

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
Parks & Recreation Commission
May 20, 2020**

Call to Order

6:00 pm: K. Libby called the meeting to order

Present: Katie Libby - Chair, Dwight Barnes - Vice Chairman, Nate Brown, Brian Fisher, Erica Menard, Terry Crotty and Jeff Shute-Members

Absent: Tom DuBois, Jeff D'Agostino - Members

Also Present: Nick Lawrence, Director and Kevin Hill, Assistant Director, Deb Treantafel, DPR Staff

An audio recording of the meeting can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCzG3YwBWbvCj8BsTpbZNjw>

Summer Camp 2020 Update

N. Lawrence referenced two documents about Summer Camp 2020 that were created by him and distributed for review to the Members. He asked for feedback from the commission. K. Libby summarized the two options:

Option 1: Offer summer camp, capped at 24 children, while meeting all of the recommended requirements. There are risks involved with this plan. If someone got sick the camp would have to come to a hard stop.

Option 2: Recommend to the Board and Selectmen that there would not be summer camp.

E. Barnes asked if N. Lawrence received any further feedback from the survey that was sent out to families. N. Lawrence responded that they reached out to 140 families and heard back from 52. Out of those 52, 37 said they were still interested in having their kids attend camp, or they would at least be open to ideas about it. 11 additional families said that they would have at least two kids coming to camp.

N. Lawrence explained that in Option 1 (above,) the number 24 comes from the state's social distancing requirements. 1 room in the George B. White Building would need to be reserved in case someone gets sick, the other 3 rooms can only have groups of 10 and a staff member, which allows 24 kids plus staff and admin.

D. Treantafel asked N. Lawrence how they would determine who the 24 kids would be. She wanted to know if they would start with the families that responded to the survey. N. Lawrence responded that they had 73 families that had already registered for camp, and not all of those families took the survey. He added that many people responded saying they were unable to answer the survey definitively without knowing what the guidelines are (from the state).

K. Libby asked N. Lawrence whether he sensed any distress or strong need from families that rely on the summer camp for care. N. Lawrence felt that the majority of the people accept that things have to change given the Covid-19 situation. He said that people mentioned that they would have to look elsewhere if summer camp was not offered. N. Lawrence also noted that any plan they come up with is contingent upon the George B. White building reopening, the decision of which will come from the Board of Selectmen.

D. Treantafel said that some families reached out to her directly regarding camp and the survey put forth, and her general takeaway was that most families felt stress from lack of a plan— not knowing what would be offered or what the next step would be.

N. Brown asked D. Treantafel, N. Lawrence, and K. Hill for their personal feelings about camp opening. D. Treantafel shared that she would rather disappoint all the families and say they can't have camp at all, than choose only 24 kids and suffer the consequence of justifying their decision to everyone else. N. Lawrence expressed concern over being able to guarantee safety— there is no way to control people's exposure outside of camp. It would only take one person getting sick to shut down the whole camp.

D. Treantafel asked N. Lawrence whether he remembered the number of other towns that decided to close their summer camps this year. He responded that he wasn't able to get an exact number, but that the majority were closing or leaning towards closing. The exception being larger towns that have more space, but even they were modifying their approach and offerings. D. Treantafel added that Exeter usually serves 300 kids, but they are only allowing 50 kids this year. If any of those children missed camp, their spots would not be offered to other families waiting, as per the guidelines that the staff have to

stay with a select group of children for the duration of the summer.

N. Brown asked what would happen if a staff member were absent from summer camp. D. Treantafel and N. Lawrence responded that they would have to have backup staff or have admin step in. That in itself infringes on the recommendation from the state, as they don't want intermingling of the children or staff.

T. Crotty asked if anyone has checked with the staff to gauge interest in working at the camp this summer. N. Lawrence responded that out of 20, 8 would be interested. Some of the 8 commented that they didn't think they should have the camp. 4 others were not interested in working this year.

D. Barnes commented that it seems that N. Lawrence, D. Treantafel, and K. Hill don't think they should hold camp. K. Hill responded that he thinks it would be challenging. The training of the staff, equipment, and data tracking adds extra steps that K. Hill is unsure they can meet. He voiced concern over the cleaning requirements, which would be difficult with a limited staff. D. Barnes responded that he understands and he wishes they could be there for people that need the service.

D. Barnes asked E. Menard how much money they brought in from the summer camp program last year. D. Treantafel reminded the team that they had a loss last year. N. Lawrence added that they increased the rates to remedy that.

K. Hill asked K. Libby's opinion as a parent / consumer on the options— specifically, whether or not she would rather know up front if she should make alternative plans, or whether she would want to try to attend camp knowing that she might have to scramble for a backup plan if a child gets sick. K. Libby responded saying that she hopes the families that would be filling the 24 spots would need the camp rather than want the camp as a "nice-to-have", so they would have a different perspective than her. She imagines they would be happy to have 3 weeks of a normal schedule (meaning, with camp running and then potentially shutting down) versus 12 weeks of struggling to work and care for their children.

D. Treantafel asked how they would determine who's need is greater than someone else's. B. Fisher offered that, as a parent and consumer, he would like to know up front rather than have the threat of closure hang over his head.

K. Libby added that the revenue from last year was \$76,289 and the expenses were \$81,900. As a ballpark, they would normally expect \$75,000 in revenue.

E. Barnes mentioned that she didn't think it would be unexpected if summer camp was cancelled, but she felt they should let parents know as soon as possible so people can make plans.

K. Hill asked and N. Lawrence confirmed that Primex Insurance was holding a webinar on June 3, with a recommendation on how things should be run at the camp. He expects their recommendations will be similar to that of the state, however there could also be some additional items that protect both the company and their clients from liability. So, essentially, even if Parks and Recreation makes a recommendation about camp, they would have to change based on Primex's announcement.

K. Libby asked if there was anything in the (insurance) policy that would assist in lost revenue, because summer camp is similar to an "event" that was cancelled. Perhaps some costs could be recouped under such a policy. N. Lawrence said he thought they might qualify for relief assistance from the federal level. E. Barnes commented to K. Libby that being able to recoup expenses via the insurance policy may matter if the camp made the decision themselves instead of being forced to make the decision.

T. Crotty said that N. Lawrence's comment regarding not being able to guarantee the safety of everyone resonated with him. He felt that this is the main reason they shouldn't have the camp, and what could be communicated to the town. E. Barnes added that the altered experience of the camp, given the restrictions and regulations, was another strong thing to consider and communicate. D. Treantafel agreed and offered supporting opinions. E. Barnes asked if they could offer "care" options for a small number of kids that are in dire need. D. Treantafel responded that would essentially be what Option 1 (above) would be; it would not be the usual summer camp. She added that the expectations would have to be set with parents communicating this.

E. Menard thinks they should also start planning for the fall now rather than later— training staff, gathering equipment, etc. D. Treantafel agrees. T. Crotty added that a lot of what happens in the fall will depend on what happens with the schools in the fall. D. Treantafel commented that they will have to look to the (potentially new) guidelines at that time.

K. Libby asked if anyone was ready to make a recommendation.

Motion: J. Shute motions to accept Option 2, to cancel summer camp for 2020, per the directive of the state (CDC). With the qualification that it could be subject to change if guidelines are lifted.

Second: E. Menard

Vote to Approve: 7 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Abstained - Motion Carries

This recommendation will be presented to the Board of Selectmen.

K. Libby asked D. Treantafel if there were any deposits made (to facilities) for field trips. D. Treantafel said no. E. Menard inquired about the refunds to families and the timing of that. N. Lawrence and D. Treantafel said they would issue refunds quickly after the official cancellation was made public. K. Libby asked about convenience fee reimbursement. N. Lawrence responded that they would not be involved in refunding those, as that is handled by RecDesk. N. Lawrence will speak with RecDesk and get information.

E. Menard commented that perhaps staff members could be put in contact with families that will need care now that camp is not offered. K. Libby voiced concern over getting involved with private arrangements. E. Menard responded that her concern is leaving families "high and dry." The group agreed that they could suggest to staff to connect with families via Facebook.

Fields and Courts

D. Barnes asked if they could employ staff to help with the Bicentennial Baseball field maintenance. N. Lawrence responded that it depends on what they are able to budget for that. The group discussed where the town was in their process of putting out bids. N. Lawrence shared that mowing has started through BlueSky Landscaping. They will continue to maintain the fields.

D. Barnes asked about his idea to allow families to access the fields. N. Lawrence responded that he spoke to J. Harrington and the fields' reopening will happen when/if the George B. White building reopens. N. Lawrence added that he is now on the Building Reopening Committee, so he will be aware of decisions early. D. Barnes responded that he feels the fields' reopening should be a separate issue from the building's reopening. N. Brown added that he would also like N. Lawrence to inquire about the basketball courts. N. Brown shared a personal story regarding the basketball courts. N. Lawrence will speak to the Board of Selectman at their next meeting. N. Lawrence added that Primex Insurance would likely speak to the reopening of the courts and fields in their webinar as well.

Maintenance Projects

T. Crotty asked D. Barnes and J. Shute if they were still interested in helping repair the fields. They responded yes. T. Crotty suggested the staff could perhaps assist with that endeavour. He voiced concern that if they open up the fields to families, they would be unable to work on them. D. Barnes clarified that at least two fields could be utilized while the others are being worked on.

Closing Comments

B. Fisher excused himself to go to work.

D. Treantafel asked when the recommendation would be made (regarding Summer Camp.) N. Lawrence said that he thought it would come from the Board of Selectmen after their meeting.

The group discussed the closing of Veasey Park and Reservation Road access to Pawtuckaway and their committee's and peoples' struggles with the mixed response from the community.

Citizens Comments

None

Adjournment

Motion: J. Shute moves to adjourn

Second: T. Crotty

Vote: Yea 7, Nay 0, Abstained 0 - Motion Carries

Next Meeting Wednesday, June 3, 2020 @ 6:00pm

The minutes were transcribed and respectfully submitted by Jacqueline Trimmer, Citizen.

Pending approval by the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Revisions, if any, will be contained in the minutes of the next meeting.