

Virtual Meeting – 6:30pm

May 21, 2020

Commissioners: Bobby Beagan, Mara Huston, Jim Marotta, Ben Carmel, Dick Williamson
Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool

Guests: Scott Nix, Chief of Police, Dan Nason, DPW, Janie Dretler, Jen Roberts, Selectboard, Bill Murphy, BoH, Chris Felt, Parks and Grounds, Mark Spector, Youth Baseball

Public Comment: Bobby reported he received permission to vote on the request to hang banners for graduating seniors at fields controlled by the Park and Recreation Commission. The request was to hang banners at Cutting, Haskell, and Featherland. If the Commission votes in favor, the Town Manager will decide if the banners can be displayed at the fields. Two of the banners will be 6'x2' and the other one will be 8'x2 1/2'. Chris Felt stated it would be better if the parents hung the signs at the fields. Chief Nix asked about a proposed parade associated with the banners, and Bobby said no parade was ever mentioned

Motion made and seconded to allow LSRHS parents to hang banners at Haskell, Feeley, and Cutting field with the Town Managers' approval.

Motion passed in favor - 5-0 Ben-yes, Mara -yes, Jim-yes, Bobby-yes, Dick -yes

Mark Spector, Youth Baseball, commented that Youth Baseball was still hopeful that summer baseball could be played and asked if use of the fields for youth groups is approved, what protocols would need to be followed. It will be a difficult task, but stated they are interested in hearing from Recreation about the polices that will be put in place for a safe reopening. Dennis stated that he is still waiting on specifics for field openings and permitting the fields.

Opening tennis courts/fields - Bobby discussed the facilities that can open in Phase 1 of the Governors' reopening plan. Tennis courts are included in that phase and the Recreation office has already received many questions on when the courts will be open. Bill Murphy, Both, stated he sent a letter to Dennis M. which stated fields and tennis courts could be open, but there was to be no shared equipment. He said the concern from the Board of Health is users need to know the proper protocol for using the courts and information needs to be communicated first, so the BoH would support opening on June 8th. Chief Nix agreed with Bill Murphy and stated due to the confusion that still exists on how tennis courts should be opened and used he would also support communication first and opening the courts on June 8th. He stated the police department should not be called to enforce the playing protocol at the tennis courts.

Dan Nason, DPW, agreed with Chief Nix and Bill Murphy and said it will be difficult to police the those that don't follow the proper use protocol, and stated it will be difficult to stop residents from other towns using our courts.

Dennis agreed with opening on June 8th, he said his concern is private tennis clubs are closed, tennis pros will use our open courts for private lessons. He agreed with the June 8th opening date.

Bill M. suggested sending out communication to residents regarding guidelines to follow when the courts are reopened to keep users as safe as possible.

Jim M. asked if other towns have their courts open. Jim and Dick W. stated they would be in favor of opening the courts on the 25th of May going along with the Governor's Phase 1 Plan. Dennis stated that some towns have their tennis courts open with various restrictions. Commission discussed the pros and cons of opening the courts on May 25th or waiting until June 8th giving time to communicate and educate the community on how the courts may be used in the first phase of reopening the courts. Discussed possible reservation of the courts and proper signage at all courts.

After discussion, Jim Marotta made a motion to open the Town's tennis courts on May 25th, with strict adherence to the state guidelines. Ben C. second the motion. The motion was amended after discussion to open on May 26th due to the Memorial Day holiday.

Chris Felt stated use of the basketball courts at the Featherland Tennis courts would need to be addressed since two of the courts have basketball courts. It was decided to keep the two courts with basketball closed at this time.

Janie Detler, BOS, asked if the State of Emergency could override the vote.

Mara H. asked about the LSRHS courts and how this impacts their use. The high school courts will remain closed at this time.

Bobby stated a positive vote on this motion would not nullify the need for proper signage at the courts.

Chris Felt stated it would take time to get signs made.

The motion passed in favor 5-0 Jim-yes, Ben-yes, Mara-yes, Dick-yes, Bobby-yes

Bobby thanked the Town staff for their input and guidance and stated the Commission will work with Dennis M. to educate and get the message out to the residents and users of the courts.

Director Update - Dennis stated he has been staying on top of the CDC guidelines and the American Camp Association guidelines regarding running summer camps. He is still waiting for guidance from the Governors' office and stated he would have to make a decision in the next two weeks in order to prepare for camp properly. It will be difficult to run Sudbury Summer as it has been run in the past. He stated he didn't feel Sudbury Adventure would run due to the daily bus trips and many of the destinations may not be open this summer. He said Preschool Pals would also be cancelled since it will be difficult to social distance children who are 3 and 4 years old.

Bill M., BoH, stated summer camps, if they are allowed to run, will look very different than in the past. Municipal camps are exempt from some of the regulations, but BoH is moving towards following many of their guidelines. Bill and Dennis have had many conversations regarding how and if camps will be able to run this summer.

Ben C. asked if many cancellations have come in. He saw the Facebook survey that Recreation did a few days ago and asked about the results. Dennis stated several cancellations have come in and he expects more once the Governors guidelines are released. The results of the survey were a 60/40 split on people still wanting camp to run. He stated 80% of the respondents wanted some type of programs to get their kids active and outside. He agrees with Bill any kind of program or camp will have to be run safely and follow the state guidelines.

Mara stated that even if the camp numbers were lower, she felt there will be residents who will want to send their children.

Bobby asked how the the different options Dennis is considering impact the Recreation budgets. Dennis stated he is currently reviewing the numbers and determining what the cost of the half day program would have to be in order to break even. He said refunding camps will impact the Revolving Funds negatively so he is looking at offering half day programs this summer to cover salaries and expenses.

Janie, BOS, stated she listened in on the American Camp Association, Zoom meeting and based on the discussion thought it would be difficult to run camps this summer.

Mara asked about running vendor camps. Dennis responded that some of the vendor camps he was thinking of running have cancelled their summer camps due to COVID-19 and the lack of clear guidelines at this time and the planning time required to run a summer camp.

Mara stated the Commission will need a clear understanding of the financial impact of not running camp as previous summers on the Park and Recreation Department/Atkinson Pool. She stated this would be necessary so that staff is not lost and planning can begin for any other summer program options and future programs and use of the Atkinson Pool. Mara requested this financial information for the next Park and Recreation meeting.

Dick W. mentioned the Master Plan and the Recreation Plan which Dick said needs to be updated. Bobby stated he would add that to the next agenda.

Next meeting is still scheduled for June 1, 6:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm, (Bobby left meeting at 8) Dick- yes, Mara -yes, Ben-yes, Jim-yes.

