

BARRINGTON
BROOKFIELD
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FARMINGTON
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MIDDLETON
MILTON



NEW DURHAM
NEWMARKET
NORTHWOOD
NOTTINGHAM
ROCHESTER
ROLLINSFORD
SOMERSWORTH
STRAFFORD
WAKEFIELD

Strafford Regional Planning Commission Q2 Meeting

City Council Chambers, Somersworth City Hall
1 Government Way, Somersworth, NH

December 5, 2019

FINAL Minutes

SRPC Members Present: Joe Boudreau (Rochester); Barb Holstein (Rochester); Victoria Parmele (Northwood); David Landry (Dover); Stephanie Benedetti (Dover); Leslie Schwartz (Durham); Peter Nelson (Newmarket); Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth); Richard Michaud (Somersworth); Lindsey Williams (Dover); Wes Merrit (Durham); Steve Diamond (Barrington); Gary Anderson (Nottingham); Tom Crosby (Madbury)

SRPC Staff Present: Jen Czysz (executive director), Shayna Sylvia (communications and outreach planner), Jackson Rand (GIS planner); James Burdin (senior regional planner), Nancy O'Connor (program content coordinator); Stefanie Casella (regional planner)

1. Welcome/Introductions

Chair Victoria Parmele welcomed everyone to the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

2. Action Item(s)

a. Approval of Draft Minutes of September 26, 2019 Commission Meeting

Leslie Schwartz **MOVED** to approve the minutes of September 26, 2019. Peter Nelson **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

b. Approval of the FY2020 Mid-Year Budget

Jen Czysz reviewed the mid-year budget explaining additions such as line items for a contractor to build a new website, the Dover Recreation Master Plan Chapter, and for hiring a contractor to assist with various planning projects at the Commission.

Tom Crosby **MOVED** to approve the FY 2020 Mid-Year Budget. Michael Bobinsky **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

3. Presentation: Recreation Planning: An Update on the Pathways to Play Project and the Dover Master Plan

J. Czysz introduced the presentation which would include an update on ongoing recreation planning programs at the Commission. Nancy O'Connor, equity and engagement planner, and Jackson Rand, GIS planner, would be presenting on the Pathways to Play (PTP) program, and Shayna Sylvia would be presenting on Dover's recreation master plan chapter.

N. O'Connor explained the two phases of the NH Children's Health Foundation (NHCHF) funded PTP project; data mapping/validation and a pilot project in Somersworth. She added that NHCHF funds support increasing access to recreation for children under 5.

J. Rand shared that he has been working on the data mapping/validation portion of the project. Strafford Regional Planning Commission's (SRPC) prior GIS Planner Marcia Moreno Báez was previously involved with this project.

J. Rand explained the series of maps he created including a map for each community and maps showing larger scale regional analyses. He shared that the process by which this occurred included examining pre-existing data, which was then QA/QC reviewed by reaching out to each community. Contacting the municipalities helped us to get feedback to verify our information. He did add that we did not receive verification from each community, so in some cases staff had to QA/QC the data.

J. Rand reviewed some of the findings to date, reviewing items like the number of recreation sites per community and number of sites by acreage intervals.

J. Rand shared sample maps created for this project such as public open space and trails, density of sports fields and of parks and playgrounds, distance from households, and access by bus routes among others.

J. Rand introduced N. O'Connor who gave an overview of the Somersworth pilot project completed as part of PTP. N. O'Connor shared that the pilot project focused on three parks (Malley Farm, the Riverwalk, and Jules Bisson Park) chosen by the City's community development department.

N. O'Connor explained that outreach was a big component of the pilot. This included an online survey about the three parks addressing access, park benefits, and areas for improvement. N. O'Connor shared that results noted that Malley Farm and the Riverwalk were the most underutilized parks out of the three.

N. O'Connor shared some of the other outreach strategies used by SRPC including going to the City's recreation camp to talk with children and parents, having participants complete a

map exercise where they identified where they live so SRPC could track access, and have children draw their dream park on a premade coloring sheet.

N. O'Connor shared that survey results also showed that the three identified parks weren't well known. She explained that SRPC staffers also attended the City's National Night Out event and brought a large chalkboard where community members could write "what would make Somersworth parks even better."

N. O'Connor reviewed next steps for the project include summarizing the information found into a final report that will be presented to the City.

Questions were entertained at this point in the presentation. David Landry asked about access to conservation lands that are not normally advertised as public. Only confirmed publicly accessible lands were mapped on the municipal recreation maps. A discussion ensued on what defines publicly accessible land.

V. Parmele asked when the PTP data will be accessible. It will be posted at the end of the NHCHF contract, which is in early February.

V. Parmele asked about the types of maps created as part of the project. The number of maps were limited by contract constraints. It was noted that if a community was looking for specific information that SRPC could help the individual community with that request.

P. Nelson opined that this information should be shared on the SRPC website. He added that it could also be sent to each community so that they could include it on their recreation websites as well.

Shayna Sylvia introduced the second part of the presentation which include an overview of SRPC's work with Dover on its recreation master plan chapter. She reviewed the project background including when the project kicked off (Sept. 2019) and two new components being incorporated into the plan, art and programming.

S. Sylvia explained the project timeline, which ends in mid-spring of 2020. She reviewed the five project phases giving an update on each. SRPC staff were able to use data from the PTP project to have an advantage when working on Task 1: Inventory and Analysis. S. Sylvia shared that this phase of the project is ongoing but that draft maps have been created by J. Rand. S. Sylvia reviewed a sample of the maps.

S. Sylvia reviewed Task 2: Master Plan at the System Wide Level. SRPC staff reviewed the city's last recreation plan from 2009 in addition to other recreation plans to use as examples for the current 2020 iteration. Under this task staff have also started to identify themes and needs from outreach conducted at various city event. Shortfall and future trends are being

examined and will be incorporated into the chapter, and associated recommendations which will include program development and funding actions. S. Sylvia explained that project manager Kyle Pimental would also be meeting with the recreation and planning departments to review the recommendations from 2009 to see what need to be taken off the list, and what needed to be carried forward in the 2020 recommendations.

S. Sylvia reviewed Task 3: Public Art and Task 4: Outreach. Task 3: includes identifying existing and potential public art locations, determining art installation preferences, and developing a place-based plan for future installations. To date, much of this has been done through outreach. S. Sylvia explained that SRPC has used many different outreach strategies including convening a steering committee, providing opportunities for feedback at various events in Dover, and two online surveys.

S. Sylvia shared that SRPC attended the October Art Walk event, Apple Harvest Day, the Dover Downtown Trick or Treat event and the November Art Walk event, to create a feedback loop. Outreach techniques used include visual preference surveys, a "dream park" sticker activity for kids, a chalkboard with open-ended question, sticky dot exercises and two online surveys. S. Sylvia stated that the second art walk event allowed SRPC staff to get feedback on rendering of potential art installation in the downtown and potential locations for public art.

S. Sylvia noted some of the results heard at each event before sharing that about 1,200 people were reached during the outreach process. The results will be sorted and incorporated into the chapter.

S. Sylvia reviewed next steps which include a presentation to the City of Dover at its Land Use Meet and Greet in January and moving towards drafting the chapter for final adoption in the spring.

M. Bobinsky noted that the renderings were helpful in allowing people to visualize public art. He mentioned the concern of maintenance for public art, especially with the rendering of the painted crosswalk. A discussion ensued regarding the graphic visual art renderings.

J. Boudreau noted that the public art examples shared are static. He suggested changing or rotating art installations that could tie together communities on a regional basis. L. Schwartz agreed that this could be a good idea for keeping people engaged. A discussion ensued about how this could work.

D. Landry commended the amount of people that SRPC reached during the outreach process. A brainstorm occurred about how to keep people engaged and allowed for continuous feedback.

Gary Anderson commended SRPC for going to these outreach events to get feedback from people. S. Sylvia responded that people did appreciate it, and that SRPC was thanked several times.

M. Bobinsky asked if trends were beginning to become apparent through the outreach. N. O'Connor responded that water access was a theme that has been addressed multiple times through the feedback. She added that adult programming was also a prominent theme.

D. Landry asked about walking. N. O'Connor shared that walking and related infrastructure was also a prominent topic.

D. Landry commented on the Bellamy Wildlife Reserve property and how it is not well known. S. Sylvia responded that the City doesn't own this property and so does not advertise it.

L. Williams agreed that there are other resources like Hilton Park and Bellamy Wildlife Reserve which, while not owned by the City, are great resources, and it is great to show those on a map. She also shared while it's great to advertise the large parks we need to consider accessible recreation options for children and seniors. She mentioned addressing amenities for seniors.

L. Williams shared that we need to consider the funding piece of all of this as well, and how to best utilize City funds, versus non-profit, versus private funds. L. Williams suggested that SRPC have a role in encouraging implementation of the recommendation in the chapter. S. Sylvia shared an idea of implementation already occurring as the City planning department teamed up with the Arts Commission and Dover Main Street to apply for an arts asphalt grant.

J. Boudreau suggested educational art display, like noting tree types on a trail or at a park. D. Landry responded that there is great educational signage at Willand Pond.

S. Diamond suggested public art ideas. J. Boudreau asked J. Rand if the Isinglass trail in Rochester was on the City's recreation map. The recreation maps will also include conservation and trails data, which either may not be open to the public or are not traditional recreation for children under 5, are complementary.

D. Landry cited the Great Works Land Trust as a great example with marketing of trail network resources.

P. Nelson suggested encouraging recreation activities like geocaching. He reiterated his idea to create a template for recreation sites for each municipality. A discussion ensued concerning this idea.

D. Landry suggested implementing ideas for the recreation master plan in a structured way over a five- or ten-year period. V. Parmele opined that mapping recreation resources is a great SRPC service.

Discussion continued about promoting recreation resources on a regional level.

4. Commissioner's Roundtable

Commissioners gave updates from their respective communities.

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Citizen's Forum

No citizens spoke during the citizens' forum.

7. Adjournment

T. Crosby **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. M. Bobinsky **SECONDED** the motion. Of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

The meeting ended at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shayna Sylvia

Communications and Outreach Planner

Minutes approved on 2/27/20

By: Victoria Parmele

Victoria Parmele, SRPC Chair