

Shelburne Recreation Committee

Minutes for Nov. 10, 2020

Members present: Diana Hardina, Jackie Walsh, Stefan Topolski, Bill Buck and Norman Beebe
The meeting began at 6:30 p.m.

1. **Cowell Gym report from Bill:**

a. Election. Holding the elections at the Cowell Gym went well. Town Clerk Joe Judd held the primary there and then the Nov. 4 election, a move from the normal site at Town Hall. The heat worked -- yay.

b. Groups wanting to use the Cowell: The Cowell is closed now because of the Covid pandemic and has been since March. We can't let any groups use it, as the Town of Shelburne has not yet opened town buildings. And, even if the Town allowed buildings to open, FRCOG health agent Randy Crochier has made it clear he is unlikely to approve it. We are going to wait for the town to open the buildings and then for the Board of Health and Randy to approve re-opening. Diana asked about taekwondo and other activities that include safe distancing. But Bill responded that we can't open the building for any activities now. Stefan said a family should be able do what a family wants to do. A family or a pod of people who spend time together regularly should be able to rent the gym, he said. Stefan said the real Covid wave has arrived and that current restrictions make sense but that they went overboard earlier in the year.

c. Xmas decorations. The town Christmas decorations are being stored in the first pingpong room at the Cowell.

d. Painting the Cowell. Bill has filled out an application to have the jail help paint the Cowell. The jail will do it for free, with inmates doing the painting. Right now, it can't happen because of Covid. Jackie wondered about using inmate labor. Diana has worked with the inmate painters before. She said they volunteer for the work.

e. Getting a security camera. There have been break-ins over the years at the Cowell. The committee wants a video camera inside the gym to record any break-ins. Town administrator Terry Narkewicz has brought up a concern with Bill -- the possible invasion of privacy of those recorded by the camera. Who will be watching them? Currently, the plan is that Bill would get alerts and footage over his phone. There was a discussion of whether we should be concerned about privacy, too. The committee asked Bill to talk further with Terry about possibilities.

2. **River Trail.** There's been pushback from several residents of the town about building a river trail from Wilcox Hollow to downtown Shelburne Falls. A recent technical study determined an elevated trail is not feasible or desirable, Norm said. Rather than an expensive elevated trail

built on pylons, a more low-tech alternative would be wooden planks on the ground, raised on one side for drainage, which would be replaced as they rot. Property near the police barracks is crucial to connecting the village part of the trail to the Mahican-Mohawk Trail. The owner is not in favor of allowing an easement. Perhaps the solution is an agreement that people could cross the land rather than a full-fledged easement, which would still be there if the owner wanted to sell her property. Another resident whose property abuts the town property on which the in-town portion of the trail will run is concerned that people will congregate below her property there especially if the trail doesn't connect to the Mahican-Mohawk Trail. To alleviate the resident's concern the plan to put a picnic area on town property near the old tennis courts has been dropped. The trail supporters would help provide people to walk the trail and get rid of any trash on it.

3. Invasive species project. The Recreation Committee is donating \$100 toward an invasive species project.

4. Ice skating rink at Stefan's house. Stefan plans to again create a skating rink accessible to the public on his Bridge Street sideward. The committee decided creating another one on the softball field at the Arms Historical Society/Museum is not feasible this year. Norm didn't think we'd be able to do the maintenance. Diana thought the weather would only allow a short season and noted that it's a problem in Canada, which has colder weather. As far as Covid goes, we decided to put up a sign asking people to wear masks at the rink. Jackie has a good FRCOG lawn sign that would work.

5. Softball field. Stefan worked on the softball field in the spring and the infield is in good shape. Grass did grown back in it, and the outfield still has hollows in it. Bill said the only way to avoid the grass is for someone to continuously maintain it with rototilling and dragging. Bill suggested that we at least clear 10 feet leading up to the bases to allow for grass-free sliding into base.

6. Next meeting time: We'll settle on a time via email.

The committee adjourned at 8:00.