

Falmouth Parks and Community Programs Advisory Council (PACPAC)
Meeting Tuesday, 1/19/2021

Present: Karen Jones, Lucky D'Ascanio, Janet Dye, Doug Zlatin, Scott Simmonds, Jeff Mason, John Lane, Absent: Melanie Collins,

Meeting called to order by Karen Jones 4:07 pm

November 17, 2020 PACPAC minutes motion to approve minutes accepted with one member abstaining.

Warm welcome to **Scott Simmonds, new member**. Scott moved to Falmouth a year ago.

Melissa Price chose not to re-join the committee for a second term. The committee again has one vacancy.

Parks Division Report: Jeff Mason

Virtual Santa visit was a group effort that Parks staff helped with.

Equipment change for the season went smoothly.

Huston Skating rink on Falmouth Road started off great in December for two weeks but storms and unseasonal warm temps have been hard on ice. Hopefully, after this past weekend's rainy weather, and this week's temperature dips we will have some good ice.

Recent windstorms have caused additional work and clean up for the Parks Division at various locations.

Spotlight on Staff:

New hire but longtime volunteer and Falmouth community member, Caleb Hemphill joined the Open Space Division as part-time Property Steward. This filled the vacancy left by Sami Wolf's departure late last summer. Hiring was put off until recently due to the hiring/spending freeze put in place because of the pandemic situation. Approval to move forward with a part-time temporary hire through June 30, 2021 with the hope that a permanent part-time position will make it through the budget process for FY22. Trail maintenance has been covered by primarily by volunteers to date. This position is a Property Steward (trail boss) position. We are lucky to have hired Caleb, who has been on the Land Trust, former Falmouth Trails Committee, LMAC and has been a long-time volunteer with Falmouth's Open Space program. He has built most kiosks you see around town at trailheads. He has jumped in full steam and will be a tremendous asset.

Community Program Division Report: Lucky D'Ascanio

Staff worked to adapt Winter/Holiday traditions to the times. The Virtual Tree Lighting with an online video and help from the Fire Department (ride for Santa) was well received by the community. Letters to Santa were dropped off at the Santa Mailbox in the Mason-Motz lobby and a goody bag filled with crafts, cookies for decorating and reindeer food could be picked up by children and families at Mason-Motz Community Center.

The before school/after school extended child care program is full and going well while supporting families during hybrid learning at Falmouth Schools. The Ski program began last week on a positive note and with smaller numbers (1 student per bus seat). The department moved the ski trips to Wednesday's (currently a virtual day for all students), so participants can

leave earlier and enjoy skiing during the day. Programming for Community activities and classes is still streamlined. The programs running are successful and safe. Recently added is a new program, the SOAR Program; Senior Adventures in Outdoor Recreation. A first adventure took place at River Point Conservation Area lead by Amanda and Caleb last Thursday and 3 other adventures are planned through April. Senior program staff are still furloughed and it is hoped, that as the vaccine is more widely distributed, we will bring these staff members back. Denise Macaronas, part time Senior Program Coordinator, and Kim Doyon., Senior Services Coordinator, are missed.

“What PACPAC means to Me” exercise: Committee Members

At the request of committee member, Janet Dye, at our November meeting, all committee members took a moment to speak briefly about what being on this committee means to them. The exercise was especially helpful for the two new committee members, Doug Zlatin and Scott Simmonds and Lucky as well. Some highlights of responses included the following comments:

1. Connection with community still there even through pandemic. Good things happen even in hard times.
2. It is a pleasure to serve as a connection between the Town offices and the citizens. It's a 2-way street; we bring concerns/issues/accolades to the group and we share what's happening/what's new with residents.
3. On a personal level I am a more informed citizen knowing what is going on in the Town
4. A way to give back to the community. I have already learned a lot about what Falmouth has to offer that I did not realize prior to joining the committee and getting involved.
5. Proud to be part of the shaping of our community from determining what uses a park will have (Community Park), offering input on ordinance development (pets in parks and public lands), programs and opportunities for all ages – youth to senior citizens.

Lucky stated her takeaway from this conversation was that even though the department thinks they are doing a good job getting the “word out”, clearly we need to do more. Currently the department uses its registration software list serve, facebook, and various mailing lists to “promote”. Scott suggested sharing posts between the Town Facebook page and Community Programs FB page more often. She is working with Erin Cadigan in Administration to promote the department better.

Park Metrics Update: Lucky D’Ascanio

Lucky went over some data from a Parks Metrics report that was run by the Finance Director comparing Falmouth to other cities and towns across the nation with populations between 10,000-25,000. The data showed that while Falmouth’s population is just a little over 12,000, the town boasts many amenities for residents.

The committee supports the idea that this information be made available to the public via a “Parks & Recreation Corner” in the Falmouth Focus to highlight the department, to spread the word to more residents and encourage more participation.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 4:00pm via ZOOM