

Reimagining Recreation Work Group

Notes from Meeting #1

December 15, 2020

- **Natural Assets**

- Trails: Kipp, Saddlemeier, Remington Trail, Partridge
- Bend in the River
- Golf Course
- Grasse River Blue Way Trail / Willow Island
 - Performance area to be added
 - Convenient for community activities
- Taylor Park
 - Beautiful place, really close to town
 - Affordable place to have a birthday party
 - Convenient
 - Kayak Rentals

>>>> *ACCESSIBILITY TO ALL FACILITIES IS GOOD AND CONTINUING TO IMPROVE*

- **Infrastructure**

- Community would like to see existing fields and resources being put to use year round
- Pavilion
 - This space can be used for things other than skating – revenue opportunities: outdoor expo, outdoor show, craft fairs, etc.
 - Parent community is very appreciated. Volunteers are appreciated. What are our limitations as far what we can do? We have a lot of parents who are willing to work on the pavilion and make renovations. Can we fundraise?
 - Can cost a lot of money to keep up. Programming has been add-ons. We are here to see if there are more efficient ways to spend money.
 - What can we do to make the pavilion more available? What can we do to draw people to the area. We don't have a robust space. Are there other towns doing things that we should be stealing our way.
- Outdoor Rink at Pavilion
 - This rink is loved by many in the community and many would like to see it renovated to the point of being usable again.
 - What happened to Priest Field by the Social Services building? This could be an additional outdoor rink for community use.

- Why is there only one outdoor rink in a community where there could be four?
 - If an outdoor rink skating day is promoted, along with a food truck event in the pavilion parking lot – some revenue could be brought in.
 - Taylor Park
 - Expand the Taylor Park Seasons beyond when college starts and ends. Would be nice if in coming college students could use Taylor Park in August/September.
 - Can cost a lot of money to keep up. Programming has been add-ons. We are here to see if there are more efficient ways to spend money.
 - Could Taylor Park be used as a venue for Baseball?
 - Priest Field
 - Could this area be used to build community tennis courts?
 - Grasse River Blue Way Trail
 - How do we market the Grasse River Scenic Park activities? Like Fishing.
 - Would like to see outdoor concerts on the Canton Island Park – supporting these programs once they are up and running is very important.
- **Needs / Gaps**
 - Recreation Department Operational Gaps
 - Gaps in coordination from the lack of a Director
 - Previous Director (Caitlin) started a Cross Country Skiing and Summer Recreation Program that did not continue
 - There should be one person running the pavilion and ice skating, and another person running a community wide recreation program.
 - If this is a vision group, we should think about promoting a couple of positions and working in a partnership to promote our programs.
 - Why is has it been same position? They seem like different skills and potentially different interests. Things can be too hockey focused and it sends a weird message that whoever runs the rink is who runs the rec department - it sends an odd message regardless of how well that person juggles.
 - Offer Boater and Hunter Safety Courses for the Community – what could the Riley Community Room at the Pavilion be used for other than Exercise Classes and holding rambunctious kids during hockey season?
 - Senior Programs / Opportunities
 - Teen Programs and Activities
 - Connecting communities to programming
 - Rensselaer Falls

- Pyrities
 - Morley
 - Crary Mills
- More difficult for organizations to host events in Canton without the support of Recreation
 - Canton Bicycle Club
 - Encouragement and support of events (Rushton) that make Canton a tourist destination and that bring the community together
- Latchkey Program – place where students can go when parents are working, how can this program utilize recreation?
- Programming that isn't necessarily sports related. Music programming, robotics, or other similar programs. Widen the scope to more than athletics. Summer theater used to be offered (1 week).
- Pavilion
 - Expand Free Skating Hours
 - Lack of coordination between all organizations/associations that use the pavilion.
- Trail use improvements: LWRP
- Bend in the River Suggested Programs
 - School field trips
 - Private Parties
 - Softball Leagues
 - Fishing
- Effective Summer Programs
 - Summer Swimming | Learn to Swim | Mommy & Me Swimming | Safety Swimming Programs (many water resources – Taylor Park and partners: pools at local colleges/universities). Important to Recreation Department, Canton and Rensselaer Falls Communities.
 - Loss of Adventures in Learning
- Effective Winter Programs
 - Snowshoeing
 - Cross Country Skiing
 - A past program that was appreciated was the Basketball Program. Minimally structured, brought Canton and surrounding communities members together, 4-6 week program, offered 2 nights a week, in between fall and winter sports.
 - We shouldn't just focus on hockey, but other winter programs.
- We don't have a functional tennis court other than St. Lawrence. We need public tennis courts for all ages. This could be utilized by the older community for tennis or pickleball.

- What about a basketball court in the middle town?
- Program affordability for all community members
 - Concerns about affordability for certain sports, specifically hockey, and how it leads to an exclusionary culture because of it.
 - If there are children in the community who want to take up a particular sport, a family's economic position should not be the reason a child cannot access that sport.
- Overall fundraising/utilization of volunteers and “satellite” recreation sites:
 - What are our limitations for fundraising? How do we go about it? What can we ask from the community?
 - Eagerness of people who are willing to help. Utilize neighboring communities that don't have their own resources.
 - Utilize what we have, would like to see more satelliting in places like Crary Mills to bring these kids into the program.
 - People show up. Let's utilize the time, resources, and services available. What can we do to communicate this?
 - How can we utilize the high schoolers to volunteer to coach or help with a theater program? Let's utilize others from neighboring towns that don't have these resources.

- **Partners**

- SUNY Canton, SUNY Potsdam, St. Lawrence University, Clarkson University
- Colleges have a lot of great facilities and resources but how much access does the community have? What can we do better to give access to things like this?
- How can we tap into using college age students in sports management as potential volunteers in the recreation department? Not ideal for work study assignments, but in what other ways could we engage college students as volunteers?