

TOWN OF RED HOOK RECREATION COMMISSION

7340 South Broadway, Red Hook, NY 12571

Phone: 845-758-4625 Fax: 845-758-5313

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Monday, 9 January 2023

John Deere Gas Gator Engine Mounts

One of the four engine mounting bolts has snapped off inside the block. This must be extracted professionally in the spring. We do not have the budget funds to do it now. This Gator is used to groom the ballfields every day. Howie Callies monitored the other three bolts and secured them with Loctite to prevent them from loosening.

John Deere Diesel Gator

When colder temperatures hit, the diesel gator has been hard starting in the mornings. We rebuilt and replaced the starter clutch on this Gator earlier this year, so the problem is something else. It appears that one or more on the glow plugs has failed. I ordered new ones and will install them when they come in.

Ted Kudzy Bench

The bench arrived on 7 December from Keystone Ridge Designs. We unpacked the bench and trailered it to St. Margaret's Home for storage until installation in the spring. As noted in earlier reports, the concrete pad for the bench is already installed by the basketball court.

I will email pictures of the bench to the Rec Commission. I will also send photographs to Ted's daughter.

2023 Budget

The 2023 Recreation Budget is available for review at the town website. I believe that the approved budget will meet our needs for 2023 unless we have major equipment failures. The Rec Park Capital Equipment Budget reflects the purchase of electric mowers instead of gas or diesel mowers for the future.

Skate Park Improvements – Phase Two

The installation of the new equipment is complete. One modification was required because the southeast corner of the blacktop pad was not level. Therefore, the ramp was installed at the nearest level point. This did not make any difference to the use of the ramp.

We may have to install plywood sheets along the grind boxes along the west side if skaters tend to lean on or run into the chain link fence. Time will tell if this is necessary.

The damaged grass areas around the pickleball courts will be repaired in the spring. We will bring in topsoil from our pile, back drag it with the JD4120 and then hand rake the area before putting down grass seed and straw. This area will be easy to water since the yard hydrant is located by the maintenance building. Skaters have been using the new equipment and have commented positively.

Rec Park West Dugouts

The two dugouts were completed on Saturday, 6 January 2023 except for the installation of the storm shield and the metal roofs. is still on the schedule weather permitting. Both metal doors have been installed and are locked. Both doors will require painting in the spring.

Doug Strawinski and I removed all construction debris. The generator is now at the Red Church Cemetery where it will be used for the Red Church Project.

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South Parking Lot Dirt Pile

Time ran out so the pile will be moved in 2023. Material will be needed to level out the bus parking area when the pile is addressed. NYMIR labeled the pile an “attractive nuisance” and I must say that kids are climbing and biking on the hill all the time. There is no way to keep them off it!

Pickleball Courts

I was asked if players could use portable nets for play after we remove the regular nets and posts. Players would have to park outside the park and walk in if the south gate is closed. Snow cannot be removed from the courts. This may not be a real issue until early spring. Many players have already moved to indoor venues.

The past few weeks (including today) pickleball players have put up portable nets to play on the courts.

Baseball Storage Shed

I did not have the time to repair and paint the baseball shed this fall. It is in poor condition. Bee’s nests must be removed, and boards replaced. I would like to make the baseball shed match the dugouts with the white Versatec Trim. This will be done in the spring of 2023. Repairs will be done with the Versatec pieces left over from the Rec Park West dugouts when possible.

Recreation Playground Sheds

We elected to paint the Pavilion rather than the Recreation Playground Sheds in the fall. This will be a priority before the summer programs begin.

Field Scheduling

Tom Gilbert is doing all the field scheduling. This avoids confusion and conflicts. All field users have demonstrated cooperation and accommodation when it comes to the schedule. Games are given priority over practices. All the various groups are provided with the opportunity to play under the lights on the synthetic field.

Summer Programs Year-End Report

Dutchess County Division of Youth Services will send out the reporting documents we must submit about our summer programs in late December or early January. When I complete the report, I will email copies to the Recreation Commission and to the Town Board.

Fir Street Blue Trail

Working with the Trails Committee and Winnakee Land Trust, we will install a Mutt Mitt Dispenser and a blue garbage container with a blue dome lid at the entrance to the trail off Fir Street in Linden Acres. The Trails Committee purchased the dome lid, the Mitt Mitt Dispenser, and a case of Mutt Mitts. Rec Park Staff will do the installation and manage the emptying of the garbage can throughout the year.

The Rec Park contributed the blue waste container stenciled with Town of Red Hook. These will be placed in the spring.

Warren Rosenthal is no longer with Winnakee Land Trust. I do not know the new contact person, but I will find out before spring.

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John Deere 4120 Loader/Backhoe (Purchased 2014)

The JD4120 repair is now complete. It was at Keil Equipment since early November. The water pump failed and required replacement. The mechanics discovered that a section of the gasket on the oil pan had blown out. The leak was substantial. To replace the oil pan gasket, I was told that the engine had to be removed because two bolts on the pan are affixed to the engine block. This is a 20-hour job at \$100.00 an hour.

While the tractor is in the shop for the water pump replacement and the oil pan gasket repair, I asked them to change the hydraulic fluid. This involves gallons of fluid that must be handled properly for environmental reasons and something that we cannot do properly ourselves. The hydraulic fluid is only a few hours away from the recommended replacement time. I have also requested that they check all backhoe attachment points so that no bolts snap off again.

The Highway Department has agreed to trailer the JD4120 back to the Rec Park when the repairs are completed.

The total cost for the repair and servicing of the JD4120 was \$4,087.80. This was paid out of the Recreation Park and Red Church Cemetery budgets since the tractor is used at both sites.

The JD4120 has been problematic since 2014. Issues with the loader and backhoe attachments and leaking hydraulic connections started as soon as the warranty expired! Now that the tractor is repaired and serviced, I hope 2023 will see no more problems.

Email about Rec Park West Mowing

As I noted in the 12 December 2022 Director's Report, I received the following email from Kelly Preyer concerning the mowing of Rec Park West:

PREYER BLAKNEY <r5onthewall@gmail.com>

2:03 PM (1
hour ago)

Good December John, Chris, and Robert,
We have been discussing the mowing practices of Red Hook Rec Park West with Chris Layman., master beekeeper and educator at Fox Farm Apiary. Chris will be starting a relationship with the NY Parks to change mowing routines there, and then use that model for pollinator landscapes. Constant mowing destroys the eggs of many insects. I hope that by discussing the benefits of not mowing during crucial breeding times may help us all help this planet a bit. Please reach out to Chris Layman at info@foxfarmapiary.com to discuss a new less intensive mowing practice that will benefit us all, financially for the town and environmentally for its people.
Thank you.
Happy healthy holidays and 2023!
Kelly Preyer

I responded to this email as follows:

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I will contact him. It is always a battle between how far mowing can be delayed given the equipment we have to mow it. We lost control of the site two years ago, and it was a very heavy lift getting it back under control. It is recreational land as opposed to a meadow.

The mowing of Rec Park West has been a challenge. I am sure that we all want to benefit the environment, but there may be a limit to how much accommodation is possible on land designated for recreation.

Damage to Rec Park East and West Lawns

Persons unknown have driven on the Rec Park West area where Flag Football is played and put in serious ruts in the field that will require extensive repair in the spring. There is no frost in the ground; it does not take much to damage the fields.

The south entrance to Rec Park East has also been damaged by cars deliberately “doing donuts.” The security cameras do not reach as far as the south entrance.

Rec Park East Storm Damage

So far this winter there have been few limbs downed. Two along the western border will need to be cut up and removed in the spring.

In past years there has been an ice storm late in the season that wreaks havoc with the pine trees. Much work was done this past year to trim these trees of dead and damaged limbs. I am hopeful that this will be effective if we do get freezing rain and ice.

Wetlands Walk

The wetland overflowed the trail on the north side of the bridge. We may need to raise the level of the trail to prevent this happening again.

Dutchess County – Division of Youth Services

I am awaiting the arrival of the reporting requirements for the 2022 Summer Programs. I have compiled all the data in preparation for the request.

Old Building Department Pickup Truck

The Rec Park has been offered this Ford truck. It has rusted out considerably and is currently not licensed or insured. It cannot be kept at the Rec Park because of vandalism. At best it would be of limited use for us at the park, and at worst it would become a maintenance headache. I suspect that it may be best to simply declare it surplus and sell it at auction.

Recreation Facility Maintenance Summary

I have developed a schedule for maintenance work at the parks. 3,003 hours have been divided among the five people who will work in 2023. The Maintenance Staff Budget is \$60,07800. Not all staff will work on rainy days. Some work on weekends may be necessary. All employees are part time and are not scheduled to work more than 25 hours per week. We are getting a better sense of the maintenance demands of the 28-acre Rec Park West.

Special Projects are often done on weekends when staff with specific skills are available.