

*MINUTES SUBJECT TO CORRECTION BY THE RECREATION GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE. CHANGES, IF ANY, WILL BE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE.

**RECREATION GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
MAY 4, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Smith, Christine Packard, Raj Chawla, Lori Houghton, Jason DiRosa, Theresa Fletcher, Kim Maiberger, Erika Baldasaro, Andrew Watts (alternate member for Max Levy), Betzi Bilodeau.

ADMINISTRATION: Brad Luck, EJRP; Ally Vile, Essex Parks & Recreation

OTHERS PRESENT: Adriane Martin, Adam Sollace, Lisa Allen, Gibson Smith, Stacy Jordan, Annie Cooper.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Raj Chawla called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Committee members introduced themselves.

3. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

There were no comments from the public.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Lori Houghton, SECOND by Erika Baldasaro, to approve the minutes of April 25, 2016 as presented. VOTING: unanimous (10-0); motion carried.

Michael Smith returned to the meeting at 6:35 and resumed with the meeting agenda.

5. REVIEW MEETING AGREEMENTS

There were no questions or comments on the previously agreed to meeting protocol that

one speaker at a time
arrive to the meeting on time
start the meeting on time
share the floor
be prepared
be respectful of others' opinions
end the meeting on time
allow time for public comment.

6. REVIEW COMMITTEE GOALS

There were no questions or comments on the meeting goals of:

Ensuring the current quality of rec services is maintained and enhanced.
Exploring all avenues and entities before making a recommendation.
Actively engaging the community in the process and making information easily accessible so the public is informed.
Being cognizant of affordability and ensuring the funding structure is fiscally responsible and will be supported by the public.
Reaching a consensus on a final recommendation by mid-June.

7. BRAINSTORM WAYS TO ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE WITH THE PUBLIC

A general discussion ensued about the level of public engagement for the RGSC. It was decided that for the committee's goals, the current level of public engagement was appropriate. Once a recommendation is made to the Selectboard and the Trustees, public engagement will morph into selling the recommendation to the public. However, the commitment from the current members ends in June when the recommendation is made. Brad Luck added that it is most likely that the Boards will prefer that interested public members of the RGSC lead the public engagement effort regarding the recommended model.

Discuss Information from Keeley Schell, RED Committee Member

Members agreed with the recommendations from Keeley Schell and that many of those had been used by the RGSC already, such as Front Porch Forum, the Essex Reporter and a public survey.

RGSC survey & video update

Members reviewed the most recent survey results. The survey ends on May 8th and so far, a little over 300 people responded. The majority of respondents were ages 25-44 and 45-64, 55% lived in the Village including the Town and 41% lived in the Town outside the Village. The majority of respondents had children ages 18 and younger and were frequent users of recreation programs and parks in the Village and/or Town. The top three ways that respondents stated as the most helpful way to get information were the Essex Reporter, Front Porch Forum and Facebook.

Ms. Vile mentioned that staff was trying to work with someone (MJ Engel) to get the survey data in a more comprehensive collection to present to the board members once the survey was complete. She asked the board members to let her know if they could recommend anyone who could help with this.

Members agreed that there had been positive comments about the video.

RGSC future engagement strategies

Members decided to continue with the current engagement strategies through the Essex Reporter and Front Porch Forum. It was agreed to resend the Front Porch Forum posting for the survey that ends on May 8th.

8. EXPLORE AND ASSESS GOVERNANCE MODELS

Brad Luck introduced this issue. Members did not have any overarching questions about the five Governance models. Mr. Luck directed the members to break into small groups to discuss

the five governance models identified and to discuss the pros, cons and what is needed for each model. Groups rotated to each chart to record ideas and check off ideas that they agreed with from other groups. Afterwards, the members reviewed and discussed each of the governance models and the written comments. The following were the results:

Governance models:
A1. Village Municipality

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>For this model to work, we would need....</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Initial ease of transition -Continuity of programs -Essex Town taxes won't increase....or increase gradually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Could eventually address this topic again (perhaps a pro) -with uncertainty of how mudget is handled down the road (whether under municipal budget or separate article) -potential loss of school space and use (whims of the boards) -potential loss of shared personnel and continuity for children -change of all support services (IT, HR, Finance) Continuation of preschool (Village in preschool business?) *Lori stated that the Trustees understand the value of preschool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To talk to school regarding use of space -Talk to Trustees about M.O. U. with unified school district -How would after school care continue? -How would shared staffing work? (looking at Colchester Recreation Model for licensed preschool was suggested)

B1. Town Municipality

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>For this model to work, we would need....</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No Charter change expanding town program -streamlined-one stop shop -cost savings? -reduced taxes for Village residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Budget is contained within Town article -possible impact of school facility access -More stringent background check standards with school -continuity of staff with children -quality of staff without Full time status (EJRP) -Possible staff turnover (EFRP) Town voters may not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Greater understanding of the budget-Australian ballot/Town MEeting/Charter Change -How do you integrate programs -M.O.U. for school access -Would both parks and recreation programs operate as separate entities or have to merge? (co-exist under Town administration but separate operations) -What needs to happen with

	welcome tax increase	the Village assets -What would happen to the Village preschool? -Could this model incorporate (later) Senior Center and Library-Brownell? (Ally Vile pointed out that Town recreation budget already includes staff member from Senior Center)
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B2. Interlocal Contract

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>For this model to work, we would need....</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Eliminate duplicate services -more efficient/streamlined operations -ease of administration -equal access to programs (tow and village) -No charter change -Flexibility in modifying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rec. Dept funds could be compromised under Town/Village budget -Control for rec dept. falls under Town Selectboard (?) (options) -2 administrations-slower integration process -logistics-continuation of 2 different buildings -no community vote -Potential elimination of EJRP preschool -Lose school integration -This would have a term -Staff-full time to part-time-quality of people and possible turnover -Interlocal contract terms and length of contract (instability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -an attorney/contract -clarity on structure -M.O.U. to use the schools

B3. Union Municipal District

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>For this model to work, we would need....</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unites communities under one umbrella -One budget -Puts both communities on equal footing from the start 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Potential for loss of programs -loss of positions? Increased administrations costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hear from a working model -Time line -Process of property transfer from Prudential Committee -What happens to childcare

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Has to be approved by both communities -Eliminate redundancies in programs -Expected cost savings -stability/permanence -structural flexibility -standalone budget (directly funded) -Potential for new programs and services -could “house” train hop, farmer’s market, senior center, libraries, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -shared staffing losses -Potential of 2 different tax districts (approval from both communities might be a con, too) -New Charter and a community vote -Continued preschool questionable -oversight of budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> systems? -Guaranteed use of shared staffing and buildings, schools -M.O.U.s from school districts that guarantee use of schools through many years -Associated cost and structure of support services (Finance, HR, IT, etc.
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B4. EWED Unified Union School District

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>For this model to work, we would need....</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Equal programming -Staffing flexibility -Shared use of school buildings -Shared staffing, continuity, retention -Separate budget article -Use of school IT services -Eliminates barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Complexity -Limited Time (timeline, is it doable?) -Westford -Unknown of future school boards -Rising tax burden -Added burden to unified school board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -If Westford would want this -If the budget would be separate from school -Does Westford have to have the option or do they have to join? -How would M.O.U.'s work, would we need them under this model? -What does Westford have now? -How could we operate without Westford? -Is the school district interested in this? Does the UUSD support this model? Ask them to attend 5/11 meeting -M.O.U.-using school facilities? -Status of Westford's participation

After the discussion, members took a vote on the models based on what they have heard so far and that they felt could meet the members’ goals and the community’s needs. The result of that vote was the following: Village Municipality received a total of 22, with an average of 2.2, Town Municipality received a total of 21, with an average of 2.1, Interlocal Contract received a total of

18 with an average of 1.8, Union Municipal District received a total of 46 with an average of 4.6 and the EWEC Unified Union School District received a total of 33, with an average of 3.3.

The Interlocal Contract model was eliminated since it was the lowest score. Members discussed whether the Town Municipality model and the Village Municipality should be eliminated as well. However, members decided to keep all four models for further discussion.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & NEXT STEPS

-Committee members will repost the notice about the public survey and the deadline coming up on Sunday, May 8th.

-Further discussion will occur on the four remaining governance models at the next meeting on May 11th.

-Michael Smith will contact the EWEC Unified Union School District to see if they are able to attend the next meeting on May 11th. A summary of reasons why members are in favor of this model and a list of questions will be sent beforehand.

-Erika Baldasaro will craft a summary of tonight's meeting.

-Ally Vile will contact WVPD to see about having a representative attend a future meeting for questions.

-Brad Luck will generate an estimate for administrative costs paid to CCSU.

10. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business and without objection the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Town of Essex
Recording Secretary
Saramichelle Stultz