

March 2, 2020  
Town of Sudbury  
Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Present: Commissioners - Jim Marotta, Dick Williamson, Bobby Beagan, Mara Huston, Ben Carmel  
Dennis Mannone, Dennis Keohane, Finance Director, Lynn Noland, Patti Walch, Ann Boland (Sudbury Garden Club), Jen Roberts, Janie Dretler (Selectboard), Charlie Russo (candidate for Selectboard)

**Public Comment** – The Commission received a letter from Susan Brown regarding her concerns about the Therapeutic Recreation Program in the Park and Recreation Department. Bobby read Susan’s letter have it in the minutes. Susan questioned why many of the Adaptive Programs have disappeared over the years. Dennis stated in the past there was an employee who held the position of Adaptive Recreation Specialist, but that individual left over 5 years ago. Dennis stated he is new to the department, but noticed that the adaptive programs have been reduced over the years because there was no one in the department qualified to run the programs. Dennis said he is reviewing all programs and will work to offer some adaptive programs again.

**Signage at Heritage Park** – Patti Walch, Sudbury Garden Club, stated they would like to put a new sign at Heritage Park. The new sign would be on the Concord Road side of the park near the new entrance to the park across from Grinnell park. Patti presented to the Design Review board and will also go before the Historical Review Board. She spoke with Chris Felt, Park and Grounds, who stated there was already a small sign at the park, but it is not easily visible from Concord Road. She would like the Commission to approve the donation of the new sign and the location. The sign is currently planned as a one-sided sign, but if the sign has to be two sided it would become more expensive and they would have to generate more funds or cancel their plans. Dennis stated the preference would be to locate the sign close to Concord Road, where Patti has already staked the location. Bobby brought up an issue regarding a bylaw that prohibits signs having any kind of commercial signage located within a certain distance of a park. In this case, the Sudbury Garden Club was planning on putting their name on the sign. He suggested contacting the Select Board to clarify if their name can go on the sign.

Bobby stated he would make the motion including that exception.

Motion made to accept the sign, to be donated by the Sudbury Garden Club, as designed with the contingency that the Sudbury Garden Club receives the proper approval from the Select Board to put their name on the sign. The Garden Club will also work with Chris Felt, of the Parks and Grounds Department, to locate the sign as agreed along the wall and sidewalk on the Concord Road side of the street.

Motion received a second and was approved 5-0.

**Fairbanks Working Group and Financial Analysis-** Dennis K. gave a summary of the process he used to develop costs for new Fairbank Community Center that he presented to the Fin Com. He reviewed costs of the current building and looked at projected costs for the new building and looked at projected debt. He discussed financing options for the new building. Looking at tax impact for the average household, he would recommend going for a 30 year pay off of the debt. Average cost for average resident would be estimated at \$230. He discussed variable costs of the new building, such as recreation program costs, and fixed costs for the building such as electricity, gas, etc. Mara stated existing programs will run as is in the new facility. New programs will only be added if there is staff and a demand to run them.

Bobby questioned space allocation. Mara stated Recreation will have a dedicated space and additional 1,700 square feet extra, new Gym, (twice the size, but dividable) toddler space currently have 2 rooms, in new building they will have one room but it will be bigger. They will have to use the gym for any extra space.

Bobby questioned space designations mentioned in previous meetings. Dennis M. explained that some of the space in the past presentations were not labeled correctly. This has since be corrected. Dennis M. stated the new facility gym space will be larger, so that may help with raining day space during the summer camp program. Some vendor programs had to moved to indoor space in the past.

Jim Marotta asked if a membership fee was going to be charged to use the facility. Mara stated the current model will stay the same as it is now, just moved to a new building. Mara said the committee hopes more people will come and use the new facility and the pool will be able to bring back more swim meets with the addition of a new facility with new locker rooms.

Mara asked Dennis K. about the cost recovery model, if Recreation doesn't cover all the cost with the programs they run. Dennis K. stated that budgets are made earlier, if the fund is out of money, the Department to would have to develop some action to cover the costs.

Commission also discussed if nothing is done to the existing building, there will still be a cost to the community. Janie Dretler stated the only option being presented to the residents is a new facility, not renovation of the current building. Ben stated it would be a good to have a slide in the presentation that shows the residents they would be paying some type of cost no matter renovation or new facility.

Bobby stated it just comes down to money. The presentation will have to sell the residents on what they are getting with the new facility. Bobby asked if the new gym offers more program opportunities. Dennis M. stated it will be a regulation basketball size gym and there will other avenues to bring in more revenue to Recreation. The Commission discussed what residents may ask about the new facility and how to get people to vote positively.

Mara commented on the email she sent to the commission prior to the meeting. There will be no formal sharing agreement.

-The current plan is that seniors will have priority of the large multipurpose room, art studio and fitness studio during their normal operating hours (Monday-Friday, 09am-4pm) Recreation can request use of the space.

-Recreation will have priority of the gym. Seniors can request use of the space.

-Recreation and Seniors will collaborate for a smooth transition between user groups.

- The reservation of these rooms would be aided by an electronic reservation system that is managed by both Recreation and Seniors.

Mara was looking for a statement of support from the Commission in regard to the Fairbank Community Center.

Motion made that the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) supports the Fairbank Community Center project as proposed by the Select Board.

Second received motion passed 4-0 and one abstention

Mara made a motion to have the PRC support statement be as follows: ‘

The Park and Recreation (PRC) supports the Fairbank Community Center project as proposed by the Select Board. The Park and Recreation Department provides affordable recreation programs and facilities for all Sudbury residents. This project will provide a modern facility to support aquatics, toddler summer camps, after school programs, teen center, fitness and general programming for all ages. The PRC believes this is a critical resource for the Sudbury community.

Motion was seconded and passed 4-0 in favor with one abstention.

Mara requested that this statement be on the Town website with a link to the Park and Recreation website.

Jen Roberts expressed her feeling that it is important for everyone to publicly support the new Fairbank Community Center project. A Town Forum is currently scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup>. Jim M. stated he felt they would have to be able to tell residents what the benefit is of the new building and why the Town needs it.

**Director Update:** Dennis reported summer registration went well and camps are almost full. He is currently working with the Sudbury Public Schools to see if there is any space, he can use for raining days. The Field Enterprise Fund is still lagging financially, but spring field permits will be in soon and that should help balance the current revenue shortfall.

Bobby asked if there might be a need for an increase in either the Pool or Field Enterprise Fund. The Commissioners stated in the past the Director's brought any request for fee increase to the Commission in April. The suggestion was to ask Dennis K. for the reports he and the prior Town Manager prepared for the Commission in the past.

**Master Plan** – Bobby stated the Recreation portion doesn't look like it has changed since the last review. Mara mentioned the document online does not mention Sewataro or Broadacres. The draft is online and Dick mentioned two areas the Park and Recreation Commission should focus on which are Recreation based; transportation and open space/recreation. Dick stated transportation would include the Rail Trail and also commented that the Recreation Commission hasn't been that forceful in supporting the Rail Trail and this would be an opportunity. The Commissioners disagreed that the Park and Recreation Commission hasn't been supportive of the Rail Trail. Jim Marotta stated the capital prioritization needs to be updated and included in the plan. Mara suggested speaking with Beth Sudemeyer. Bobby asked the Commissioners to review the capital planning document and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting.

Bobby will talk with Adam Duchesneau, Director of Planning or Beth Sudemeyer to discuss further and make sure everyone is on the same page.

Janie Dretler discussed the grants to approve bike paths etc, which is a state program. The proposal for the sidewalk on Morse Road is not going forward at this time.

Parcel 1 of Broadacre was purchased with CPA funds with the idea for recreation/open space use.

Bobby distributed a copy of past Park and Recreation Capital projects requests to review and update. Dennis M. also discussed the possible need to discuss fee increased at the Atkinson Pool and Field Permit Fees.

Meeting adjourned at 830pm.