

Shelburne Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes for 1-21-26

Attending: Members Dan Post, Diana Hardina, Norman Beebe, and Stefan Topolski, Cowell Director Grace Thorne, and guests Tom Johnson, Peter Stevens, Bodhi Kraus, Lisa Greaney, Ann Kitson, and Thomas Rabideau

1--- Call to order

* Dan appointed secretary pro-tem

* December 17th meeting minutes approved with minor changes.

2--- Updates/reports/program check-ins

* Community Preservation Committee – Norman reported the committee met with some of the applicants to answer the list of questions the committee drafted at their December meeting. The proposals whose applicants we met with were for the second/third phase of the BSE playground (\$45,000), additional funds for installation of Arms Library elevator (\$15,000), and for the Wheel-View Farm APR local match (\$85,000). There was a miscommunication with John Taylor who is the contact person for the proposal seeking \$25,000 as a first step toward restoration of the Fire Tower. The committee will meet with John in February.

* Cowell Director's report – mini-splits out of commission pending repairs, likely for the rest of the winter. (The contractor, Jamrog, sub-contracted out the lines, and the lines have pinhole leaks. The company who made the lines went bankrupt because people were suing them for faulty lines.) We'll be using oil to keep the gym warm. The clock battery has been replaced, bleacher opening instructions have been posted on the ADA approved bleachers, and the lobby security camera is working. The Academy at Charlemont is scheduled to do a deep cleaning of the gym on May 20th. There is a new system for removing dust from the gym floor to make it less slippery; best done before playing. There have been numerous inquiries about private rental of the gym.

* Cowell Youth Winter Program – groups are going well. Diana heard some discussion from participants that the groups may wrap up in February. Norman will contact Fred to clarify that the program should run through March 12th.

* 18 and over basketball has yet to exceed 20 players so far this winter so there's no need to implement restrictions on who can play.

* Ping pong is running on Wednesday nights from 6 to 8 pm. It's open to ages 12 and up. Diana reports that tonight they have three tables running!

* Refrigerated ice rink – Tom Johnson and Peter Stevens gave us some additional information on ice rinks. They will visit a recently installed rink in Lenox and report back to us at a future meeting.

* Skating – Stefan is planning to have a smaller rink this year. He expects to have skating up and running by the end of the week!

* Volleyball – still struggling, sometimes no one shows; other times they have 3 to 5 people.

3--- Ongoing/new business

* Calendar – Norman is managing the on-line calendar

* Draw-around – we approve having the Hilltown Draw-around return to the Cowell. They will, as they have in the past, make a donation in lieu of paying to use the gym. They'll need the gym from April 23rd through April 26th.

* Pickleball fees – the committee discussed the possibility of moving to a pay-per-session format (eliminating the monthly rate available to those who play pickleball), or a tiered payment structure. But after getting input from the pickleball leadership team, the committee decided to continue to offer a monthly rate for those who play pickleball. The committee on a 3 to 1 vote raised the monthly pickleball fees from \$15 to \$16 for residents and from \$35 to \$40 for non-residents. Diana opposed keeping the monthly rate. (We also learned from the pickleball leadership team that the \$35 monthly rate approved in 2023 had never been implemented and that non-residents were paying \$30 a month.) The pickleball leadership team asked that the committee write a letter informing pickleball players of the new monthly rates. Dan and Norman will write the letter on behalf of the committee. These fees will be in effect for the remainder of the current indoor season. The committee will review fees for all programs prior to the beginning of the indoor season that begins in the Fall of 2026, including the possibility of a discount for seniors. Bodhi suggested that there be a fund that people would be invited to contribute to that would be used to provide a reduced fee for those who could not afford the regular fee.

* Pickleball – the pickleball leadership team presented an update on the changes implemented to the program. A Friday morning session was added and a 2nd session was added on Sunday. There are now eight sessions offered per week, five of which are drop-in sessions. In the first three weeks of the new format, there were fifty-one individual players (which included four or five new players and twelve couples). Twenty-five of those players paid the monthly fee, and the rest paid per-session.

4--- Next meeting on Wednesday, February 11th at 6:30 pm