unanimous.

Next meeting will be held Wednesday March 12, 2025 – 4:30 pm – Senior Center