

Recreation Advisory Committee February 10, 2025 Minutes

Committee Attendees: Cook, Beth Locke, Drew Christine McGee Peter Morris rtschwebel@gmail.com

Town Attendees: Damion Clements, Kelly Clark

Public Attendees: Kathy Rosenkampff, Stephanie Costigan, Mara Glatzel, Krista Edwards, Edwige Yingling

Action items

Beth

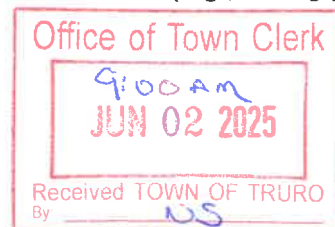
- ☐ **Reach out to Bobby (Provincetown Rec Committee Member):** Discuss the possibility of a joint meeting between the Truro and Provincetown Recreation Committees to explore collaborative opportunities, including unified registration for youth sports.
- ☐ **Redraft Recreation Advisory Committee Goals for 2025:** Condense the existing document, incorporate feedback from the meeting, include goals related to the Walsh property, emphasize collaboration with neighboring towns, and create a timeline for achieving each goal. Highlight existing action steps visually (e.g., grayed out or italicized).

Damian

- ☐ **Discuss same-day sign-up policy with Out-of-School Time (OST) staff:** Explore options for allowing same-day sign-ups for after-school programs for registered students, while maintaining accountability and addressing school administration concerns, positively conveying to families Out of School Time Program is a community safety net encouraging positive outcomes.
- ☐ **Investigate online cancellation functionality in new software:** Determine if parents can cancel their child's attendance online and if those cancellations are reflected in daily rosters.
- ☐ **Discuss eligibility of five-year-old rising kindergartners for OST with staff:** Review existing policies and determine any necessary changes to accommodate this age group in after-school programs.
- ☐ **Reach out to Top Mast:** Determine the cost and viability of rec offering swim lessons in shoulder seasons in partnership with Top Mast as had been done in the past.

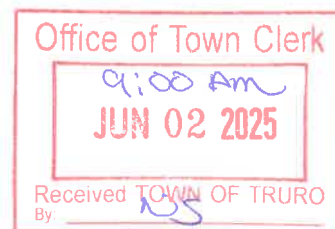
Public Comment Summary

- **Kathy Rosenkampff (in person)** – Expressed concerns from an office perspective about the recreation program's lack of flexibility in enrollment deadlines. She believes the 12:00 PM cutoff for sign-ups should be extended, especially during the school year, as parents often forget to register at the start of a new month. She cited a recent incident where a long-time attendee was unable to participate due to a missed sign-up, creating challenges at dismissal when staff had to contact the family last-minute. She emphasized the need for direct, personal communication (e.g., calling parents



or grandparents) rather than relying on emails, to ensure children are accounted for at the end of the school day. She urged for an immediate change to this policy, rather than a prolonged process.

- **Laura White (letter)** – Expressed concerns about the Out-of-School Time Program's policy that prevents children from attending if they are signed up after 12 PM. She shared a personal experience where her daughter, a regular participant, was unable to attend on February 4th due to a missed sign-up deadline. Although she registered her daughter immediately after being notified, she was still denied entry and had to take the bus home. Laura emphasized the difficulties this rigid policy poses for working parents, particularly in emergencies or unexpected situations. She urged the program to consider a more flexible approach, such as same-day sign-ups with prior notice or a grace period, to better support families while maintaining program structure.
- **Nina Ritchie (letter)** – Highlighted the essential role of the after-school program in supporting working families, especially given the high cost of living in the area. She acknowledged the program's reliable communication and helpful reminders but suggested broadening the sign-up window to accommodate unexpected scheduling changes, particularly for families without nearby support. Nina also emphasized the importance of maintaining program availability during school breaks, expressing concern over the cancellation of the program during Christmas break, which could negatively impact some families. She urged the program to prioritize accessibility, diversity, and inclusion in scheduling and decision-making. Additionally, she commended the program for fostering an inclusive environment and encouraged staff to be mindful of varying needs and behaviors among children when addressing incidents.
- **Peter Cook (in person)** – Expressed concern about the lack of a full third and fourth grade basketball team, emphasizing that some children are missing the opportunity to play. He noted that while there are options in other towns, some students, particularly girls, would participate if a co-ed team were offered. He pointed out that existing teams often have just enough players to field a game without substitutions, and forming a co-ed team could increase participation. He encouraged the program to consider this option to better serve the kids and expand opportunities for play.
- **Mara Glatzel (in person)** – Spoke about the deeper implications of not offering a co-ed basketball team for third, fourth, and fifth graders, particularly the impact on young girls. She shared her daughter's experience of wanting to play basketball but facing barriers, while also noting that her daughter had played soccer in Provincetown, which was challenging but ultimately a positive experience. Mara emphasized the harmful message being reinforced—that boys are better at sports—stating that her daughter has repeatedly expressed this belief. She highlighted the importance of allowing all children, especially girls, to participate in athletics without needing to prove they are "good enough" first. She found the suggestion of forming a girls' cheerleading team for a boys' sport deeply offensive. She also pointed out that elementary-age sports should be about fun and exploration rather than competition, and that excluding girls at this stage has long-term self-esteem consequences.



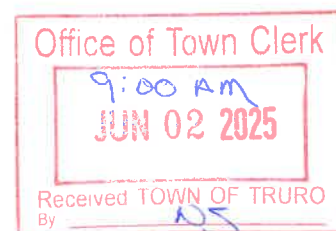
She urged for a solution that ensures all kids have the opportunity to play, whether that be a co-ed team or another approach.

- **Amy Smith (letter)** – Advocated for expanding after-school programming to include preschoolers, particularly those in the rising kindergarten age group. She highlighted that after-school care is both essential for working families and beneficial for children's social and developmental growth. Amy noted that her son, a September-born preschooler, spends the school day with younger children due to the two-year pre-K structure and would benefit from interacting with older peers in an after-school setting. She also suggested that increased enrollment could help sustain clubs, mentioning that the chess club was canceled. Additionally, she expressed concern about families leaving for Provincetown, which offers broader after-school and summer programming starting at age four. She recommended prioritizing expanding after-school care for younger children over summer programming to support retention in the district.
- **Isadora Medley (letter)** – Raised three key points: (1) Advocated for summer daycare for babies and toddlers, or at least for those entering preschool, noting that Provincetown Wee Care offers programs for children as young as three months, which influences where families choose to send their children to school. (2) Emphasized the need for winter swim lessons and indoor pool access for Truro children, as existing options are inadequate—Willie's Gym is in poor condition, and the Eastham Sheraton program has been reduced to one day per week with a long waitlist and an inconvenient schedule for working parents. (3) Stressed that drowning is the leading cause of death for children and, given Truro's coastal location, increasing access to swim instruction is a crucial safety issue. She suggested exploring partnerships with local motels to address this need.

Key Topics

Flexibility and Communication for After-School Programs

- **Concerns about 12:00 PM sign-up cutoff:** Parents expressed frustration with the strict 12:00 PM cutoff time for same-day sign-ups, citing challenges for working parents and the need for greater flexibility, especially for families consistently enrolled in the program.
- **Suggestions for improved communication:**
 - Proactive outreach from OST staff to families not yet signed up on the first of the month.
 - Personal contact (e.g., text messages) to remind families of sign-up deadlines. Noting that realistically this is may 2-3 outreach calls for those families consistently signed up and not a heavy lift.
 - Clearer communication about program details and activities to increase awareness and participation.



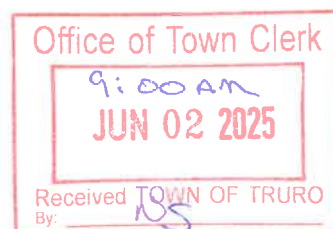
- **Need for a balance between flexibility and accountability:** While acknowledging the need for structure, the committee discussed finding a balance that accommodates unforeseen circumstances for families while ensuring efficient program management and resource allocation.
- **Potential for a grace period and online cancellation:** The committee explored the possibility of implementing a grace period for same-day sign-ups and developing an online system for cancellations to improve communication and reduce wasted resources.

Co-Ed Sports Teams

- **Concerns about lack of co-ed options:** Parents expressed concerns about the limited co-ed sports opportunities for elementary school students, particularly for girls, highlighting potential negative impacts on self-esteem and skill development.
- **Challenges with existing league structure:** Damian explained that the current youth sports league primarily operates with separate boys' and girls' teams, requiring a league-wide vote to implement co-ed teams. He noted that past efforts to propose co-ed options have been met with resistance from other towns.
- **Potential solutions and collaborations:**
 - Continue advocating for co-ed teams at the league level.
 - Explore proactive partnerships with Provincetown and Wellfleet to create joint girls' teams or offer more flexible team arrangements.
 - Initiate a joint meeting with the Recreation Committees of neighboring towns to discuss shared challenges and collaborative solutions.
- **Benefits of co-ed sports:** The committee acknowledged the social, relational, and developmental benefits of co-ed sports, particularly at the elementary school level, emphasizing the importance of providing opportunities for all children to participate and develop their skills in a fun and inclusive environment.

Expanding Recreation Program Offerings

- **Desire for more diverse activities:** The committee discussed the need to expand and diversify recreation program offerings, particularly for older children and teenagers, to address the lack of activities and combat isolation in the community.
- **Suggestions for new programs and facilities:**
 - Explore options for winter or shoulder season swimming lessons, potentially through partnerships with local businesses (e.g., Top Mast Motel).
 - Consider adding activities like tennis, basketball, and pickleball, potentially utilizing the Walsh property for new facilities.
- **Quarterly program reviews:** The committee agreed on the importance of conducting regular program reviews to assess the success of existing programs, identify areas for improvement, and explore new offerings based on community interest and feedback.
- **Marketing and promotion of existing programs:** Parents emphasized the need for stronger marketing and promotion of existing programs, particularly the no-cost summer recreation program for Truro students and residents, to increase awareness and participation.



CPC Committee Liaison

- **Need for a new liaison:** The committee needed to appoint a new liaison to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to replace Lindsay White, who was no longer a member of the Recreation Advisory Committee.
- **Peter Morris volunteered to serve as liaison:** After discussing the responsibilities and meeting schedule, Peter volunteered to serve as the CPC liaison and all members were in favor.

Eligibility of Rising Kindergartners

- **Proposal to align age requirements:** Beth proposed aligning the age requirement for all recreation programs to five years old, allowing rising kindergartners who turn five during the school year to participate in OST. This would create consistency across programs and address concerns raised by parents of younger children.
- **Discussion of feasibility and potential impact:** The committee discussed the feasibility of this proposal, considering staffing requirements, program structure, and potential impact on participation numbers. Damian agreed to discuss the proposal with OST staff to determine any necessary policy adjustments.

Decisions Made

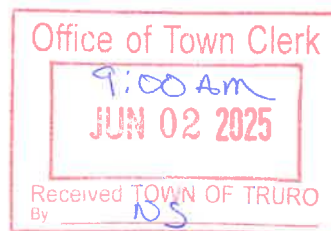
- Minutes from the November meeting were approved.
- Peter Morris was appointed as the new liaison to the CPC Committee.

Next Steps

- Beth will reach out to the Provincetown Recreation Committee to arrange a joint meeting.
- Beth will redraft the Recreation Advisory Committee Goals for 2025, incorporating feedback from the meeting.
- Damian will discuss the same-day sign-up policy and online cancellation functionality with OST staff.
- Damian will discuss the eligibility of five-year-old rising kindergartners for OST with staff.
- The next Recreation Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for March 17th at 3:30 PM.

Conclusion

- **Focus on improving communication, flexibility, and program offerings:** The meeting highlighted the committee's commitment to improving communication and flexibility within recreation programs, expanding and diversifying program offerings, and strengthening collaboration with neighboring towns to better serve the needs of Truro families.



- **Addressing community concerns:** The committee actively engaged with public comments and letters, demonstrating a willingness to address concerns raised by parents and explore solutions to enhance recreation opportunities for all ages.
- **Ongoing efforts to enhance recreation programs and community engagement:** The meeting underscored the ongoing efforts of the Recreation Advisory Committee to improve and expand recreation programs, promote community engagement, and contribute to the overall well-being and sustainability of Truro.

