

JOHNSON SKATEPARK & BIKE TRACK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
THE STUDIO STORE, 2 LOWER MAIN ST. EAST, JOHNSON
REMOTE ATTENDANCE BY ZOOM
WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024

Present:

Committee Members: Casey Romero, Howard Romero, James Whitehill (via Zoom), Alexis Daniels, Greg Fatigate

Others: Sheila White

Absent: Rick Aupperlee, George Swanson

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order*

Casey called the meeting to order at 5:37.

2. *Draft Minutes of April 10, 2024*

Howard moved to approve the minutes of April 10, 2024, Alexis seconded and the motion was passed. (Sheila White arrived at 5:37.)

3. *FEMA Updates: Rebuilding, Mitigation*

Casey said she talked to Ron Rodjenski this afternoon. Regarding recognizing the damage to the bike park, FEMA seems to think they may need to come back to Johnson because they may have missed something. Hopefully that will be sometime this month. There is no update regarding mitigation and the skatepark ramp question. We got quotes for fence repair. FEMA will only pay around \$5K to repair it as it was, but if we think redoing that first section with stronger posts is a good idea we can submit that idea and see if they go for it.

Committee members agreed it makes sense to find out if they will pay for making the fence stronger but it is not critical. Casey said right now we have someone scheduled to do the fence repair in June. She wants to get it done. She can ask Ron how long it might take to go through the process of finding out whether we can get additional mitigation money and let him know that we would also be happy just to repair it as it is.

Casey said we wanted to clear out behind the trees on the side of the fence by the houses and make it so there is room to get behind there to do maintenance work. She talked to someone who could do that work. The Vermont Dept. of Labor wage range for that type of work would be around \$19-20 per hour. This person would do it for \$20/hr. It might take 10 hours or a little longer.

Howard moved to authorize spending up to \$400 for clearing vegetation along the fence, Greg seconded and the motion was passed.

4. *Directors' Orders & Green Up Day Report*

Alexis said she thought Green Up Day went pretty well. Not many people showed up but a lot of work got done. The park looks a lot better now.

Casey said the portalet arrived. She has been saying to the company that we deserve credit for service lost last July and the fact that they never picked up the flood-damaged portalet, so they said our first month will be free.

Pierre Hall submitted a bill for doing mitigation design work, including coming up with concrete vs. wood cost comparison figures for FEMA. If FEMA accepts the expense they will pay 75% of it. The

bill was for \$960. His rate is \$60/hr. Casey didn't want to pay the bill without talking it over with the committee. James asked if this amount will be included in the mitigation funding FEMA is providing. Casey said no; this is an expense that is eligible for 75% FEMA reimbursement. The committee agreed Casey should pay the bill.

5. *Options for Change: Administrative Tasks & Committee Structure*

Casey said this can be tabled until the next meeting.

6. *Laraway Report*

Casey said she was grateful for the box of apples Laraway gave us for Green Up Day. Healthy Lamoille Valley contributed \$50 that bought other snacks.

7. *Site: Dealing with DIY Ramps; Crime Report: Rail Damage*

Casey said a youth pushed the metal grind ramp off its posts so it is not usable. The estimated cost for repair is around \$600 if we can get the unit to the welders. She reported it to the sheriff's department. They are familiar with the youth responsible. They have also been in contact with the mother of another youth who watched the vandalism but did not participate. The mother wanted to make things right and community work was suggested. It seems like that will proceed with the youth who observed. Casey wanted to see how the committee felt about having someone do community service work in the park. The mother of the observer youth would supervise him. Greg asked what the nature of the work would be – trash pickup, etc? Casey said yes. He might help with the fence work, picking up tree branches. The committee agreed that would be fine.

Casey said people have been building and bringing in DIY ramps. Someone brought in a wood desk with a metal rim. She felt it didn't belong there for safety and design reasons. We also don't want objects that are going to float away. The town crew took the desk away. They asked if they should remove the other items and Casey said the committee would talk about it and get back to them. A skatepark user built and brought in a concrete block feature topped with granite, which is probably sturdy. But people need to come to us first before putting things in the park and the committee needs to give permission. What does the committee want to do? Do we put up a sign or two asking people not to put things in the park without telling us?

Alexis said she doesn't know if a sign would stop them. Howard said at least it would alert them. There are people from other towns who don't know about this committee. Alexis said she feels most people know they aren't supposed to bring in their own ramps. She thinks it is just happening because of the lack of things to skate. People are trying to get creative.

Greg asked, while we are waiting for FEMA money, is there a way to have some tolerance for DIY items? He thinks there is an upper limit to how much will show up. He thinks the granite-topped ledge is safe after some modification, and won't float away. Other items with wood and nails that can float could be problems. Is there some assurance that FEMA will come through and we will have a concrete park? Casey said they have committed to coming through with up to \$136K – 75% of the amount of damage plus mitigation recognized so far.

Greg suggested that if something shows up we could ensure that it is sound and if it is we could anchor it in the asphalt. Casey said she doesn't see why that wouldn't work. James agreed. He feels we should be a little more lenient now. Greg said it would be with the understanding that the DIY items will come out when the concrete comes in. James agreed.

Greg said he has a masonry drill we can use for anchoring items. Sheila asked if the holes put in the pavement would destroy what people would use to skate on once those pieces are gone. Committee

members said no; we could fill in the holes. Alexis said she thought the asphalt was being removed anyway. Greg said his hope is that it will be. Casey said no decision has been made yet about removing the rest of the asphalt.

Casey said Ronan Stefanski was interested in storing loose materials at his place, which would prevent people from using them to build things.

Greg said he thinks we need signage with some guidance. Casey said she thinks if they come to us first that is enough.

Greg said at some point towards midsummer we need a meeting where skaters are encouraged to attend (or perhaps the meeting can be held at the skatepark) so we can get finalized placement of where to bolt things down. We shouldn't have the meeting until after the half pipe is done because that will change where people might want things.

There was general agreement that the concrete and granite ramp is stable and acceptable at the park for the time being. Greg suggested cutting off a piece of granite that overhangs on one side to make it safer. Casey said she will refer the builder of the piece to Howard and Greg to discuss that.

James suggested that after we get the concrete we should give people about a month's warning that if they don't remove the items they placed in the park they will be donated or trashed.

Casey said one reason Ronan Stefanski is taking materials from the park is so he can use them to build things that can be used privately on other sites.

8. *Bike Skills Park Plan*

The committee worked on the skills park map for the mitigation plan.

9. *Executive Session: Personnel Compensation*

Howard moved to go into executive session to discuss personnel compensation, Greg seconded, the motion was passed and the committee entered executive session at 6:26. The committee consented out of executive session at 6:35.

Howard moved to increase Ashton Schriber's salary to \$17/hour, effective May 9, with acknowledgement of his growth as an employee and suggestions for future improvement, James seconded and the motion was passed.

10. *Other Business*

It was agreed to meet on the first Wednesday of the month at the library until the municipal building is available.

11. *Adjourn*

Greg moved to adjourn at 6:37, seconded by Howard and the motion was passed.