

Virtual Meeting – 6:35pm November 9, 2020

Commissioners: Bobby Beagan, Mara Huston, Ben Carmel, Dick Williamson

Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool

Guests: Janie Dretler (BOS), Jennifer Roberts (BOS), Howard Feng (FinCom)

Public Comment: None

Director Update: Dennis reported the Halloween drive-thru was successful. 125 to 150 cars came through to see the carved pumpkins. Dennis thanked the DPW, Police and Fire department for their help.

Dennis stated field rentals are winding down for the winter. Soccer finished last weekend and Parks and Grounds will be pulling nets off Haskell this week. Haskell will be aerated and slice seeded. The plan is to leave the bathrooms open for another week. Financials for the Field Enterprise Fund look good right now, due the fact that Park and Grounds salaries are not being charged to the Fund at this time. In addition, some of the bathroom cleaning expenses are being charged to the COVID account. Currently we have about \$89,000 in the Field Enterprise Fund, this would be much less is the salaries were being charged against the account. Dennis added that he is still renting Cutting Field.

Mara asked if we still get money from rental of the Community Field. Dennis will check with the athletic director to see if the field is being rented.

Dennis mentioned to the Commission that they may need to discuss an increase in the field permit fee. He stated the current Field Enterprise Fund is committed to about \$140,000 in salary and benefits for half of the Parks and Grounds staff and \$10,500 for transfer into the Cutting Stabilization Fund. We are not bringing in enough revenue to cover expenses. At some point he would like to add the topic to the agenda.

Pool activity has been busy with swim/dive team rentals, along with lap swim. Swim lessons are only being held on Saturdays. He is looking into holding some type of lessons over the holidays. Lessons during the week will return after swim team season. He is still waiting to hear what LSRHS will do regarding their swim team.

The Pool Enterprise Fund is even right now due to all the swim team rental income and the fact that we are using a skeleton crew with only a few part time lifeguards during swim lessons and to cover time off for full time staff.

Recreation staff is running Wild Wednesdays with smaller numbers. Terrific Twos winter sessions are set to run Monday, Wednesday, Friday with up to 10 in the class. The hope is to build the program back up to five days a week.

There is currently about \$23,000 left in the Recreation revolving funds. Half of the Program Coordinators salary is paid out of this fund plus the salary for the part-time Preschool Director. Dennis stated he may have the Program Coordinators work the Terrific Two program depending on the numbers and the status of the other Recreation programs.

Bobby asked Dennis for an update regarding discussion on the mask policy in Town.

Dennis said the Governor issued a mandate stating masks had to be worn indoors and outdoors regardless of being six feet away. It is difficult to get everyone to wear masks. Signage is at all the fields, parks and tennis courts. It is getting colder so the outside activity should start to subside at the tennis courts and basketball courts. The tennis nets are set to be taken down after Thanksgiving.

Dennis stated there is always the option to lock the courts and take down the basketball rims. Hopefully people will follow the rules, so this isn't necessary.

Mara Huston questioned if the Commission needed to do anything, or just let the Parks and Grounds handle closing the courts for the season as they have done in the past. It was decided not to do anything.

Additional signage was discussed. Mara suggested easel signs placed at Featherland to remind players of the rules. Dennis mentioned he heard the Town was going to put out the electronic street signs with rules. Dennis will contact the Board of Health and see what type of signage is going up.

Janie Dretler, BOS, stated she stopped by Featherland and spoke with kids playing basketball without masks. She alerted them to the new change to the mask order. She did mention that if rules weren't followed the risk would be the courts would have to be locked down.

Robert Beagan asked about any more issues with vandalism at the fields. Dennis stated all has been quiet. Chris Felt is still researching cameras that might work at the fields.

Janie Dretler, BOS, asked about Community Field use and if groups were using it other than Town teams. Dennis stated he did not believe so, he has had to kick some teams off from other Towns at Cutting Field etc. He has discussed this with the Athletic Director at LSRHS.

Janie asked Dennis if he had a copy of the Community Field Agreement and the agreement for the LSRHS softball field. Dennis said he had a copy of the Community Field Agreement but not sure about the other, since he wasn't Director when that project was completed. Janie was looking for a copy, but was having a hard time finding one.

Dennis said he toured the Sewataro land and talked about doing some programming up there, but due to COVID he has not pursued anything at this time. He felt there was opportunity to run programs in the future.

Janie asked if Dennis knew the procedure for renting space or using a facility at Sewataro. She asked about liability and about certificate of insurance. Dennis did not know, but stated he has referred some groups up to Sewataro but is not aware of the permit application or if a fee is charged

Bobby added that Recreation does not have jurisdiction over Sewataro, it sits with the Selectboard.

Janie stated there is a management contract. She is looking for clarification on some areas. She wanted to make sure the Town was doing everything correctly.

Mara asked if groups are paying a permit fee and if so, where does that money go. It was not known.

General CPC Update/Discussion and possible vote on Feeley/Softball CPC and Haskell Playground CPC Proposal: Mara stated two site visits were conducted at Haskell Playground and Feeley Softball. Several members from the CPC Commission attended along with Dennis and Chris Felt. Representatives from Girl's and Men's Softball joined them at Feeley. Everyone was able to offer information and ask questions. She felt the visits were successful.

Featherland CPC: Mara stated she received the final pay application for the second set of tennis courts at Featherland. The final report will close out the process and return a few thousand dollars back to CPC. Until a decision is made on the sound dampening coverings for pickleball noise, Mara will not mark that pay application as complete until a decision is made on the coverings.

Bobby asked Dennis if he was able to find out if funds were left in any of the Boundless Playground accounts. Dennis contacted the Finance Director and is waiting to hear if funds are left how they can be used moving forward.

Mara referenced a past discussion on possibly using some of the Meadow walk money for the design portion of the Feeley CPC project. She felt that would benefit the Feeley project.

Bobby agreed and suggested putting that topic on the next agenda. He also stated the Commission should discuss long range plans and how funds from Meadow Walk should be spent. Mara requested the Recreation CPC Projects be scheduled for the second night of public hearings, and that would be on December 2. Mara stated after that, that the CPC will start deliberating and making decisions in a January.

Commissioners discussed possibility of holding a meeting before the CPC hearings. Decision was to hold the December meeting on November 30th.

Bobby asked if there were any modifications to the Haskell Playground or Feeley/Softball CPC requests that the Commission voted on at the last meeting. Mara stated the site visits went well.

Bobby stated as long as the Commissioners didn't feel anything had changed, they should be set with the CPC submissions. If something comes up; the Commission could vote at the November 30th meeting so the submission could be updated before the presentations.

Bobby asked if there were any questions on the Haskell Playground. Mara asked about the runoff from the parking lot to the trees. The trees roots are reaching out for water and disrupting the playground surface tree root issue is very obvious and needs to be addressed.

Dick Williamson mentioned the use of root barriers and thought that was something that should be explored. Mara stated that may work with new trees, but wondered about existing trees and how to handle that root problem. That issue will need to be addressed by an arborist.

Fairbanks Update: Bobby congratulated everyone on the work and effort put forth to get the new Community Center Building passed at the November 3 election.

Janie and Jen also thanked everyone for their work with the virtual walkthrough and public forum and the work done to educate the public on the necessity of the new building. In addition, they thanked all the prior groups that worked on the project over the past several years. It was a huge team effort.

Mara stated the conceptual plan was based on a needs/space assessment. They have put their final touches on that document and sent it off to Janie Dretler, the Chair of the Selectboard, the Town Manager, Bill Barletta and then to the Permanent Building Committee.

Janie stated the first step is to select an OPM (Owners Project Manager). This will be an interview process and the project will go out to bid. That process will be overseen by the Town Manager and Bill Barletta, a combined facilities director with involvement from the permanent building committee. She thought the permanent building committee was tentatively scheduled to meet a week from Thursday, November 19th. Janie encouraged everyone to stay involved. This is a community center and it is important that we are all heard throughout the process.

Mara suggested keeping the Fairbank Building on upcoming agendas to keep everyone informed of the process.

Update on Memorial Tree Donation: Dennis reported a location other than Heritage or Grinnell Park has been selected so the decision is no longer with the Park and Recreation Commissions.

Janie stated she believe the tree selected was a birch and that it has been planted between the Loring Parsonage and Flynn Building.

Dick stated he spoke with Marilyn Ellsworth and Patty Walsh, of the Garden Club, and they were agreeable to make recommendations for landscaping the parks.

Bobby thought it was worth keeping a dialogue open with the Garden Club regarding the overall design of the parks. He said it wasn't something he gave a lot of thought to until the residents mentioned it at the last meeting.

Dick stated he will continue the conversations with the two Garden Clubs. The Garden Club works with the Parks and Grounds/DPW.

Janie stated she was pleased Park and Recreation will stay involved in monitoring Heritage a Grinnell since there has been discussion of passive recreation on those sites and making them an active part of Town.

Mara stated it would be great to put some picnic tables on the site along with some shade trees. May also want to start thinking about what could they do on lower Grinnell Park to make it a nice place.

Janie offered the Selectmen just approved irrigation plan for Grinnell. It was suggested to invite both Garden Clubs to Commission meetings twice a year to discuss ongoing plans for Heritage and Grinnell Park.

Janie Dretler mentioned the Town is entering the 75%/100% design for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and this location is near the parks, so it would be good for Recreation to be involved with the process.

Master Plan Update: Dick did not have any updates. He stated the contractor is putting together the final document. Commissioners were concerned the missing information regarding recreation may not added to the final document. Mara asked it there would be another opportunity to review the document. Dick stated it had not been announced yet, but he thought for sure there would be an opportunity to review it. Mara asked if Dick could request a copy of the document. Dick said he expected to get a copy, but would request one.

Janie Dretler stated she thought there would be a virtual open house regarding the master plan, she thought it would be available through December 2. Janie suggested emailing the master plan steering committee to get an update.

Bobby stated he forgot to mention that Jim Marotta missed the last meeting and tonight's due to surgery.

Discussion on Park and Recreation Charter (Roles and Responsibilities): Bobby stated the Commission has discussed a Charter for the Commission previously, and thought it would be good to review the topic again. He mentioned Ben was asking about the priorities and goals for 2021. Bobby suggested discussing various ideas and then decide the short and long-term goals of the Park and Recreation Commission at the next meeting.

Mara stated there was no discussion about the sound absorption panels for Featherland Tennis courts tonight during the CPC discussion. Bobby recalled he was going to look into other options, but did not have anything at this time.

Dick mentioned the design guidelines for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail involve some areas of Recreation and one those is a parking lot that would abut Broadacres. A bike path along Morse Road is also being discussed along with other ideas that may involve Park and Recreation.

A Field Study was suggested. Davis field renovation has been discussed in the past and is important in order to rest portions of Haskell Field. A field study would go out to bid once the scope of the project had been confirmed. In the past, the field studies have been done by Gale Associates.

Mara stated the number of kids may be lower, but the number of opportunities is growing. Rugby, flag football, field hockey and the Commission even had someone ask about developing cricket fields in Town. Girls' softball is saying their numbers are growing.

Mara suggested getting information on the Recreation properties nestled in neighborhoods in Town to see what they really are and how they can be used. Suggestion was to invite Beth Sudemeyer to a meeting to discussed the properties.

Dennis stated it would be great to have the option of pickle ball/tennis in addition to basketball. This would be great for summer camp opportunities.

Dennis also mentioned long term planning goals for the Atkinson Pool. He stated the Commission has always been more slanted towards field, but thought it would be good to balance fields with pool and park and recreation support.

Discussion centered on incorporating support for all aspects of Park and Recreation and then having Commissioners assigned to each area. The four areas of support would be Park and Recreation, Atkinson Pool, Fields, Community. This designation would help determine what the needs are in each area and this then would be the basis of what is put in the master plan. The Chair would oversee all areas.

Mara stated would be good to get the Friends of Park and Recreation up and running again, but will need to find volunteers

Ben reviewed a list from 2016 listing Park and Recreation priorities. On the list was a new surface at the Haskell playground, new Fairbank Community Center, replace Cutting Field Turf, install lights at turf fields at LSRHS and Cutting, replace Featherland Tennis Courts, the Malone property, and a second well at Haskell. A splash pad at Haskell was also discussed.

Bobby stated the discussion was very helpful and now the need is to narrow down and focus on the plan for the future.

He also stated he would like to see a continuous path at Haskell for people to walk on and get exercise. The current sidewalk does not continue around we are one of the few communities that doesn't have a track that is easily accessible. The high school track is difficult for everyone to get to

Moving forward Bobby suggested creating a list of priorities at the next meeting

Mara asked if it made sense to focus on two areas for the next meeting and the other two at the January meeting. Then after discussion could review everything in March and use that analysis to set the priorities for the Park and Recreation Commission.

Bobby offered to take on the Fields, Mara will be responsible for Aquatics, Ben will take on Community and Dick will take Recreation. This will be the basic framework, but open for discussion.

Vote on New Park and Recreation Commission Chair: Bobby stated he enjoyed the opportunity to be Chair of the Commission. He thought it was a good idea to rotate the role of the Chair. He liked the idea of dividing up areas of need and have each Commissioner responsible to work with the Park and Rec Director and report on their specific area. He said Mara had expressed interest in the Chair, but if anyone else is interested they should let him know. No one expressed interest, so Bobby made a motion to elect Mara Huston as the next Chair to the Park and Recreation Commission. Dick seconded the motion. Ben-yes, Dick-yes, Bobby-yes, Mara-yes.

Jennifer Roberts thanked Bobby for his strong leadership during his term and wished Mara success in her term.

Approve minutes: Motion to approve the minutes from the October 5th minutes as amended. Motion received a second. Motion passed 4-0 Ben-yes, Mara-yes, Dick- Yes, Bobby-Yes

Next meeting scheduled for November 30th, which will actually be the December meeting

Commissioners decided on Tuesday, January 5th for the first meeting of the new year due to CPC deadlines and the holidays. The meeting in February will be held on the 1st.

Motion to adjourn the meeting - Motion passed 4-0 Ben-yes, Mara-yes, Dick- Yes, Bobby-Yes