

Town of Sudbury
Park and Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2014

Present: Commissioners- Dick Williamson, Paul Griffin, Jim Marotta, Tobj Gozdeck
Guests: Art Krusinski, Andrew Sullivan, Scott O'Connell, Mike Walsh, Paul Lucchese

Meeting started at 6:30pm.

Minutes from January 27th were approved. 3-0 (Paul Griffin did not vote)

Sudbury Greenways – Andrew Sullivan, a Sudbury resident, presented to the Commission the idea of greenway rail conversion as a low cost rail trail conversion for our existing rail trails (the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and the MA Central Rail Trail) instead of using federal or state funding. He stated greenways are the lowest cost trail conversion option, they require no multi-year design study, they can be constructed within the town's wetland by-laws, and the development is town driven since no federal or state funds are used.

He stated that a full build "MA-DOT" rail trail will take much longer and have many restrictions because it is primarily funded by federal transportation bills. The trails must meet American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards, which are also referred to as MA-DOT standards. Instead of building a trail, the towns are forced to build a road. He also stated that there is a concern that once Sudbury has spent money on a design study, there is no guarantee the federal funds will become available to actually fund the project.

Andrew also pointed out that a greenway build does not preclude a future full build MA-DOT rail trail. His feeling is that the greenway is a logical first step to get the residents of using the rail trails sooner.

Tobj agreed that this sounded like a great opportunity for the Town of Sudbury.

Dick stated he disagreed with some of the Greenway presentation, but didn't think the meeting was the appropriate time to discuss his differences.

Paul stated it appears the Greenway option would build a basic path that could be enhanced at a later date moving on with the full-build option.

Dick stated he thought the Selectmen were leaning towards the full-build MA-DOT trail and he felt that both rail trails would eventually be full-build. He also stated he didn't think the CPA proposal could be changed at this time.

Jim Marotta stated he had looked into the Greenway option and felt that it should be considered by the Selectmen and the Town of Sudbury as an option to the MA-DOT full-build option. He read a motion that he had drafted regarding the greenway and it was discussed by the Commissioners.

Jim made the following motion: The Park and Recreation Commission recommends the Board of Selectmen CPA request for rail trail design funds be amended to include the greenway concept. A greenway has merit from a cost, environmental, recreational and timeline perspective. A greenway could be in use in a relatively short time frame and connects key recreational assets in the town such as Davis field, Featherland Park and Ti-Sales, all three of which are currently under consideration for renovations by the Commission. A greenway does not preclude a rail trail if the town so chooses to pursue it now or at a later date when funds may be available from the State.

The motion received a second from Todj. The Commission voted in favor of the motion 3-1.

Featherland Field - Mike Walsh (Little League/Babe Ruth) informed the Commissioners the Little League Baseball Board voted to spend money on converting the upper Featherland diamond to a 50/70 foot diamond for 6/7th graders along with still being a field for girls softball and men's softball. He wanted to make sure that if Little League spends money on the field they had a guarantee of using it at 5:45 daily. He stated the girls high school softball field would use the field from 3-5:30, Little League would have the field from 5:45pm to 7:30pm and men's softball would have the field from 8:00pm on.

Little League's plan is to put artificial turf in the infield for baseball, which would still allow the field to be used for softball. They will also add dugouts to the field, all of which will cost around \$100,000.

Mike also asked about the plans for TI-Sales Field. He indicated Little League's interest in building a mini complex of 4 fields for 1st and 2nd graders. He stated that the school fields are becoming unusable since they cannot be maintained properly due to the heavy use daily during the school day. He said it doesn't make any sense to keep spending money on them.

Jim Marotta asked if Little League would prefer to have men's softball off Featherland and moved to Ti-Sales if possible. Mike said he didn't think Men's softball had the funds to assist in building a field at Ti-Sales and Little League would have those funds to renovate TI-Sales.

Paul discussed the possibility of putting lights at Feeley for men's softball, which would allow them to use the field later in the day.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2014 at 6:30pm.

