



**STORRS HILL FACILITY PLANNING ADVISORY
COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 25, 2025 - 6:00 PM**

CITY HALL, MEETING ROOM 1

51 N PARK ST, LEBANON

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- 1. Call to Order**
 - 2. Approval of Minutes**
 - A. February 11, 2025 Minutes
 - 3. Old Business**
 - A. Draft report review
 - 4. New Business**
 - 5. Other Business**
 - 6. Future Agenda Items**
 - 7. Next Meeting Date**
 - 8. Adjournment**

The order of agenda items is subject to change.

Meetings are open for in-person and remote attendance. Members of the public that wish to attend remotely may do so by going to LebanonNH.gov/Live where you will find instructions on how to enter the meeting. Members of the public will be able to participate and ask questions through the City's virtual platform or by phone. Please note: Should technical difficulties occur during the meeting that disrupts virtual or phone connection(s), the meeting will continue without remote access capabilities.

Draft

**CITY OF LEBANON
STORRS HILL FACILITY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES February 11, 2025
Lebanon City Hall Meeting Room 1 & LebanonNH.gov/Live
6:00PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: (6/8)

**Dan Mielcarz
Brett Sowerby
Angela Orlando (online)
Lauren Cockerill
Trent Jones
Jennifer Meade**

MEMBERS ABSENT: (2/8)

**Stephanie Vallee
Cory Grant**

STAFF PRESENT: (1)

Paul Coats (Recreation Arts & Parks Director)

Guests:

Erling Heisted

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2 **1. CALL TO ORDER**

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4 Paul Coats called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

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6 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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8 Minutes were accepted as written by unanimous vote of the committee. Brent moved, 2nd by Dan
9 6 yes. 0 no.

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12 **3. NEW BUSINESS**

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14 The committee reviewed some preliminary language for the report, which was compiled by Paul
15 from various section contributions by individual committee members.

16
17 Some funding comments were made: Plymouth put up 25m for \$80k 2018.
18 50m jump could qualify for Historic Landmark designation and receive new funding grant opps.

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20 What needs to happen to create the Learn to Ski area?

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22 Are Poma repairs / improvements important now with the increased number of visitors? What was
23 Cory's estimate to bring POMA up to current standards?

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26 **4. Future Agenda Items**

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29 Next Meeting: February 25, 2025

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1 **6. ADJOURNMENT**

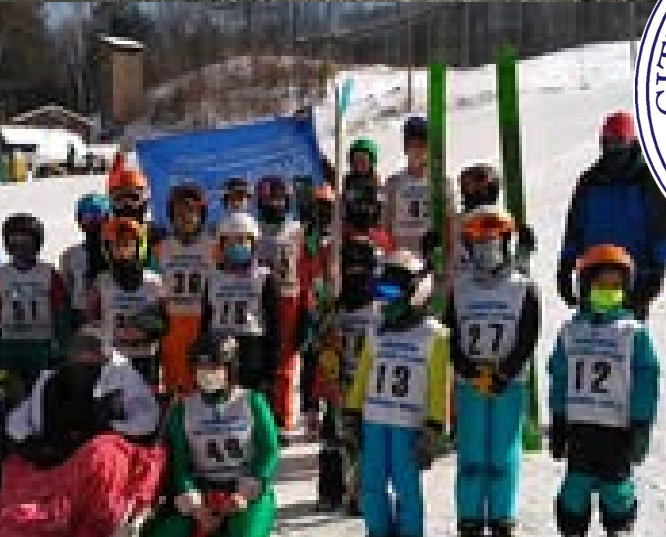
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3 *Paul Coats adjourned the meeting at 6:45 pm.*

4

5 Respectfully submitted,

6 Paul Coats



2025
Storrs Hill Ski Area
Facility Planning Advisory Committee
Report



MESSAGE

from the committee

Welcome

We are pleased to present to you the Storrs Hill Facility Planning Committee Report. This report identifies the committee's suggested priorities for facility improvements at Storrs Hill Ski Area.

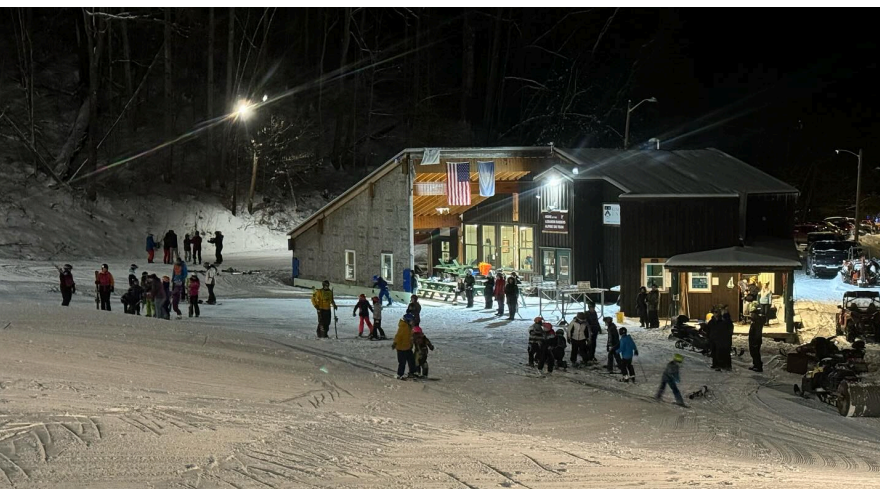
Together with the Lebanon Outing Club, the Recreation Arts & Parks Department strives to enhance the quality of life and well-being of Lebanon's citizens and visitors. We play a unique role in the community by offering people spaces, places and opportunities for fitness, sports, play, learning and socializing throughout their lives. Lebanon's steady growth and appetite for recreational services drive the need for facilities and programming that responds to an evolving and dynamic community.

This report outlines the considerations the committee researched among the various facility improvement options at Storrs Hill, known funding options, and concludes with prioritized recommendations.

Committee members are:

Angela Orlando, Brett Sowerby, Cory Grant (LOC President), Dan Mielcarz, Jennifer Meade, Lauren Cockerill (alternate), Stephanie Vallee (LOC Vice President), and Trent Jones

Staff representative: Paul Coats, Recreation Arts & Parks Director



OVERVIEW AND PROCESS



The Storrs Hill Facility Planning Advisory Committee (“committee”) charge is to:

1. Work with and serve in an advisory capacity to the Lebanon Outing Club, Lebanon Recreation Arts & Parks Department, and City Manager regarding the development, prioritization, and strategies for facility improvements at Storrs Hill Ski Area.
2. Conduct a community needs assessment for recreation at Storrs Hill Ski Area, including soliciting public input, review of the City of Lebanon Master Plan and Strategic Plan references to Storrs Hill, and consultation with the Lebanon Outing Club Board of Directors.
3. Develop options for consideration to include at a minimum the following:
 - a. Repair, renovation, replacement or removal of ski jumps along with the timelines and estimated costs.
 - b. Alternative recreational facilities such as snow tubing or other winter related activities.
 - c. Include the estimated/projected usage of the various options and a financing plan to achieve each of the options.
 - d. The options shall be developed in a written report.

Invitations to apply for membership were advertised to the community through various typical channels. Applicants were asked to answer several pre-screening questions related to their motivation, community involvement, and skills or expertise. Seven regular members plus 1 alternate were then appointed by the City Manager. Meetings were posted and open to the public, and minutes can be found at [Events • City of Lebanon Agenda Center • CivicClerk](#).

Throughout the research and discovery process for the recommendations, the committee ensured due diligence using a variety of resources. The committee engaged in multiple research collecting meetings over many months, including tours and informational sessions of the lodge and pavilion, jumps and grounds; a public survey consisting of over 300 responses and comments; and researching benchmarking data from other regional organizations. After obtaining all the gathered information, the committee then proceeded with a Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis of multiple components of the Storrs Hill Facility.

The SWOT analysis was facilitated by an impartial consultant, Cindy Heath, who is both familiar with the rich history of Storrs Hill Ski Area and skilled in the art of generating discussion and analyzing options. SWOT analysis results are included as addendum A.

The committee’s final step was to take an anonymous straw poll to determine individual member’s order of facility improvement preferences, after which consensus was obtained.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENT

OPTIONS: Lodge & Pavilion



The lodge serves as the central gathering space for the hill. Built in 1997, the current lodge includes 2 bathrooms, commercial kitchen, office space, Ski Patrol / First Aid room, and public open space. The large outdoor pavilion was built in 2020 in response to the COVID 19 pandemic, creating an outdoor gathering space. The intent has always been to complete the structure to meet current demand for lodge space.



The committee considered three different levels of lodge improvements:

- A). Fully enclosing the pavilion to make it part of the lodge indoor conditioned space;
- Expand the kitchen, storage, heated public gathering area, deck, and year-round access to bathrooms. \$300,000
 - Triggers the necessity of a fire sprinkler system, which would add over \$150,000.
 - Total cost: \$450,000
- B). Completing the pavilion construction as an outdoor extension of the lodge; and
- Extend the frost wall and concrete foundation flooring throughout the structure.
 - Install large windows facing the ski hill for the public to view the hill and to create an atmosphere of openness and light.
 - Extend the pavilion roof over the existing decking to provide greater weather protection to the structure and the public.
 - Add large access doors between the lodge and pavilion area to make pedestrian traffic safer and provide greater flow for the public.
 - Extend the kitchen footprint and add much-needed storage space to enable greater proficiency for the kitchen.
 - Provide secure year-round access to the bathrooms without having to staff the lodge.
 - Total cost: \$120,000
- C). Improving the overall aesthetic of the lodge environment. There are some improvements that could be done for free, which would present a more welcoming, organized, and professional environment. These include removing some of the couches, rearranging the lodge picnic tables to increase eating space, and decluttering both areas. Public comments from the survey, such as; “less clutter and more seating”, “make more organized and welcoming”, and “outside around lodge looks messy and not inviting” support this recommendation.

72% of public survey respondents placed lodge and pavilion completion in the top 3 preferences.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS: 25 Meter Jump



The wooden 25 meter ski jump was originally built in 1947, and underwent several structural repairs and improvements over the years. It was declared unsafe in 2022 and subsequently dismantled. The loss of the jump has been acutely felt by the local ski jumping community, particularly youth athletes, who have expressed a need for such a facility.

The committee considered:

- The 25m jump provides a stepping stone for young jumpers to progress to from the 15m training jump before advancing to the 50m jump.
- The absence of the 25m jump at Storrs Hill now requires jumpers to travel to Oak Hill in Hanover where there are 18m and 32m jumps, or Proctor Academy in Andover where there are 18m, 30m, and 38m jumps.
- Storrs Hill has mutual aid agreements with these organizations to allow for shared use of facilities.
- Lebanon only had 4 jumpers when the jump was taken down, but had 15 pre-COVID.
 - Does a new jump create more participation?, or
 - Are more jumpers a pre-requisite to building a new jump?
 - There is a current shortage of volunteer coaching.
- A new 25 meter jump: \$275,000.
 - Optional training room beneath the jump: Add \$50,000.
 - Optional plastic for year-round jumping: Add \$100,000+
- We can have either a new 25m jump or a learn to ski area at the same location, but not both.
 - There are some indications that a new jump could be built in the vicinity of the 50m jump, which would require extensive engineering.
- It is crucial to address how maintenance costs will be sustained.

The proposed 25 meter jump at Storrs Hill presents both opportunities and challenges. While it would fill an identified gap in training facilities for youth jumpers, it must be carefully considered in the context of regional alternatives, the sustainability of funding for maintenance, and the immediate needs of the 50 meter jump. Lebanon must weigh these factors and determine whether the long-term benefits of a 25 meter jump outweigh the financial and resource commitments required, particularly in light of declining participation and competing infrastructure needs.

43% of public survey respondents placed the 25m jump replacement in the top 3 preferences.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENT

OPTIONS: Heistad Hill 50m Jump



The Heistad Hill K50 ski jump at Storrs Hill was constructed in 1954 and renovated in the early 1990s. The jump is named after Erling Heistad Sr., who was instrumental in building the jumps at Storrs Hill. The Lebanon Outing Club performs yearly maintenance, with a notable recent upgrade consisting of protective boards in the outrun to protect ski jumpers from Great Brook.

Ski jumpers who are learning the sport start on smaller jumps and work their way up. Due to its size, Heistad Hill occupies a unique space in progression for ski jumpers throughout New England – there are no other jumps between K39 and K65. Heistad Hill is also the site of an annual Junior National qualifier for the Eastern Region and has strong support from the regional ski jumping community.

In the public survey commissioned by the committee, a large number of respondents mentioned improvements to Heistad Hill as a priority. This widespread interest in Heistad Hill represents an opportunity for potential fundraising.

The committee considered current and long-term needs for the 50m jump:

- Short term:
 - The steel structure needs to be repainted to prevent corrosion and extend the useful life to around 2050.
 - Power-wash and repaint: \$100,000; or
 - Sandblast and repaint with maximum levels of lead abatement: \$400,000.
 - Replace pressure-treated wood decking: \$100,000.
- Long term: As an alternative, a full replacement of the jump would be expected to last 100 years with regular maintenance. This would allay concerns about the footings and structural steel that may prove to be an issue in the medium-term future: \$400,000 - \$600,000
- Adapting the hill for summer jumping is also an option, with plastic matting and water needed for the landing hill. There is no estimate for this option at this time, but this would allow the asset that is Heistad Hill to be used year-round, with potential for competitions that would produce revenue.



FACILITY IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS:

Learn-to-Ski/Magic Carpet/Sledding Area

Beginner skiers and their instructors face some challenges at Storrs Hill Ski Area, with no beginner lift service and a relatively small learning area as compared to other venues. The POMA lift is only suitable for intermediate to advanced skiers, and while it can be ultimately beneficial to learn how to navigate skis uphill (and a heart pumping workout), new skiers tend to rely on an able-bodied volunteer to pull them up to the lowest area near the lodge where they can ski down about 55 feet on gentle terrain.

Investing in a dedicated learning-to-ski area with a magic carpet lift is a strategic move that will benefit the Lebanon community in multiple ways:

- The magic carpet will make skiing and riding more accessible for beginners, easing the learning curve and attracting new participants to the sport.
- Incorporating an adaptive ski program will ensure that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to experience the joy of winter activities in an inclusive environment.
- By offering a safe, designated space for instruction and adaptive sports, we can expand our reach to a wider demographic, including families, newcomers to winter sports, and individuals who may not have considered skiing or snowboarding an option before.
- The absence of similar amenities in our area positions us as a unique destination for beginner-friendly and adaptive skiing, strengthening our local ski culture and economy.
- Dedicated sledding days and times in this same area is also possible, giving Storrs Hill an officially approved area for this popular winter activity.
- Total cost: \$100,000

Conversion of the former 25m jump site to a learn-to-ski / sledding area with Magic Carpet lift would be a major strategic change from the previous use as a 25m jump. Additional resources of staffing and funding for maintenance would have to be dedicated to its operations.

63% of public survey respondents placed the creation of the learn-to-ski / magic carpet in the top 3 preferences.

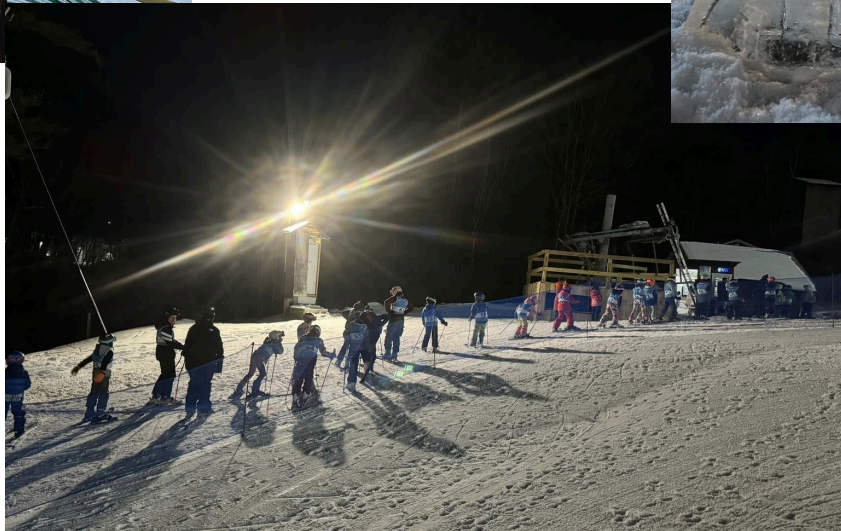


FACILITY IMPROVEMENT

OPTIONS: Poma Lift



Storrs Hill Ski Area's sole lift was installed in 1973. The Poma style lift transports skiers and riders using a bar and disc that fits between the skier's legs and pulls them uphill while they stand on their skis or snowboard. The lift's towers and many moving parts have been repaired or replaced as needed at various times over the past 50 years, which has been adequate to ensure continued operation. It is inspected annually by the State of NH Tramway Board, and the cable is annually inspected by a specialist. The State of NH considers the lift "grandfathered" from many current regulations due to its age and adequate level of maintenance. However, if a modification to the lift or its towers is ever determined to be necessary it would be considered a redesign and would require a brand new lift to meet updated standards. \$500,000.



FUNDING



Beginning with the creation of its first ski jump in 1925, Storrs Hill Ski Area has been enjoyed and supported by generations of Upper Valley residents. Currently, this area is maintained by the 501c3 non-profit organization Lebanon Outing Club, which assumed responsibility for ski area operations from the city of Lebanon in 1986. The club continues this agreement to this day, making it the primary funder of the facility.

Throughout its long history, various grants and donations have demonstrated the community's continued enthusiasm for Storrs Hill. Most recently, these include:

- 2018 - Byrne Foundation grant to install stainless steel tracks on main jumps
- 2019 - Byrne Foundation grant to improve the Poma lift
- 2021 - Novo Nordisk and Byrne Foundation grants for various lodge improvements
- 2024 - Byrne Foundation grant providing free skiing and snowboarding to the public for the 2024-2025 season.

These projects have been successful, leading to even greater usage. But, as this report outlines, more must be done at this facility to support the community's needs. Funding obstacles include the cost of inflation for building projects and environmental factors, such as the increased need to make snow in the winter months. It is also essential to recognize that Lebanon Outing Club is the primary funder of the facility's operations with limited reliance on City tax dollars.

Additional funding would benefit the facility by offering year-round usage options, increasing public use in the winter months, attracting new clientele, and reducing the burden on staffing and operations. In addition, the more attractive the facility is to the public, the more likely it will attract volunteers and increase donations.

It is with the above in mind that this committee recommends Lebanon Outing Club look into funding opportunities through the following sources:

- New Hampshire Charitable Fund
- Local corporation's philanthropic branches
 - The Mascoma Bank Foundation
 - Claremont Savings Bank
 - Novo Nordisk
 - HOPE (Hypertherm Owners' Philanthropic Endeavors) Foundation
- Ford Sayre

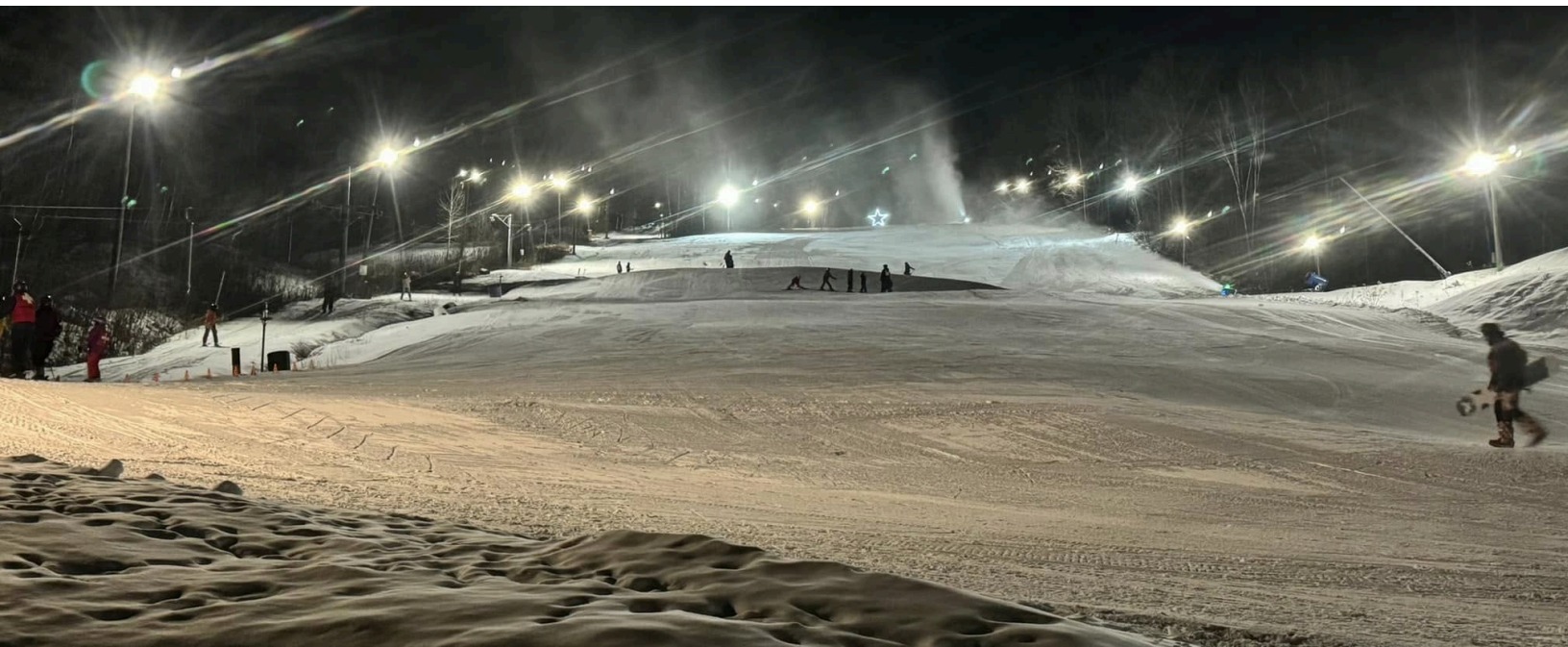
FUNDING (Continued)



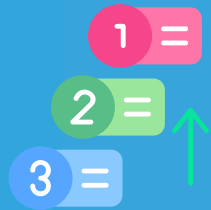
- Individuals who have donated to Storrs or LOC in the past
- Local donors with connections to Storrs Hill, skiing and snowboarding
- Continuing the relationship with The Byrne Foundation
- Save America's Treasures Grant

It is also recommended that the club review the options for creating an annual fund and building more structure for its already successful fundraising efforts. This could include hiring a short-term consultant and/or adding someone experienced in fundraising to its Board of Directors. Additionally, a future capital campaign should be considered.

DRAFT



RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES



Significant investment will need to be weighed against the existing infrastructure and future needs of the facility. It is essential to consider the long-term sustainability of this investment, particularly in light of historical challenges with maintaining such structures due to limited funding.

There is public support for and committee agreement that the top 3 priorities should be:

1. 1-2 Years: Learn-to-Ski / Magic Carpet / Sledding Area: \$100,000
2. 1-3 Years: Lodge & Pavilion Option B (complete the outdoor pavilion), and general upkeep: \$120,000
3. 4-5 Years: 50 Meter Jump painting and decking: \$200,000
4. 20 Years: 50 Meter Jump replacement
5. Relocate 25 Meter Jump

While staffing and maintenance of a new Learn-to-Ski area and magic carpet are considerations, the long-term benefits—including fostering community engagement, boosting tourism, and providing a more inclusive outdoor recreation space—outweigh these challenges. Prioritizing this initiative will ensure that skiing and snowboarding remains accessible and sustainable for future generations.

Heistad Hill 50m jump is a truly unique asset to the City of Lebanon and one of the most recognizable landmarks in town. The K50 has played an important role in the training of several Olympic ski jumpers, along with many jumpers who have not reached that level, but nevertheless have found the sport an important part of their lives. We are recommending repainting and rehabilitation of the current structure to extend its lifespan from 5 years or less to at least 25 years in order to support the century-long tradition of ski jumping in the city. The strong regional interest from the ski jumping community in maintaining the jump provides an opportunity for fundraising and volunteering.

