

JOHNSON SKATEPARK & BIKE TRACK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING/REMOTE ATTENDANCE BY ZOOM
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2023

Present:

Committee Members: Greg Fatigate, Casey Romero, Howard Romero, George Swanson (Zoom), Rick Aupperlee (Zoom), James Whitehill

Others: Joey Handy, Kayla Handy

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Casey called the meeting to order at 5:34.

2. Draft Minutes of March 8, 2023 Meeting

Howard moved and George seconded to approve the minutes of March 8, 2023. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

3. Update: 'Crete Project

Casey said we got an estimate last August of about \$40K for the half pipe. Pierre Hall says prices have stabilized and some have dropped a little. Pierre felt if we wanted to we could talk about going out to bid this year. We could also consider doing more fundraising this summer, doing site work this fall, and doing construction next spring. We also need to consider future improvements but want to include Pierre's ideas for that. One consideration for the future is the poor health or old age of many of the maple trees. Yesterday Ian suggested we could put in the start of what he called a concrete plaza. We could put flat concrete up to about the end of the tall quarter pipe just to establish more concrete. Kayla asked if anything like that would be a future project. Casey confirmed that it's not part of the current 'Crete project.

Casey said the half pipe is in terrible shape. It hasn't been analyzed formally. Maybe we need to take it down now. Joey said he thinks we should wait. People skate it quite a bit. A lot of people who use the skatepark don't know what is going on with the 'Crete project. They think nothing is happening. If the half pipe is taken down and it seems like nothing new is going in people will be unhappy. Kayla said she works with a couple of people who use the skatepark and they have similar feelings to what Joey described. It was agreed to keep the half pipe up as long as it is safe. James said he will take a look at it. Joey said he was just there and many people were on it.

Casey said Pierre thought the roughly \$27K we have was enough to start going out for bids on the half pipe. Pierre no longer builds but he has people he could recommend. She is personally hesitant to jump into it because that \$27K includes \$10K of our reserve funds. She would be more comfortable with doing more fundraising this summer before starting the project in fall or spring.

James asked what the intent is for the reserve fund. What are we saving it for? Casey said the potential uses are pretty wide open. James said it has only grown in the time he has been on the committee. His opinion is that if it is the right time to use it, we should use it.

Greg said there are people at the park wondering if this is ever going to happen. We could put it out to bid and have a build date and start laying groundwork and telling people when it will happen and also that we still need to raise money. He is guessing we will have a hard time finding anyone to build it. There is no harm in putting it out to bid and seeing if we can get someone to do it for the amount we

have and putting information out about our plans so it doesn't seem so theoretical. General discussion included the point that we invite people to meetings but they don't come.

Joey said if we need a reserve he would suggest maybe reducing it by half. He would be willing to do another event at the skatepark. The last one was successful. Kayla said we could even just have a jam with a raffle. Those types of events are successful.

Howard said he thinks the sooner we can start the better. He is all for using as much of the reserve funds as we can.

George said he would like to see like \$5K left in the reserve. He thinks we should strive for 3 qualified bids. We can choose our ideal starting date but probably when we can actually start will be 6 months down the road. Rick said he agrees with George.

Casey said she is comfortable with what others are suggesting.

Casey said the event at Moog's will be very family friendly. It will be all outside. Tom Moog wants it to be in full summer. Tyler of Darkside sold his shops but he wants to do something. He had the idea of something at Bolton. Could the type of event Kayla and Joey are talking about be done at Bolton?

Kayla said if we have it at the Johnson park we are celebrating Johnson and attracting locals. We want to make sure we tell locals that the committee values them. The event doesn't have to cost anything. Just by having a raffle and an entry fee we could get at least a couple of hundred dollars.

Casey said her only qualm is that we will be starting the coaching program in mid-June. She doesn't know how much of her time it will take up. It is new and she doesn't know what kind of supports will be needed. So she has reservations about her time.

James said Bolton is indoors so we could do something earlier there. Casey said Tyler is involved in his business transition until around the end of June. Kayla said she feels we would get a different group of people at Bolton. Howard asked how we would advertise something like that. Kayla said once the park is open there can be posters and flyers there. Until it opens we can only advertise on social media. Casey said if we had an event there in the fall we could advertise it at the park.

Casey said the last couple of years we have had a small event on Green Up Day, with people helping to clean up. Should we think about doing that? It is the first Saturday in May. The weather might not be good. Kayla said we could have a rain date. She thinks the people who show up would be local and willing to change plans at the last minute. James said he thinks that would be good. There is a lot of site work that it would be good to have extra hands for. Casey suggested possibly having the Jam then, but Joey said it might be too soon to get donated prizes. It was discussed that we could have the Jam later, but give away raffle tickets and promote the Jam at the Green Up Day event. Kayla suggested the Jam could be in June or maybe on Memorial Day.

George asked if we have ever done a 50-50 raffle. Casey said we can provide merchandise and she thinks that is the way to go. Others agreed.

It was agreed to plan for a Green Up Day cleanup event, a Jam around early June, an event at Moog's in the summer and an event at Bolton in the fall.

4. Update: Let's Roll Program

Casey said she ordered 5 decks online to be loaners. She is working with Dean on registration. We won't know about the \$5K grant until sometime in May so we are just going to go on with the small program until we learn anything different. The cost to participants is \$30 per kid, with discounts for more than one kid. There will be scholarships for kids whose families can't afford the fee. We are asking parents be present. We haven't decided about an incentive for parents to come. We really want parents there but she is still uncertain whether we will require them to come or just encourage it.

James asked, we won't make a profit from that program? Casey said no.

Casey said Copley offers multi-sport helmets for \$12 and they will work with us. Outreach and PR for Let's Roll has started in a small way. There will be notices in the Johnson column of the News & Citizen and on Front Porch Forum. James said he will put it on Instagram. Howard said we should put up a poster at the park.

5. Site Issues & Security

Casey said Joey was able to remove more graffiti from the sign. She will start conferring every week with Ashton about what he will be doing. The sheriff's department deputy who was the recreation coordinator for about a month and is also a basketball coach at the college (David Ellerbee) said the sheriff's department would like to help with the skatepark. There is another deputy who is a skateboarder.

Howard said we now have a second camera. Casey said the camera angle was too narrow and the action at the sign wasn't in range to capture the vandalism. She thinks we can get additional cameras from the sheriff's department and it would be foolish not to use them. James agreed. He said issues will continue happening if there is no punishment. What is the goal of getting more cameras? What will we do if we find out who did something? Howard said we will get the sheriff's department involved. Casey said Ian says that in Newport there is more of a culture of skater-enforced respect and better behavior. But we are in a high-crime area, whereas Newport is more isolated. James asked if the response to vandalism will be the same as with drinking and smoking. Kayla said vandalism is an enforcable crime; but often there's no way to prove who did something. If we show we are serious about repercussions, Casey hopes more people will be willing to self-enforce. Rick suggested it might helpful to promote a little community policing. Casey said she does hear from people who live in the area.

6. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:19.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths