

## Recreation in the Town of Atkinson - Focus Group Report

Date: August 1, 2023, 6:30-8:00 pm

Location: Kimball Library

Attendees:

- Master Plan Committee members:

- Noriko Yoshida-Travers
- John Ottow
- Karen McFadden
- Kate Rochford
- Sue Coppeta

- Selectperson: Bob Worden

- Community members:

- Rebecca Rochford
- Mike McNeil
- Kathryn Wilkins
- Deb Desimone
- Kay Galloway

Purpose: The focus group aimed to collect feedback from residents regarding the current state of recreation in Atkinson and to identify areas for potential improvement.

Process: Attendees were prompted to discuss the existing activities, services, and facilities provided by the Recreation Department. The following items, listed in order of the group's priority, were identified and discussed:

- Buildings: Community Center, Bathrooms at Woodlock and Collins Parks
- One-Time Events: e.g., "Sun 'N' Fun," Holiday Events, Fishing Derby
- Fields and Parks
- Senior Programming and Events
- Kids Programming and Events

### Key Findings:

- Residents generally expressed satisfaction with the current level of recreation in Atkinson.
- The capacity of the Recreation Department, led solely by Director of Recreation Noriko Yoshida-Travers, limits the town's ability to provide recreation services.
- Bob Worden indicated the possibility of grant funding to enhance the current Community Center.
- Many programs, especially those for children and teenagers, are organized by external parties but utilize Rec Department facilities.

### Recommendations:

- The town should explore the addition of another employee (potentially part-time) to bolster the capacity of the Director of Recreation.
- Applying for grants to improve the Community Center is advisable.
- Increasing "One-Time" events to foster community unity.
- Enhancing town parks, fields, and courts.
- Expanding senior programming.
- Efforts should be made to make recreation more accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Conclusion: The focus group provided valuable insights into the opinions of residents regarding the current state of recreation in Atkinson. The Master Plan Committee, Planning Board, and Resilience Planning and Design will assess the findings from this focus group and incorporate the information into the Master Plan.