

JOHNSON SKATEPARK & BIKE TRACK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING/REMOTE ATTENDANCE BY ZOOM  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2023

**Present:**

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

Others: Matthew Farnan, Kasey Whitten, Ryan VanDyk, Alexis Daniels, Ashton Schriber, Andrew D'Aversa, Ethan Whaley

**Absent:** Rick Aupperlee

**Note:** All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

**1. Call to Order**

Casey called the meeting to order at 5:32.

**2. Proposed Site & Maintenance Work: Skills Terrain, Student Assistant**

Greg said he wants to give the skills park a more maintained pathway and take out some little-used features. He doesn't think it will require a lot of excavation to make a 5 ft. path. He will overlay the path with stone and fabric. Crushed bluestone dust makes the best surface. His thought was to work mostly on the perimeter track, not the lines going through the area, but we can decide what pathway makes the most sense based on usage. He can do 1200 linear feet. He will be able to fill in some holes with waste material.

Casey said Greg's estimate for this work was \$8,430. We have \$6,386 available from older grants. James said he thinks improving the bike terrain is more important than other possible uses of the grant funds. Casey said the difference between what we have on hand and Greg's proposal is about \$2,044. The town has informally agreed to do the trucking. If we get Johnson Farm and Garden to give us landscape fabric at cost, then the amount left to come out of our budget would be about \$1600. We need to be mindful of the fact that we don't have any extra funds budgeted for repairs and maintenance in FY23. Greg said he believes he could provide a discount if necessary. He asked if Casey has checked to see if Percy's pit would donate materials. Casey said not yet. Greg said he can see them donating  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch stone, but not bluestone dust.

**Howard moved and George seconded to accept the proposal from Greg for skills park site and maintenance work.**

Matthew Farnan asked if the committee has data on how often the skills park gets used. Greg said only anecdotal data and observations of tread wear compared to the pump track. His idea with this project is to create a more welcoming space.

Matthew said his main interest is in trying to get financing for repairs. Greg said the grant Casey talked about can only be used for the bike terrain, so using it for this project is not taking from anything else. He is interested in keeping the cost to what is available in grant funds so we are not taking away from the process of adding concrete.

Andrew D'Aversa said he is curious about why the skatepark hasn't received more money in recent years. That question was deferred to general Public Input discussion.

**The motion was passed.**

Casey said there is a proposal to have a student assistant for Ashton. She has had very preliminary discussion with one high school student who skates a lot at the park, Ronan Stefanski. He is interested. We need to confirm that we can pay an underage person through stipends or some other means. The town has a policy of only hiring people who are 18 or older. The assistant would deal with trash and site maintenance. She also would like the person to come to committee meetings.

Greg asked what the downsides are. Casey said there are none. Greg asked if Ashton wants someone working with him. Ashton said yes. Committee members said they see no problem with this proposal. Matt said he thinks Ronan would be a good pick.

**Greg moved and Howard seconded to hire an assistant for Ashton, subject to selectboard approval.**

Ethan Whaley asked what the assistant's responsibilities would be. Casey said trash and site maintenance – no power tool use. Ethan asked, no building structures? Casey said not with power tools. The person would be under her direct supervision and would work with Ashton. Andrew asked if there is any way the position could be broadened to include some light building. That would be great skills building for the person in the position. Howard said we have an age problem. Casey said we can't allow use of power tools for someone that age. Howard said that is because of the town's insurance policy. Casey said that needs to be double-checked.

**The motion was passed.**

**3. *Draft Minutes of May 10, 2023 Meeting***

**Howard moved to approve the minutes of May 10, 2023, Greg seconded and the motion was passed with James not voting as he had temporarily left the room.**

**4. *Directors' Orders***

Casey said directors' orders totalled \$1051. Most of that was for mowing, site work and portolet service. Not included in the orders was rehab of 3 picnic tables. With Howard and Ashton doing the work we were able to rehab the tables at a cost of just \$300 for supplies.

**5. *Laraway Report***

George said Laraway just celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Graduation is next week. The school garden is now 25,000 sq. ft. Hopefully it will provide produce for students, the kitchen and the food shelf. Eleven new chicks hatched at the school, so they have about 16 chickens now.

**6. *Public Input***

Casey invited public input. Matthew said he works at Smugglers' Notch and also works with a 501(c)(3) in New Jersey. He moved to Johnson in 2014 and has been skating at the park ever since. He cares deeply about it. He is grateful for the work the committee put in to make the space. He thinks there should be more community engagement like this. He did a survey of skatepark users and got about 36 responses. He asked what additions or repairs people wanted to see at the park. He also provided space for suggestions, comments, or concerns. He shared survey results with the committee. The majority of respondents asked for repairs to existing features. The features are still mostly usable but are degrading over time due to weather, etc. There was a lot of variety in what people said they wanted to see at the park. Committee members can look through the responses later. A lot of people would like to see a small portion of funds going to repairing existing structures.

Matthew said there are 5 moveable rectangular structures that would be easy to repair. He could do the work himself with another volunteer. The wood is rotting but the angle iron can be salvaged. He

thinks that would be a great place to start with repairs. Those repairs would be the cheapest and would require the least skill. He knows a lot of money is being kept for the 'crete project but it would be great if there could be some small repairs or rebuilds. The 5 structures he is talking about get used a lot. They are skateable but not as safe as they once were and new skaters get a little intimidated when they see worn things. He talked to the people who built the Warren skatepark and they stressed that in Vermont concrete is the way to go. The repairs he is talking about wouldn't be concrete; the structures would still be wood.

Ryan VanDyk said some of the feature suggestions from the survey were fairly easy, low cost ideas, like a slappy curb. Howard asked if those are moveable. Matthew said not usually, but we could make one that was moveable. He can think of places at the park where we could put one permanently.

There was a question about whether the committee is thinking of preserving the china bank on the mini ramp. Greg said he doesn't think the committee has had any discussions about dismantling specific features. James said the mini ramp is deteriorating; that is why the committee is going with a half pipe for the next concrete feature. Greg said the hope is that a concrete mini bowl will be in place before the mini ramp goes.

Matthew asked if there is a design or a cost estimate for the concrete bowl. Casey said yes. We have roughly \$29-30K available. Project designer Pierre Hall felt that was enough to go out to bid. We have put out a Request for Proposals. We have had no responses yet. We would love to do construction this fall. Spring construction is also an option. The town website has the RFP and all the committee minutes.

Greg said he is not sure if the china bank will be able to stay if the mini ramp is removed because he is not sure it has sufficient independent foundational support.

One member of the public said a concrete bowl would be great, but it doesn't make sense to have a beautiful concrete bowl with the rest of the skatepark falling apart. Someone else commented that the bowl can only accommodate a few people at a time, so it is good that there is other space in the park.

Committee members described what the new bowl will be like. Casey said she can put the plans from Pierre for the concrete bowl on the bulletin board at the skatepark.

A member of the public said he would like to see a little more freedom for skateboarders to be caretakers of the park. Several people said there is interest in volunteering. Casey said the issue is liability. We can't give carte blanche to volunteers to do whatever they want. Greg said if people who are over 18 want to volunteer, the committee is open to hearing proposals, but we need to know what is being done and make sure things are not being added that may not fit into the committee's plans or may cause insurance issues.

Casey suggested a working group to plan repair work. Greg suggested an organized volunteer day. Casey said she thinks the first step is a planning meeting to discuss what community members want to do at the park and what it might cost. Then the committee can look into getting materials.

Matthew said he can determine what lumber would be needed for the 5 features he suggests repairing. Howard encouraged him to do that. Greg asked if he could take pictures as well. Matt said he is

suggesting that the rebuilt structures would be exactly the same but with new wood and in some cases wood extended so it is flush with the angle iron.

Casey said we not only need to be concerned about liability with regard to safety of structures but also with regard to the safety of people working. A member of the public asked if volunteers could sign a waiver. Casey said waivers don't mean much. Howard said we will have to look into that.

Greg suggested that Matthew get measurements and determine what he thinks is needed to repair the 5 structures, then send him the information. The two of them can work together to prepare information for the next committee meeting.

Howard said the problem the committee has is money. Our goal eventually is to have everything at the park made of concrete. If skatepark users could find money, that would be great.

Greg said we can start by figuring out what needs to get fixed and developing a plan. He suggested that if Matt is comfortable talking to his employer, Smugglers' Notch, there may be waste material available there that would be useful to us if they were willing to donate it.

Matthew said he thinks rebuilding one of the 5 boxes would probably cost about \$200-250. Casey said we have a budget for repairs and maintenance but it is not very big. But we have always found ways to do things. We can't get grant money for repairs and maintenance.

A member of the public said community trail building days are a huge thing in the mountain bike community. He thinks we could bring that same idea to the skatepark. A volunteer day seems like a great idea.

Howard said he thinks there are quite a few mothers who come to the park with their kids who would be willing to do something to help. Casey said hopefully the Let's Roll program for elementary age kids will help bring in new users and parents.

Matthew said he would like to be a community advocate the committee can reach out to with questions about what the community is thinking.

Greg said he thinks the idea of a subcommittee is good. We need to figure out what we can ask of a subcommittee. We can discuss that over the next few meetings.

Howard said if anyone has ideas about fundraising for the park on social media, the committee is interested in hearing them. Matthew said he is involved with getting prizes and funds for the 501(c)(3) he works with so he could help with that. *(Greg left about 6:30.)*

Ethan said he and Joey planned the fundraising jam last year with help from Ian and the committee and are open to doing it again, but they need help with planning, etc. Some people offered to help. *(Community members left at 6:40.)*

**7. 'Crete Project: RFP, Events, Other**

Casey said there is no news about the 'crete project other than that the RFP was published.

**8. Rec Coordinator's Report**

There was no rec coordinator report.

**9. Let's Roll Program: June Cancellation, Grant Budget, Next Steps**

Casey said we will advertise for another coach for the Let's Roll program. We will probably have to pay more than \$19/hour. That person may need an assistant. Joey Handy is willing to be the assistant. Casey was pretty generous in the Let's Roll budget for that. We have already bought the skateboards. She would like to get t-shirts to sell and stickers to give away. Those things will probably cost around \$600. We are doing in fine in terms of the \$5K in grant funds.

**10. Executive Session: Employee Resignation**

**Howard moved to go into executive session to discuss an employee resignation, James seconded, the motion was passed and the committee went into executive session at 6:42.** The committee consented out of executive session at 6:45.

**Howard moved to accept Ian Hutchings' resignation, James seconded and the motion was passed.**

**11. Adjourn**

**Howard moved to adjourn, James seconded, the motion was passed and the meeting was adjourned at 6:46.**

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*

UNAPPROVED