Minutes of the January 8th, 2018

Winslow Park Commission Meeting

6:30 PM

@ Freeport Town Hall

As produced by Neil Lyman

Winslow Park Manager and Winslow Park Commission Secretary

In Attendance- Robin Barron, Karissa Davan, Carla Dupuis, Lucy Lloyd, George Connick, Nancy Marquis, Doug Reighley, Neil Lyman

Absent- Steve James, Kim Swett

Meeting convened at 6:30

The Minutes of the November 13th, 2017 meeting were approved

**Old Business:**

* Karissa Davan gave an update on her work to find a suitable online reservation program for the park. She has been looking into the Maine State Parks reservation program. She informed the commission that they are interested in working with the park/town. The system has been granted awards and also included a call support center. There is a $1.95 charge, paid to the system operators (the state), per rented night that can be charged on top of our fees or absorbed into the cost of the campsite per night. The reservation system would handle all payments. Karissa informed the commission that the first step would be to set up a conference call with the system operators, herself, Carla Dupuis, Neil Lyman and any other interested persons from the commission.
  + Neil Lyman asked if there was a yearly or monthly fee on top of the $1.95 charge. Karissa said she did not believe so after reviewing literature associated with the system.
  + Robin Barron commented that the Maine tourism association also has developed a system which may be worth looking into.
  + Carla Dupuis commented that it would be good to be associated with the states park system as Winslow operates much in the same manner.
  + Neil asked about Winslow Park employee access to the reservations. Robin Barron informed the commission that park staff needs full access as he has tried reservation systems without this and it was problematic. This would need to be a question for the system operators.
  + George Connick asked about customer access to booking exact, specific sites. Robin and Karissa both felt that this was part of the system.
  + Karissa will pursue a conference call and e-mail all interested parties.
* A discussion on the roles of the commission/town/park manager etc… was opened. Neil Lyman had previously sent out the towns administrative codes associated with the park as well as the parks administrative policy.
  + George Connick provided some historical information pertinent to roles and responsibilities associated with the park and the trust which created it as follows.
    - The parks property was purchased, as a farm, in 1900 by Delia Winslow. Delia’s Daughter, Adelaide Harb, Grew up spending summers on the property. By the 1950’s there were a large amount of inquiries to Adelaide about developing the property, one of which was Central Maine Power in order to build a power plant. Adelaide was so disturbed and annoyed by the inquiries that she deeded the property to her attorney, Paul Powers, in order for him to figure out a way to protect the property. Mr. Powers, working with Adelaide, sought out an organization which could properly protect and operate the property within guidelines laid out by Adelaide. These guidelines included preserving the properties natural beauty, not developing the property and that the property be a public use area for camping and leisure to benefit the inhabitants of Freeport. After contacting a number of organizations which Mr. Powers felt qualified to operate the property, all of whom refused, the Town of Freeport agreed to take on the responsibility in 1953. This agreement, however, had a stipulation that the town would not contribute any funding to the operation or property. Adelaide at this time agreed to put up a sum of money in trust to back the preservation. A resident named George Soule, whom lived directly adjacent to the park and ran a duck decoy shop, agreed to be the head of the park commission and help with operations. Any park income at this time, much the same as today, would come from user fees only. Paul Powers stayed on as the Parks Trustee and overseer of the property from this point until the mid 1990’s. The Park Commission acted as an advisory group to be the eyes and ears to the community and make suggestions on big picture operations to the Town Council. Throughout the history of the park, the parks trustee has been the key player in major issues in which said trustee has felt that things going on within the operations of the park by the town are not in the best interest of the trust and park.
      * The first major example of this came in 1983 when the town, backed by the commission, had mapped out a plan to expand the road and develop parking and a major boat ramp at the end of the point. Mr. Powers attended a town meeting expressing his opposition to this plan which he felt violated the trust and Adelaide Harbs intent. He suggested that he, as trustee, would need to take legal action to regain all control of the park if such actions were taken by the town. The town subsequently dropped the plan.
      * The second example of these roles of power concerning the park happened in 1987 when local residents complained that the waterfront camping area was an eye sore and should be eliminated as well as campsites drastically reduced. Mr. Powers became involved with his concern being that the camping aspect of the park, as well the views associated was one of Adelaide Harbs main preservation concerns and that eliminating this aspect would be a direct violation of the park trust. The subject was subsequently dropped after a long legal battle.
      * A third example of these type of events came in the mid 90’s when plans surfaces to move a large barn from the harbor area to the park. Rumors surfaced that there was intent to run the L.L. Bean kayak school out of this facility, although L.L. Bean denied such a plan. Mr. French, whom Paul Powers had handed over trustee powers to, as well as his law partner, stepped in claiming that such actions were in violation of the trust. The town replied by stating that Mr. French had been improperly appointed as trustee and was subsequently deemed not the legal trustee. William Plouffe, an attorney from Freeport, took over the duties at this time and maintained that commercial operations were not allowed at the park. The barn was never moved or any commercial businesses allowed to operate from the park property.
      * The parks trustee has historically had a final say, be it legal if need be, to the best interest of the park and to-date each trustee has upheld this responsibility. The town council acts, with consideration to the recommendations of the commission, on large projects or any instances which the park changes in appearance or operations. The commission has historically been an advisory committee. The Town/Park staff deals with day to day operations of the park as a public park and campground.
      * Nancy Marquis asked how the private houses were developed within the property. George explained that Adelaide Harbs mother had looked into large scale housing on the property and sold two lots. This development was all ended when Adelaide gained control of the property.

**New Business:**

* A brief discussed began concerning the legitimacy of people who have year after year seasonal campsites at the park. George Connick informed the board that this question had gone to park trustees in the past and that if it were to be challenged that questions could be raised as to the legitimacy of this practice. The issue was not pursued. It was decided that there are some concerns with commission members regarding this issue and that it should be discussed further with more information present. Neil Lyman will put together any historical information as well as financial information regarding seasonal sites.
* Neil Lyman went over the Winslow Park Yearly Report for 2017 noting that well cash flow and campsite rentals were above or stable with recent years, that day use had seen a 10% decline from the previous year. This could be because of weather, brown tail moth issues or an unknown problem. The commission should keep an eye on this statistic to make sure all involved are best serving the community. The park report is attached as a supporting document.
* Neil also noted that while the Winslow Park Ordinance was revised in May of 2014 and the commission voted to suggest to the town council to adopt the changes, it never went to the Town Council. This needs to be revisited and sent to the council. Doug Reighley, the commissions liaison to the council will help with moving this forward.

**Other Business:**

* Doug Reighley introduced himself as the new Town Councilor and the liaison between the council and the Park Commission.
* There are some questions about reappointments to the commission. Neil to get specifics and contact those affected.
* Next meeting set for February 12th
* An executive session was called at 8:05 PM and Neil Lyman left the room. The executive session ended at 8:24 PM After discussion the Winslow Park Commission voted to approve the allocation of a performance bonus in the amount of $7,500 to Neil Lyman for job performance exceeding expectations relating to managing the wind storm clean-up, Pound of Tea building work, staff management, substantial long-term cost savings due to diverse knowledge & many other activities.

**Public Comment:**

Meeting adjourned 8:25