

**TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Tuesday, September 20, 2011
TOWN HALL CHAMBERS
7:00 p.m.**

A Town Council Workshop of the Old Orchard Beach Town Council was held on Tuesday, September 20, 2011. Chair Quinn opened the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

The following were in attendance:

**Chair Bob Quinn
Vice Chair Michael Tousignant
Councilor Shawn O'Neill
Councilor Robin Dayton
Councilor Sharri MacDonald
Town Manager Jack Turcotte
Assistant Town Manager V. Louise Reid
Recreation Director, Jason Webber**

The Council acknowledged the presence of several members of the Skateboard supporters including members of the Recreation Committee. Supporting the presentation of Jason Webber, Recreation Director, were Andrew Syska, Christopher Syska, Ian Junking, Eric Santos, Sam Lampert and Nick Santos. Dru Laduke, Chair of the Recreation Committee, was also present. Jason Webber presented his report of what has been done over the past several months to focus on the plan for the skateboard park including soil samplings at two of the locations suggested for the possible location of the park. It was noted that the one closest to the Public Works Department had rock less than one foot down whereas the area of the Ballpark (behind the Police Department) was the choice location based on the soil samplings that were done there. Councilor Dayton has asked that those soil samplings be documented. The general consensus and support of not only the Ballpark Commissioners but the Recreation Committee as well as the Recreation Director himself is the location in the Ballpark area.

The purpose of the Workshop this evening was to discuss further planning for the location of the Skateboard Park in Old Orchard Beach, Maine. A skate park is a purpose-built recreational environment for skateboarders, roller skaters, inline skater, and scooter riders who ride and develop their techniques. Unlike organized sports like basketball or football, skateboarding has no set arena or rules and skate parks have no standard design template. Each skate park is designed specifically to provide unique challenges to its users. The design area would be approximately 60 feet by 120 feet with considerable buffer zone. There are, however, three main categories of skate park design - bowl, street plaza and flow parks. Old Orchard Beach would probably have either the bowl, the street plaza park or the flow park. Bowl parks are designed to emulate and improve upon the pool skating experience. Skaters in bowl parks can move around the park without taking their feet off the board to push. The curved walls of bowls allow skaters to ride around and across the bowl in addition to the back and forth skating you might see on a traditional half pipe. Bowls come in an endless variety of shapes and sizes but most bowls are between 3 and 12 feet deep. The street plaza park, which is the favorite of the vast

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majority of skaters, and the most expensive, is designed to emulate and improve upon the street skating experience. Obstacles in the street plaza are styled to look like natural street terrain such as stairs, railings, planters and benches. The flow park combines both the bowl parks and street parks which allows the skater to use that speed to hit street obstacles such as stairs, railings and benches.

There are advantages and disadvantages to having a Skate park in a community. They are no longer new and they exist successfully in many locations. Exposure to liability litigations seems to be less than had been feared in the past. Demand is high, probably significantly higher than we know and it is growing. Facilities can be built at a reasonable cost. Many, not all, skaters are tempted away from public areas by the existence of a dedicated skate park. Some jurisdictions have found that it is much easier to enforce existing ordinances prohibiting skating in public areas. Some have toughened their ordinances as a result. Some of the disadvantages include the fact that they tend to attract graffiti. Skate parks require regular and frequent maintenance to ensure safety of equipment, particularly half and quarter pipes, and the cleanliness of the surrounding area. They also need to be fairly isolated and located away from residential area, high volume commercial areas that generate foot traffic, and other potentially incompatible athletic uses.

It should be noted that community groups and civic leaders have identified skate parks as an answer to the lack of suitable places to ride. Old Orchard citizens have embraced the recreational and societal benefits of skate parks. Skate parks, even the more challenging ones, are far safer than kids rolling through busy downtown streets and there is a lot less damage to picnic tables and other items throughout the community that skate boarders use as obstacles when they ride. In addition, when parks are built right, with local skater input and involvement throughout the process, the kids develop a sense of ownership and pride for the location. Skate parks provide a place for skaters to go and practice the sport they love with friends. It gives them the opportunity to improve, to achieve small victories on a daily basis, to grow more confident in themselves and their own abilities, and allows them to dream of possibly becoming a "Tony Hawk" someday.

The discussion about the inclusion of bikes in the skateboard planning is something that requires further discussion and evaluation but is something the Committee wants to consider. It was highly and strongly recommended by the Council that the designer or company doing the construction be used for all phases of the project so there is consistency to the building of the skateboard park itself. Jason Webber explained that this is going to be more than just a Skateboard park but also a park where families can come and watch and enjoy family activities as well. The question of the visibility factor was discussed but it was noted that it is close to the Police Department and there could be a security system installed to make contact quickly in case of emergencies. It was noted that money was collected in the Square pool this summer and after Columbus Day the pool will be drained and the money counted and Paul Golzbein, owner to the Pier, will match whatever amount was raised this summer. Mr. Laduke congratulated the dedication and involvement of the young men in the audience and their families in this important venture.

Some of the funding areas to be considered included the possible grant from the Tony Haak Foundation which offers grants that range from \$1,000 to \$25,000 to eligible 501C3 organizations wishing to build skateboard parks in low income areas. There are other foundations such as the

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Gannet Foundation, National Park Service Lane, Water and Conservation Fund, Community Development Block Grants, and then, of course, the individual contributions of local institutions, citizens and foundations. The Skateboard projects at this point has approximately \$39,000 in its coffers.

The Town Council expressed appreciation openly to all those who have participated in the long project discussions and planning and encouraged them to move forward with their timeline which included the following:

- **Council Workshop Sept 20, 2011**
- **Completion of the RFP = September 23**
- **Advertisement = September 24**
- **Sight walk with potential designer/builders**
- **Bid closed on Oct 13 at noon**
- **Open bids at 3:00pm at Town Hall**
- **Recreation Board meeting to review bids**
- **Present Recommendations to council at the council meeting on Oct. 18, 2011**
- **Work with designer to come up with new design and budget**
- **L&W Conservation grant due December 9th**
- **This winter remove trees.**

The Workshop closed at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

**V. Louise Reid
Town Council Secretary**

I, V. Louise Reid, Secretary to the Town Council of Old Orchard Beach, Maine, do hereby certify that the foregoing document consisting of three (3) pages is a true copy of the original Minutes of the Town Council Workshop of September 20, 2011.

V. Louise Reid