

Virtual Meeting 6:34pm

January 9, 2023

Meeting Roll Call: Mara– here, Jenn – here, Laurie – here, Ben– here, Bobby - here

Director, Dennis Mannone, Director Park and Recreation

Public Comment: None

Comments from Chair: CPC met last week and approved funding for Feeley Field Phase 2 in the full amount with \$100,000 coming from the Meadow Walk fund. Mara reported the CPC had questions on the request for funds for the fence and lights at the Fairbank Community Center basketball court. She said there was discussion on making the parking lot side of the fence shorter, so it didn't look like a cage, but still be safe. Mara reached out to Conservation regarding the Bobolinks, but did not have a meeting. She will update with any information next month along with information she develops during her review of Recreation properties. New cross walk signal has been installed at the Fairbank Community Center. Mara was involved in discussions on assistive listening systems for the new Fairbank building. These systems assist hearing impaired so they can participate and hear what is occurring in all parts of the new Fairbank Building. Additional funding will be needed for these services. Concrete slabs have been poured, steel and walls are starting to go up for the new building. Dive well will be tested for leaks next week; process is being managed by the Facilities department. Fence screening has been taken down since the ground is frozen which reduces dust and wind off Haskell was blowing areas of the screen down.

Warrant Articles for Teen Center Revolving, Youth Revolving and Revolving 53E1/2 need to be signed for FY25. Documents will be in the Park and Recreation office for signature. Annual report, after its reviewed and updated, will also be in the folder for signature.

Director Update: Dennis sent out Pool and Field Enterprise financials. Pool shows a negative deficit, but should be about even once outstanding swim team rental checks are received. He is still unsure how the pool shutdown will impact financials. Dennis mentioned the Aquatic Coordinator position is now open; job has been posted, but no resumes received to date. Field Enterprise fund will not see additional deposits until spring.

Feeley Phase 1 going out to bid by the end of January. Dennis has a meeting with DPW to discuss Feeley Phase 1 timelines and the Haskell playground. No update on the Recreation bus/van. Sudbury Summer dates have been posted along with Sudbury Adventure dates. Camp will start after July 5; first session will be abbreviated. He is not sure if preschool pals will be offered this summer. Haskell playground will be used as the headquarters for summer camp again this year. It will be shut down Monday through Friday from 8:30pm to 3:30pm. Dennis sent an email responded to an email on the wellness center proposed at the Curtis Middle School. He supports the project, but wanted to make sure concerns regarding irrigation and field layouts and field dimensions had been discussed by all parties. Laurie asked about the Preschool Pals program. Dennis said it is a summer program that hasn't been run in a few years. This program may run again, but it will depend on staffing and space requirements and availability for the summer.

Bobby asked about the Teen Center Revolving Fund Article and the status of the Teen Center. Dennis responded the Teen Center attendance was declining before Covid and events have not been held since that time. He is waiting until the new Fairbank Community Center is built to see how teen programs will be run. Middle School trips have been offered in the past year, so he is keeping the Revolving Fund article active as a placeholder right now.

Ben asked about Field Enterprise Fund and if the current numbers are comparable to last year at this time. Dennis said it is difficult to compare since there were openings in the Park and Grounds staff last year. He is concerned about the Haskell well and cost of repair.

Mara stated her concern that the Pool Enterprise Fund will be expected to cover staff expenses during construction shut down. She would like to see the Town cover this expense. Ben asked if Dennis had spoken to the Town Manager about this concern or if the concern should be brought to the attention of the SelectBoard. Janie Dretler, SelectBoard member, suggested Dennis speak with the Town Manager. She also stated the Park and Recreation Commission could put forth a Town Meeting article requesting funds to cover pool shut down expenses. Dennis stated he did meet with the Finance Director and interim Town Manager during the budget review and discussed this concern. His understanding is that expenses and revenues will be monitored and if there is a deficit at the end of the fiscal year in the Pool Enterprise Fund it would be addressed at that time. It was decided that Mara would send an email to the Interim Town Manager addressing this concern and asking how the lost revenue and expenses during the pool shut down will be handled by the Town. Dennis added that the Pool retained earnings includes \$70,000 from funds the Pool received from the Town due to the Covid shutdown. Dennis said he would have thought the Article for the new Fairbank Community Center building would have factored in the costs of shutting down the pool during construction.

Mara will send an email to the interim Town Manager and Finance Director asking how the Town plans to cover the fixed pool expenses during the construction shut down. Commission will decide next actions based on response to email.

Youth Baseball Batting Cage at Featherland: Mark Spector, 3 Carriage Way, Lincoln Sudbury Youth Baseball, discussed improving the batting cage at Upper Featherland. The current batting cage is a semi-permanent single hitting tunnel. They are looking to create a safer environment for the players and create additional capacity for practicing and are looking to the Commission to approve a permanent case structure which will double the size of the current footprint. LS Youth Baseball will fundraise and pay for all expenses including materials, construction and ongoing maintenance. Mark said LS Youth Baseball would work with the Park and Director and Park and Grounds Staff and the vendor for construction of the project. Dennis offered that the Park and Grounds Staff would probably assist with some of the site work preparation depending on how involved it is. Bobby asked if the batting cages would have to be gifted to the Town as a donation before or after the work is done. Dennis said he will check with the Town Manager to see how it should be handled and see if there is a new process from what was done in the past. Dennis suggested voting on the project tonight and then he and Mark would work with on the logistics and financials of the project.

Ben made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission support the LS Youth Baseball Upper Featherland batting cage project with the stipulation they work with Dennis and the Parks and Grounds staff and follow the appropriate process to get the project completed. Jenn seconded the motion. Bobby amended the motion to say support the project as presented by Mark Spector at tonight's meeting. He wanted to be sure the design presented was the project installed at Featherland. Ben seconded the amendment.

Vote on the amended motion. Bobby – yes, Jenn – yes, Laurie – yes, Ben – yes, Mara – yes. Amended motion passed 5-0 in favor.

Vote on the original motion. Ben -yes, Bobby – yes, Laurie – yes, Jenn – yes, Mara -yes. Motion passed 5-0 in favor.

Haskell Pathway Update: Bobby walked Haskell field with the Parks and Grounds Foreman and learned the sprinklers run all the way into the tree line planted a number of years. The Foreman didn't think moving the sprinklers for the path would be a big of an impact on the sprinkler system and suggested Bobby contact Phil Solomon, Engineering Department, regarding field layouts. Phil will take a look the impact to the field layouts if the walking path is extended along field, parallel to Butler Place, and will contact Bobby once he has had time to review the data. Laurie clarified that the path will just connect along Butler, but not connect to a path on the inside of Hudson Road. Bobby said he is only focused on the Butler Place section now, not a full walking path inside Haskell Field. He would like to see that in the future because it would be safer than walking on the Hudson Road sidewalk. Mara will keep this topic on the agenda for continued discussion.

BFRT Advisory Task Force Report: Laurie updated on meetings that took place in December. She said there is still a lot of discussion on a how to move forward with the construction of CSX south of the diamond. She is hoping to get more information from the next meeting which hasn't been scheduled yet. She said information from Fuss and O'Neill will be critical in determining the next steps for future construction beyond the diamond south. She has seen trucks in various locations around the rail trail beginning construction activity. Mara asked about the ground-breaking ceremony. Laurie said it will be later this winter or early spring; she will update the PRC when the date is scheduled. Mara will keep this topic on the agenda.

Broadacres Riding Ring Opportunity: Bobby opened up a discussion on possible uses for the riding ring on Broadacres property. He said he spoke with an individual who has access to indoor ice-skating rink materials and thought it would be a good idea to discuss what the Town has planned for the property. He thought this idea was something the Town might want to explore. He said the Town is currently using the facility for storage. He offered to invite the individual to a Commission meeting to discuss further. Mara stated she had walked the property in the past and recalled it was not in great shape and suggested Bobby talk with the building inspector before spending too much time on this idea. Mara also suggested checking with the Town in regard to what is planned for that section of the property because it is not designated as a Recreation property. Janie Dretler, SelectBoard, said the Town has had discussions on the property and potential use such as a community garden, but nothing has been decided at this time. She said the property is under the purview of the SelectBoard and there is a process to follow to present potential use of this section of the property. One section of the Broadacres property is designated as Recreation. Mara commented that funds for an Open Space and Recreation Plan were approved in 2022 and that plan when completed will help to guide the PRC decisions moving forward. She did not think work has begun on the plan yet, due to a resignation in the Planning department. After discussion it was agreed that Mara will send an email to the Director of Planning to check on the status of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. She said the Plan is important because it will give guidance, but also open up Grant opportunities.

Ben suggested starting every meeting off with an update on priority projects the PRC is working on at the time. It was thought this would be a good way to stay on top of the various projects and make sure the work on them keeps moving forward

Dennis liked the idea but cautioned that everyone wants things to move fast but it doesn't always happen in municipalities where staff is lean. He is hopeful the new Town Manager is able to get the departments really working well with each other which would help move the big projects forward in a positive way. He said staffing and funds are often not available which can impact projects. He said many department heads are frustrated and exhausted and burned out which is why the Town is losing people. He said it is very frustrating because people want to do good work and be efficient, but sometimes the work environment bogs down the process. Janie Dretler, SelectBoard, will request to add discussion on Broadacres to a future SelectBoard agenda.

Vote – Review and Approve 2022 PRC Annual Report: Mara shared her screen with the original copy of the report sent to the Commissioners. She incorporated comments received from the Commissioners. Commissioners reviewed draft of the report paragraph by paragraph and added more information and edited the various sections of the report. Mara suggested giving her permission in the motion to “wordsmith” the document so the Commissioner will not have to meet again just to approve the document. Bobby made a motion to approve the 2022 Park and Recreation annual report for the Town Warrant including the outstanding edits that have been discussed and Mara will complete. Motion received a second. Vote: Bobby – yes, Laurie – yes, Jenn – yes, Ben – yes, Mara –yes. Motion passed 5-0 in favor.

Vote -Review and Approve PRC Minutes – December 13 minutes were distributed for review. Motion was made to approve the December 13 minutes with corrections. Jenn seconded the motion. Vote: Bobby – yes, Jenn – yes, Laurie – yes, Mara – yes. Ben did not vote since he was not at the meeting. Vote passed 4-0 in favor.

Next Meetings – January 9, February 13, and March 13, 2023. It was decided the March meeting agenda will to discuss the financial structure of the Recreation/Pool Department and the Commissions Roles and Responsibilities.

Motion to adjourn, seconded. Vote: Ben – yes, Jenn – yes, Laurie – yes, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes.