

**Minutes of a Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) Meeting
Held via Zoom - Thursday, September 08, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.**

Attending: Tom Demeo
Allan Douglas
Carolyn Janes
Erik Eriksson
Michael Lynch
Manno Theos
Craig Rushton (Ex Officio)

Regrets:
Iris Churchill
Bill Green
Mary Crowley

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Acknowledgements

The group acknowledged that the land on which the meeting is conducted is the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

The group also acknowledged of the passing of Queen Elizabeth.

Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes

MINUTES Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission meeting on Thursday, June 02, 2022, were adopted as read. All in favor. CARRIED

New Business

**UPDATE ON SUMMER
ACTIVITIES**

- ◇ Craig Rushton provided an update on summer activities in the recreation department.
- ◇ All summer camp offerings full with waitlists (unable to accommodate extra camps due to staffing and space)
 - Very low cancellation rate (estimate of 3 camps)
 - All camps were based at the Lewis Center
- ◇ Early Years programs very popular – and changed to run out of Cozy Corner Preschool – lots of parents seeking socialization for their children after COVID
- ◇ Teen Odyssey (adapted teen program) moved to operate at The LINC – more age appropriate space
- ◇ Inclusion was full with waitlists
- ◇ Return of summer volunteer program – busiest we have seen in awhile
 - Using this a recruitment and training tool for young workers to help fulfill staffing shortage challenges
 - Identified and created roles that are suitable for new workers – child-minding, storage, supplies, being back up to Jr staff – then move and integrate into cross section of programming prior to fall (early years, children, inclusion)
- ◇ Summer Fitness and wellness centre usage are more consistent than we have seen in past summers – lots of people who have just moved here
- ◇ Reduction in contracted programs this year – as many contractors are also still recovering from COVID and facing staffing shortages

Outdoor Pool:

- ◇ Quieter summer for open swims and lane swims – we believe the late start to summer had impact on that
- ◇ Lessons very popular and the return of private lessons was well received
- ◇ Above average interruptions/closures at the outdoor pool due to mechanical issues this year

Youth Services:

- ◇ Registered programs ran – especially popular were out trips and cooking
- ◇ Drop-in was quiet
- ◇ Will look to focus on promoting drop-in and re-establishing relationships/reconnecting with youth more at risk for Fall

CHANGES TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMOX VALLEY RECREATION GUIDE

Craig notified the group that there has been changes to the distribution of the Comox Valley Recreation guide. It is changing from “door to door” distribution to electronic access, “pick up” locations as well as printed copies upon request.

Old Business

MCPHEE PARK UPDATE

Craig provided an update. The McPhee Meadows Nature Park Final Concept plan was adopted by Council on August 29, 2022. It is move to the detailed design stage and applications for grants are in progress.

PARKS NAMING - LAWRENCE BURNS

Craig provided an update. The dedication event will take place on October 4, 2022 at 6 pm. RCCS Staff have sent invitations out for the event. Attendance is by invitation only due to the location of the event and Burns Family wishes.

LEISURE FOR EVERYONE ACCESS PROGRAM (LEAP)

Craig did a short presentation on this extension to the pilot program which is starting in January 2023.

AQUATIC SERVICES REVIEW (IN CONJUNCTION WITH CVRD)

Craig provided an update. The City is expecting to get some preferred options/recommendations for future community engagement on the future of aquatic services in Comox Valley.

REGIONAL PARKS STUDY (WITH CVRD)

Craig provided an update. Provincial approval has now been received, and the CVRD will be bringing the 4th and final reading of the service to the board on September 20, 2022.

INITIATIVES FOR ENGAGING YOUTH WITH PRAC

The group discussed this topic as a whole. Allan suggested youth focus groups, and, Tom suggested that effort is made to engage young parents in the 30 years range and that schools could be engaged if there was a desired topic to focus on. Craig committed to reaching out to operations staff to see if there are topics or initiatives that recreation or culture could use engagement. Craig also reminded the group that there are youth engagement options through the LINC youth council and it may be beneficial if they were connected with the PRAC group. Craig noted that it would be a great fit and provide meaningful experience for the youth to take on community projects and report back to the group. Craig also mentioned that something similar could happen with adapted participants to help promote accessibility.

Round Table

COUNCILLOR MANNO THEOS

Councillor Theos let the group know that during his election campaigning he heard many concerns including: RV campers having a lack of sani-flush in the City, the need for a dog park and Frisbee golf park, and needs from the Evergreen Community organization for new kitchen air conditioning, new stage, new stairs and that the city was not providing a response. Tom let the

group know that he considers this a key conference facility that is well used and that it requires an investment to bring it back up to standards. Allan suggested that the City connect with the Evergreen to discuss opportunities to partner on renovations required.

BILL GREEN (VIA EMAIL PRIOR TO MEETING)

Bill (not available for meeting) submitted an email in advance of the meeting in regards to the baseball diamonds in Courtenay. The group discussed the different levels of playing fields to service the different levels of baseball in Comox Valley. It was suggested that there is a need for more baseball fields in Comox Valley. It was noted that there is currently a sports field study in place and that the group will wait to see the results. Tom was curious about participant numbers and Allan suggested tasking Bill with exploring the current numbers and trends in regards to baseball and to bring it back to the group. Bill also submitted a request for City plans for the area behind the Washington Inn. The item is not within the scope of the PRAC advisory commission and it was suggested that follow up could be made with the engineering department.

Next Meeting

Thursday, October 06, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.