

Park and Recreation Commission Meeting

Virtual 6:32 pm

December 4, 2023

Commissioners: Mara Huston, Laurie Eliason, Bobby Beagan, Ben Carmel-Chair

Dennis Mannone- Dir. Park and Recreation

Guests: Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director

Roll Call –Mara – here, Bobby – here, Laurie – here, Ben - here

Public Comment: None

Chair Comments: Ben held his comments until topics are discussed during tonight's agenda.

Director Update: Dennis stated his department is preparing for shutdown and the move to the new building. Swim meets will be held on Friday and Saturday and then the pool will be shut with a plan to open for renters on December 26th. The plan is to open the facility to everyone on January 2. A few Recreation programs have been scheduled to start mid-January with more added as the year goes on.

He will meet with the Feeley Field contractor and architect Friday morning in order to create a punch list to finish. The plan is to complete the Phase 1 and then bid out Phase 2 over the winter months. He met with the SMILE playground architect today and the plan is to send the bid out after the first of the year with renovation to begin in early spring. The playground will be closed for a couple of months. Bobby asked if the Commission could see the plans and any alternatives being discussed. Dennis said the bid documents will be ready in a few weeks and they will be able to review them at that time. He said the add alternatives come into play if the playground equipment is too expensive and a change to a more affordable piece is required. The budget is around \$250,000. If something comes up that will significantly impact the budget, he would have to go back to the CPC and request additional funds. Ben agreed the priority is the pour in play surface and new equipment would be second. Dennis is working with DPW on the bid process. The DPW does the front-end piece with all the legal requirements of the bid. He said the bid should be out in 3 weeks or so. Once the Town manager signs the contract, a start date can be set. He said the same process will be followed with the Phase 2 bids for Feeley Field.

Mara asked about the trees along the fence by the playground and the plan discussed in the past to remove them. Dennis said the plan is to remove the trees along the parking lot side of the playground along with the tree in the middle of the playground. Everyone is hopeful the trees on the back side of the playground might be able to be saved. Mara suggested additional discussion so the Commission understands the plan for the playground renovation. Ben agreed and said once the bid documents are completed the Commission can review them. Dennis said nothing will be done with the trees until the bids come in and they see how the available funds line up with the bids and added the DPW may help with some of the work, so that will help with the expense. Mara asked if replacement trees are part of the bid. Dennis said no, they would be purchased after, perhaps by DPW.

Ben asked Dennis if he had any update from Adam, the new Director of Planning, and the RFP for the Open Space project. Dennis had nothing new to report. Ben will reach out to Adam and ask him to attend the January or February meeting.

Ben commented on an email received regarding use of Curtis school, inside and outside. The response was Sudbury Public Schools handle inside rentals and Park and Recreation handles rental of the field

after 3 and on weekends and availability is based on field permits requests. Ben asked for clarity on who is responsible for handling these requests. He suggested this should be a topic for another meeting. Dennis agreed and said he believes he is only responsible for booking fields for athletic events not special Town events or other requests from third party rentals that require more Town services. He grants field permits by season, so he won't know if a field is available until he receives all the permits from youth groups. In this case, he said the Town Select Board's office has taken over and is handling this request. He has informed user groups they cannot use the field that day. Ben will add this topic to a future agenda. Mara mentioned the need to address requests from groups to rent or use the new Community Center. Laurie agreed it is not completely clear how the various rooms will be rented out. Dennis said he had a discussion with the Town Manager and Deb Galloway, (Dir. Senior Center) and Sandra Duran and the plan is to hold off any rentals for at least 6 months since the building isn't complete yet and more discussion will need to take place. Dennis is not planning on renting out the program rooms at this time.

Dennis will be handling the Recreation side requests, Deb Galloway will handle the Senior Center side and Sandra is planning to handle rentals of the shared space. Custodial service, opening and closing of the facility and fees are all areas for discussion. Dennis said an added concern is the Recreation side of the building is still under construction and the pool lobby will not be available until spring. He doesn't want to create more problems than he already has to deal with in the new facility.

Laurie agreed and asked if there was a building manager. Dennis said Facilities is in charge of the building. Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director, said she is in responsible for operational issues with the buildings. They are currently working on developing clarity on the staffing requirements to run the new facility. She said unfortunately an operational plan wasn't part of the original project and there is currently no plan to add additional staff even though the square footage has been doubled and the new building will require a different level of management and maintenance. The Town is taking rentals of the new facility slow and are investigating the overall operational costs, insurance requirements for opening the facility for third party rentals. The goal is to be able to offer something that makes sense to the community and something the Town can afford and support. She is looking into management software to handle rentals of the common areas and multipurpose room, but outside rentals require policy decisions and will require legal review as to the Town's liability.

Mara agreed, but stated the Sewataro buildings are free and used by profit, not-profit, family groups. She hoped the policies on the new Community Center would be decided upon soon. Sandra replied one is a building the Town is operating and the other is a facility that the Town has a contractual agreement with so they are different entities with different policies.

CPC Discussion with Marcia Rasmussen: Laurie introduced Marcia as the part-time Rail Trail Coordinator who is providing updates and holding meetings on the development of both rail trails. Marcia has submitted 2 applications to the CPC, one for expansion of the driveway at Parkinson Field and the other is related to additional funds for Phase 3 design of the BFRT. Marcia presented the presentations she prepared for the CPC which included pictures, maps and overview of the projects. Marcia discussed the expansion of the driveway for access to the Ti-Sales Field; after speaking with a consultant the cost for survey, design, permitting and possible construction was estimated at \$250,000. Marcia stated she was looking for a letter from the Park and Recreation Commission in support of this project. Mara clarified that Ti-Sales Field is used for LSRHS ultimate frisbee. Commission discussed

driveway access to Ti-Sales Field and Rail Trail access. Marcia said the parking at Ti-Sales would also be parking for the rail trail and a traffic light is planned for Rt 27 and Peakham Road. The light will be for traffic and crossing of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. It was not clear if it will be an actual traffic light or crossing signal for cyclists and walkers. Laurie added the requirement for handicapped parking as well. Marcia agreed and stated it would be great if the survey would cover these issues even if they didn't have all the funds to do everything at this time. Commission discussed the article and then Ben made a motion for the Park and Recreation Commission to support the article as presented. Bobby seconded the motion. Vote – Laurie – yes, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes, Ben – yes. Motion passed 4-0 in favor. Mara suggested that Marcia add the Park and Recreation Commission's vote to support the article to her presentation slides.

Marcia presented the second CPC application for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 3. She stated the initial request was for \$250,000 but then increased to \$750,000 when it was learned prior funds allocated for Phase 2 could not be transferred to Phase 3. These funds will be used for the trail design from Station Road across Route 20 to just 200 feet beyond the Framingham/Sudbury Town line. After Marcia's presentation and discussion of the design fees and funding Ben made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission support the CPC article as presented. Mara seconded the motion. Vote – Laurie – yes, Mara – yes, Bobby – yes, Ben – yes. Motion passed in favor 4-0.

Soccer/Lax Wall with Zach Kaufman – Zach Kaufman, 17 Butler Place, Sudbury Youth Lacrosse, presented additional information to the Commission on the Lacrosse Wall, Sudbury Youth Lacrosse is requesting to build on Haskell field. He walked the field with Mara last week. He said they found a company that sells a pre-cast concrete wall, so they will purchase the wall instead of building it. The wall will be placed on a poured concrete pad with artificial turf in the front of the wall. Zach stated Charles Contracting, a company owned by John Fraser, President of Sudbury Youth Lacrosse, will do the concrete pad. The overall cost of the wall, installation and artificial turf is between \$25,000 and \$30,000, which would be a donation to the Town. Zach stated his understanding is the order of operations is to get approval of the project first from the Park and Recreation Commission, then proceed to the Building Department for approval and then the Select Board and Town Manager. The Commission discussed approving the location of the wall contingent upon approvals from the Building and Select Board. The Commission expressed concerns regarding how the lacrosse wall, if approved, may impact the future of the Haskell pathway.

Bobby suggested postponing any vote until actual drawings can be reviewed of the actual layout and design specs for the wall, foundation and artificial turf and how close it will be to the fence, pathway etc. Bobby said he would not be able to vote until he reviewed that data. Ben agreed, but didn't want to keep delaying the decision on the wall. Mara thought if Dennis and the Parks and Grounds Foreman approved the location it should be supported. Laurie suggested doing a group walk on the site with the Commission to confirm the location of the wall and the proximity to the Haskell pathway before putting a permanent structure at Haskell. Zach stated Sudbury Youth Lacrosse would be open to moving the small lacrosse fields a bit if they impact the location of the wall.

Bobby stated before the wall is approved, he would like to walk Haskell field with the Combined Facilities Director and other Commission members to discuss the accessible pathways at Haskell field and have someone from the Town review and approve the layout and proposed location of the wall to

see how it will impact current field usage. Bobby will work on a date and time to walk the field. Dennis will work with the Parks and Grounds Department along with Zach to stake out the location of the wall.

Commission Update –

Fairbank Update – Mara reported all inspections are done, furniture is being moved in and contractors are working on a punch list before the move to the new building. The plan is for the new center to be open on December 26, but it is up to the Department Directors when programs will be offered to the public. Town staff is working on outstanding technology issues. Temporary entrance to Recreation will be on the side of the building and parking will be across the street at Haskell. Phase 2 will begin once everyone is out of the old Fairbank building. Phase 2 requires asbestos abatement and then demolition of the building by late January/early February. New Recreation entrance will be ready by spring. Ben asked about grand opening plans. Mara said there is no official date yet, but the senior center will have soft opening celebration in late January.

Haskell Pathway – Bobby discussed the plan to extend the current pathway along the Butler Road side of Haskell field. He said the Commission received an email from residents on Butler Road offering a history on the pathway. Bobby summarized the email and said there was easement given to make Butler Place the pathway instead of continuing the path behind houses on Butler. An Article submitted at Town meeting back in 2007/2008 to extend the pathway on Haskell was pulled and not voted on once residents presented the historical agreement between the residents and the Town. He wanted to make the Commission aware of the email and said it would be a point of discussion as they discuss extending the path at Haskell. He has reached out to the Combined Facilities Director to discuss further. Ben asked if the Commission should reach out to Town Counsel. Bobby thought it might be necessary since he wasn't sure if it was an agreement or actual Town meeting article. He thought it would be good to find out if there is anything that would prohibit the Commission from extending the pathway. Ben stated that Abby Kaufman, 17 Butler Place, confirmed in the online Q&A that the Town paid for the white fence and trees behind Butler Place. Dennis expressed concern that if a path is put down the center of Haskell it will impact field layouts and they will lose an 11v11 soccer field. Ben stated it would be good to look at Haskell field and see how the proposed lacrosse wall and Haskell pathway discussion will impact the field.

Rail Trail Update - none at this time.

Commission Vacancy Update – Ben explained the process for filling the vacancy on an elected board. He said Jenn Stone's term runs through 2025. The individual appointed will serve until the end of FY24 and then it will become an open position for the 2024 Town Election for a one-year term. He said it is under Section 11 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The position has been officially posted as open and there will be a future meeting with the Select Board once there are candidates for the opening.

Ben reminded the Park and Recreation Commission section for the Town Annual Report is due on January 26th. He asked for updates to last years report and accomplishments that occurred during the year. Ben will consolidate all comments and information and send out the document to the Commission for review at the January meeting.

Next meetings – Ben will send out a request for dates members are available for January, February and March meetings. He will also send out a request asking when members are available for a site walk at Haskell.

Motion to adjourn. Laurie seconded. Vote: Laurie – yes, Mara – yes, Bobby – yes, Ben – yes. Motion passed in favor – 4-0. Meeting adjourned 9:28pm.