Enfield Recreation Committee

September 19, 2023

Members present - Emily Curtis, Matt Young, Jamie Ibey, Kevin Marker, Amy Stewart

Matt called the meeting to order at 6:37.

Minutes - Minutes from July were reviewed. Matt motioned to approve the minutes; Emily seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Recreation Director Update - Kevin said that summer camp went well. He will be asking the staff if they would like to work longer next summer. Matt asked if it was going to be considered to go 8 weeks instead of 6 next summer. Kevin said that he would check with the staff with that prior to next summer.

The storywalk signs are now up at Shaker Field. The Eastman Charitable Foundation grant paid for the signs. There are guidelines for what books can be used. The library is working with Kevin to pick the books up at the field. At 11:30 on September 30 the first book will be unveiled. Every sign has an activity for families to do. There will be activities for families to do on the 30th. The first book is A Good Place by Lucy Cousins. The signs are also for the community to use (with approval).

The town Halloween will be Saturday, October 28 from 3:00-6:00. There were a few complaints of the Halloween event last year being scary or gory. The theme of the haunted house is Disney villains. We will need volunteers to set it up. Trunk or treat will also be happening. Kevin is messaging police, fire and the fast squad for touch a truck.

Kevin talked to Dawn Archambault about Hometown Holidays.

Matt said we have been invited to the October 3 meeting at 5:30 at the DPW in regard to the Methodist Hill property. There are no concrete ideas about what to do with the property yet, so the town is looking for input from our committee as well as other committees and people in town as well as the surrounding towns. There are property abbuters from the area that have ideas about what to do with the property.

 Emily said that, as the meeting is in 3 weeks, we don’t have a lot of time to talk about what our ideas are given that we don’t have information from MPOC about the property. Kevin shared that the property is 100 acres. About ⅓ of it could be subdivided. It is zoned for residential use. It is category 5. It is only accessible via Methodist Hill. Some of the people on the committee want to have trails that connect to the Lebanon trails. The category 6 road in Lebanon connects to the property in Enfield, but the road does not have clear boundaries. The Lebanon land is currently in a lawsuit. There is water that runs through the property and there is a lot of swampy land in parts. Matt asked if we had to have proper drainage to do anything with the land. Kevin said that we do not. The property was taken over by the town due to unpaid taxes. There is a ridge that deems part of the property undevelopable because the grade is too big. There’s only a small part of the property that can be built on.

There is an idea to put about 100 miles of trails in the forested land, then to sell the part of the property that could potentially be developed. Matt asked about parking. Kevin said that there is a flat area that could be cleared for parking. Matt would be curious to see what the fair market value for the property would be. Kevin did say that this would likely be a future process, much like the Johnston Drive property, because of the time frame for surveying the land, trail development, etc. Matt is concerned about the trails being maintained by volunteers. Kevin said that the demographic of this town is older and he feels that in a few years, we will start to get a lot of younger families who are looking for recreation opportunities. Enfield should be developed a little further out than the lake and the downtown. The Methodist Hill area is close to skiing and golf as well as other towns. Kevin did say that it is a hard sell because it is a lot of land and it is on the further edge of town. Emily said that having something so far out of town does not bring in a lot of people to our downtown area. We would have to do some collaboration with Whaleback and Montcalm golf course to get the trail information connected to those organizations and do something to encourage people using the trails and those areas to visit the downtown. It’s hard to make an investment in an area of town that doesn’t bring people to our downtown.

The master plan was brought up a lot in the conversation Kevin attended and some people feel that buying the land might contradict what is laid out in the master plan. Matt suggested that the cost of developing trails would be covered by the sale of what land is usable for development. The money would be reinvested to the development of the property for trails. It would be nice to do events (cross country, cross country skiing, biking, etc). The land is currently posted. Matt also suggested putting a solar farm on the land. Emily said that we should possible think about runoff that might occur with development of trails.

The selectboard has final say on decisions made about the property.

Matt shared that at the selectboard meeting last night that the possibility of Enfield Rec taking over MYSL was on the agenda. Jamie presented to the selectboard about the proposed change. Matt shared with the selectboard that this was not a new conversation. He is afraid the selectboard is underestimating the cost and time the organization takes. Kevin said that the hope was that Kevin would do events one month, sports the next month. Ed thinks that once coaches and registration for the programs are set, the programs should run themselves with minimal help from Kevin. It will be a lot to get it set up. The key part of this transition would be getting registration switched over to the town and getting it working for the town. Ed is noticing that there is duplication of work in Kevin’s job and he is concerned about the amount of time MYSL can take. The Recreation Committee wants to make sure that Kevin is supported and not overextended if the town takes over MYSL. Emily wants to make sure it is not poorly reflected on the town if we can’t find volunteers for coaches or various positions. Kevin said that as a town, we have more ability to hold fast to numbers if coaches are not available. Jamie also shared that having a town employee making team decisions takes some of the heat off MYSL board if people are unhappy about how teams are split. Emily also said that it’s important to make sure all coaches and volunteers are background checked. Jamie said that the software they use for registration currently runs background checks. Matt said that if MYSL is to remain intact, there should be very defined roles. Kevin is going to take the rec commission rules from Claremont to help define how sports teams will be governed. This will help us to  have a check and balance system with Kevin and the recreation committee. Kevin feels that the town taking over for MYSL is doable. He feels that it ultimately is the best thing for Enfield and will help recreation to grow. Matt was concerned that we didn’t know that MYSL was being talked about until he was told by his father. He feels that we should have had advance notice about the meeting as it has impacts on the recreation committee.

The next meeting of the Recreation Committee will be on Tuesday, October 17 at 6:30 PM at Whitney Hall.

Emily motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:43. Matt seconded it. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy E. Stewart

Secretary