

## **Skateboard Park Report**

In 2002 the Recreation Department/Boys & Girls Club, Gardiner Board of Trade, Gardiner Police and several area youth developed and established a skateboard park at the Railroad Station on Maine Avenue. This collaboration resulted in a wonderful recreational area for the youth to skateboard and play basketball. Approximately \$35,000 was invested in this project, which paid for hot topping the area, fencing, construction of ramps, basketball hoops and signage.

The first year the park was open all went pretty smooth. The second summer the park was opened was very difficult to manage. There was an older group of youth who behaved very disrespectfully. The police had many issues from vandalism to drugs to deal with at the skate park. In August 2003 the skate park was closed due to the Boys & Girls Club moving to Pray Street. The skate park was not set up at Pray Street due to the many issues that were unmanageable at the Railroad Station.

Since that time there has been new interest in reestablishing the skate park. Jim Toman and I meet several times with a group of middle school students to discuss a skate park.

The two most important initial questions to be answered are:

### **Who would be responsible for the skateboard park?**

Successful management of a skateboard park will take a collaborative effort on the part of the City Council, the police department, the Boys & Girls Club, youth, parents and businesses. Consistent monitoring and appropriate location are musts for a safe positive skateboard park.

It would be my recommendation that the City take the lead on this project given the issues that skateboarders create for downtown businesses and the police department. The City could establish a core group to start the work and define each groups responsibility the project. I would be willing to chair this committee. I have our past experiences to draw from as well as information from the Tony Hawk Foundation regarding organizing, planning, designing and funding a skateboard park.

### **Is there a suitable site for the skateboard park?**

The following sites have been discussed as possibilities; old OC Woodman site, the Common, Quimby, the waterfront, Pray Street, the winery and Hannaford parking lot by the rail trail. The chosen site should be owned by the City if the City is going to take responsibility for the park. That would narrow the options to the Common, Quimby and the Waterfront.

When evaluating a site it needs to be located in a highly visible location, near the street for easy access by police and parents and an area where noise is tolerated. The Tony Hawk Foundation (professional skateboarder) recommends city owned existing recreation areas located in areas where some noise is tolerated, or at least where there is a precedent of fairly noisy athletic activity there. Size of the site would depend on resources available to develop the park.

It is recommended that City Council determines the need for a skateboard park, who will be responsible for the park, consider locations and name committee chair. Once these items are considered the planning could move forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Ingrid Stanchfield