

## Stratham Hill Park Association Meeting

Jan 27, 2026

In Attendance: Dan Crow, Greg Blood, Mel McGrail, Cole Emanuel, Seth Hickey, Pat Kelley, Allison Knab, Joe Lovejoy, Paul Deschaine

Greg Blood opened the meeting at 6PM

Dan Crow reviewed October minutes and made a motion to accept.

Cole Emmanuel seconded

Approved

The 4H roof and bathroom issues were discussed.

Our requested budget was passed by the Budget Committee; however, the scope was reduced to renovation of existing space, using existing funds. These funds are included in the RFP DPW budget, and repairs/maintenance will be staying on schedule.

The Stratham Summer Camps will remain at SMS this year.

Ken Lundgran is monitoring the trees in the park for those that need to be removed because of hazards. Pace Tree Service did a walk thru with Greg, and gave a verbal cost of \$8,500. This will be included in the DPW budget as a line item.

Seth spoke of ECO counters in the park. They are mainly focused on the Jack Rabbit entrance.

In one year, there was a 116K count of traffic at Jack Rabbit, with Dead Fish having 12K.

Sundays are the peak for Jack Rabbit, Thursdays for Dead Fish.

There was discussion of adding additional counters, we will remain with the counters that are in place. It was asked, and agreed, to put the counter figures on the town website.

The Ice Rink expense receipts have been submitted, of approx. \$1K.

It was decided to not install heat, to keep things simple. The netting will be rebuilt, at the door, so pucks will remain on the ice.

All in attendance were pleased with the success, and the number of users for the Ice Rink.

It was decided to table the discussion with UNH regrading the study program for park usage.

Seth, along with others, felt we needed more community input before moving forward, giving town members an opportunity to present ideas. We are not looking for big changes, we are seeking enhancements to what the park already has in place. Uses for the Noyes Stage is especially sought. We are offering 'a seat at the table' for creative discussions. This would not be the agenda for park problems (e-bikes, dogs..) A focus group will be formed after Town Meeting.

Allison reported that Ranger House decisions have not been decided by the Selectboard. The future of that space could be phased in, rather than building a complete "Welcome Center." She requested we look into more sources of input.

Allison shared that the CIP for the park is in place for the future. We have not reached the deadline for using these funds.

The Fire Tower work will be presented as a separate Article at Town Meeting. The town will seek \$250K for maintaining and improving the fire tower, work to be completed by 12/31/2031.

E-bikes are a continuing issue, and becoming a large problem everywhere. This committee is in agreement that they should not be allowed in the park, and for several reasons. It is difficult to determine the class of E-bikes, 1, 2, or 3 because they are easily modified, with no difference in the appearance of the bike. Land owners, who share their property with the park, and the Conservation Committee, want a ban on all E-bikes. Besides the difficulty in differentiating class levels, technology is changing so fast it is hard to keep up. These bikes are going faster and faster. It was felt insurance companies will soon enter the dynamic as more injuring are occurring. People walking on the trails are also concerned for their own safety.

There was a discussion whether an ordinance is needed that states:

“No Motorized Vehicles Allowed”

There was a discussion regarding continuing to offer free rentals, for non-profits of the park pavilions. There are a lot of costs to the town for these events. DPW is needed throughout rentals for trash removal, bathroom maintenance, and other expenses the town covers rather than the hosting renter. No permits for rentals have been issued yet, Seth begins registrations in early Spring.

The park already has in place, a ‘no commercial activities’ within the original deed of the park. The association wants to enforce this, as it is well known, there are dog walkers with multitudes of dogs. Which only adds to the already current dog problems in the park. Cole suggested using the police roadside sign stating

“No Commercial Use” discussion will be continued, and addressed in other areas.

Paul made a motion to Adjourn at 7:30

Dan seconded

Meeting adjourned at 7:30

Next meeting: March 23rd at 6

Respectfully Submitted,

Mel McGrail