



City of Auburn
Recreation Department
Dawna LaBonte', Director
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Parks and Recreation Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

Wednesday June 12, 2024, at 4:30pm (Anniversary Park)

Members Present: Jeremy Gatcomb, Misty Edgecomb, Dawna LaBonte, Sara Parker, Tim Cogle, Julia Bergeron-Smith, Philip Savignano, and Corey Kinnan

Absent: Haley Warden and Elisabeth Collier

Meeting Minutes: May's minutes approved Phil/Julia; all in favor unanimous.

Department Update:

- Dawna reminded the group that July is Parks & Rec month
 - The theme is for this year's Parks & Rec Month is "Where you Belong"
 - She gave the committee a schedule of what would be happening to review
 - She handed out the "meet the team" brochure. This is a review of the staff at Auburn Recreation and their roles and explains a bit more about their positions.

New Business:

- **SWOT Analysis Sheets:**
 - Julia reviewed the sheets w/the group. This committee will complete these sheets (based on their observations) as they conduct park tours/discuss park use. They will be collected and then they will be added to a Google drive where the information will be easy to access.

Work in Progress:

- **PAL Center –**
 - Jeremy told the committee that demolition of the building was on Monday June 17th. The pieces of things will come put slowly. Construction of the new building will begin July 12th. Dawna said that she did a walkability tour with Landry and French (Construction Company). They will be sure that they leave a 4 ft space for the PAL kids to walk through so that they can walk to Pettengill Park.
- **Walton –**
 - Julia reached out to Sue Dorris; she will be the Superintendent (currently the Assistant Superintendent) who connected her to the Ad-hoc School Committee. The Ad-hoc Committee wants to meet with the Advisory Board, a date, time, and agenda will be decided.

- Dawna said that there is a push with the new council to host large events at Festival Plaza
- There are currently almost 30,000 people in Auburn so there definitely will be a need for more event space and fields etc.
- Dawna told the group that the Grab N' Go program is currently for sale. She also said that it could potentially fall back on Rec.

Parks Tours Notes:

- **Anniversary Park –**
 - Auburn's newest park that's still a work-in-progress
 - This was used as a community space after Lewiston shooting
 - Summer shed use - vendor rentals, art and book night, maybe food trucks someday.
 - Rentals happen through downtown coordinator
 - People go fishing here
 - Lots of public art
 - We anticipate increased use if the area is redeveloped/built up with shops and housing
 - Issues:
 - There is a potential for future flooding
 - December flooding caused kayak rental locker to float away
 - Stairs were ripped out
 - Christmas tree is not very large and there was not enough space for the holiday event
 - Drivers try to use the parking area/road as a throughway
- **Sullivan Square –**
 - Green space is good but it doesn't appear to be used regularly
 - Foot bridge is in the master plan
 - It appears to have drainage issues and noisy traffic
 - Ideas to promote use:
 - Plum tree, apple trees, blueberry bushes, herb garden/raised beds
 - Partner with seed companies or gammon nursery or cooperative extension to do learning session
 - Consult the neighbors about how they would like to utilize the park.
 - They might become users/stewards of the space
 - Find out who uses this park by taking random head counts
- **The Bench Park –**
 - Tiny but pretty cobblestone space – more of a sitting station
 - Doesn't necessarily need anything more than some sprucing up and an additional access point. Other ideas include:

- Clean out brush and make herbs or a pollinator garden
 - High bush blueberries
 - Again, engage the people across the street to find out what they want to use the space for
 - Make it easier to access - no entry point from the back of it
 - More bushes on the street to block some of the traffic
- **Raymond Park –**
 - This is the last park out this direction of Auburn
 - It's near Walton School, so if Walton became something else it may benefit from increased traffic
 - Slated to get renovated and there is a public works plan in place - playground equipment will be replaced
 - If approved, it will go through a bidding process (RFP)
 - Lots of green space - great trees and shade
 - Not fenced in - lots of traffic but this has not seemed to be a problem (no police reports about traffic accidents)
 - Ideas for improvements:
 - Talk to the neighbors about their ideas
 - Ask about leveling area for picnic tables
 - Basketball hoop and flat space
 - Charcoal grills
- **Strategies for assessing Parks –**
 - Develop a playbook for how to engage the public to gather data and ideas about the park spaces (concerns, needs, ideas, hopes)
 - Most parks would benefit from bathrooms, free wifi, and water bottle filling stations

Other Business:

- Corey asked about brown tail moths. He thought it would be a good idea to send something out to the community about how bad they are, and their presence in Auburn. He moved from out of state and was unaware of how bad they were.
- Corey also mentioned the importance of there being and AEDs in each facility, more specifically the room/location where the sport is being played and being sure that they are easily accessible and not hard to locate.
- Corey brought up issues with a private youth organization (DEI concerns/issues). Dawna recommended reaching out to the Recreation Department for a copy of their policies and procedures.

Meeting was adjourned, Julia / Phil all in favor unanimous.

Next meeting will be held Wednesday July 10, 2024 – 4:30pm (Park Tour Continues)