

Park and Recreation Commission Meeting
March 29, 2016

Attendees: Bobby Beagan, Jim Marotta, Dick Williamson, Mike Ensley; Guests: Melissa Murphy-Rodriguez – Town Manager, Pat Brown – Board of Selectman, Bill Place, Dir DPW, Jim Kelly, Facilities Dir, Jack Ryan, Tobj Gozdeck, Mara Huston, John Beeler

Minutes from February 16, 2016 approved 4-0.

Public Comment: Mara Huston presented a pricing policy review for the Park and Recreation Commission. She had several questions on the Enterprise Fund presentation given at the last Commission meeting. In addition, she questioned why there wasn't a non-resident surcharge to be a member of the pool. She suggested the Commission should wait to vote on any increase and that more information should be gathered before the vote. Jim M. responded with some history on rate increases at the pool. Tobj Gozdek voiced his opinion that the Commission should wait to vote on any increases. Dick offered that he did not remember too many increases in the pool rates over the years. Jim M. thanked Mara and Tobj for their comments and stated that he felt many of their concerns and questions would be answered during the presentation on rate increases by Kayla and Melissa later in the meeting.

Community Center Update – Jack Ryan presented the plan for the proposed new Community Center. The plan will be presented at the open forum in early April and has already been presented to the Sudbury Schools (SPS) because space has been allocated for them in this building. He stated they are making the same presentation to the Council on Aging on March 31st and on April 11th, the task force will be presenting to the BOS, Fin Com, and Capital Action Committee (CAC) what Article 33 will include and the amount that will be requested for design fees. The task force is still working on the final building costs, operating expenses and projected revenues. He explained that in order to reach the figure needed for the design fees, the overall estimated costs of the new facility must be obtained. Jack pointed out to the Commission that it would cost \$12 million to renovate the existing building and bring it up to code. He presented the various options designed for the new Community Center over the past several months which brought him to option 4B, the plan that will be presented in Article 33. It is a two story design (approx. 78,000sq ft.) which keeps the existing pool and builds new offices/exercise rooms on the other side of the pool. The facility has a larger gym, larger pool area, and an expanded Preschool. It has a fitness/exercise equipment room, an elevated track and bleacher seating for the pool. The existing building would be used during construction and torn down after the new facility is completed. The projected cost of the building is approximately \$32 million, but Jack stated they are still working on the exact figure.

Bobby B. asked how long the pool would be off line due to construction. Jack stated it was unclear at this time and since they are currently working with a conceptual plan that would become clearer as the project moves forward.

Jack stated that there will be two open forums on April 14th to present the new Community Center to the residents of Sudbury before Article 33 is presented at the Town Meeting.

Bobby expressed concern over Jack's comment that the operating budget for the new building would not be that much more than is currently spent on the existing building. Jack explained that the larger size of the new facility would allow more people to attend the programs, but not necessarily require more instructors. The larger space would also allow for more summer camp attendees, which would bring in more revenue. Mike Ensley asked what the current operating costs of the building were, and Jim Kelly responded about \$1.6 million.

Jack stated the expectation is that Park and Recreation's revenues would increase more than the revenues from the Senior Center in the new facility.

Jim M. stated when he gathered information from the YMCA the operating expense was \$80 a sq. ft. or more and he was having a difficult time understanding that the operating expense Jack presented for the new facility would be between \$25-\$40 dollars a sq. ft. He suggested to Jack proper analysis would have to be presented to the Commission and Jack said he agreed and that he had confidence in his numbers. Jim followed up with the statement that there would need to be proof that the revenues would increase because the facility could run at a substantial deficit.

Mike E. asked Kayla and Melissa their opinions on the new facility and the costs. Kayla stated that she had concerns and would like more shared space especially if Recreation is expected to generate the majority of the revenue for the facility. Melissa expressed concern over generating the required operating expense and stated any deficit would have to be covered by an override.

Jim Kelly said the members on the Task Force share the same feelings and don't want to present something that will run at a deficit and be a burden to the Town.

Pat Brown asked if the Task Force will have actual Sudbury costs and comparable local costs to present at the meeting.

Melissa R. stated she was nervous about that the facility will actually be able to cover the costs.

Jim M. said a motion could be made, but he would need more information in order to vote on any motion. It was decided that no vote would be taken at this meeting.

The Commissioners did express ongoing concern that this new Community Center is being planned around an aging pool. Jack stated that the design group felt the pool was still in good shape and the planned renovations would be sufficient to keep it running for a number of years.

Park and Recreation Fee Study – Melissa presented the Field Enterprise budget and said historically Recreation has used the retained earnings to offset any overages. She said that she and Kayla agreed they would like to use data from an entire year to do an accurate rate study to compare if it would be better to charge hourly or continue with a per user fee. The Field Enterprise Fund is still a major concern for FY16 due to lack of revenue coming in and is concerned retained earnings will once again have to be used. Her recommendation was to either increase the field permit fee by 20% effective July 1, 2016 (which would take the fee from \$35 to \$42). If the Commission felt this was too extreme, they could choose to phase in the increase by raising the fee 10% effective July 1, 2016 (\$35-\$39) and another 10% effective July 1, 2017 (\$39-\$42).

Melissa did not recommend using the current retained earnings (\$165,712) to offset the overages. Jim M. would like to see more data before they voted on an increase. Melissa stated the data showed that historically the Field Enterprise Fund has brought in between \$190,000-\$200,000 a year. This year it

appears that number will fall short and the retained earnings will have to be used again. Jim stated he would like to wait and not increase at this time until more information was available. It was felt that the retained earnings could be used again to offset any overage.

Melissa offered to come back in 6 months to review the numbers again, and then review the increase fee option. She did not want to stop spending in the Enterprise Fund, but would have to if the funds were not available to cover the expenses.

Dick Williamson did offer his concern that the retained earnings could be used for renovation of the artificial turf fields and possibly some of the funds could be transferred to the stabilization fund created last year for the replacement of the turf fields.

No vote was taken at this time, but Melissa and Kayla will come back in 6 months with additional data on the Field Enterprise Fund.

Kayla presented the current status of the Pool Enterprise Fund and presented a 10% across the board increase for Sudbury residents and a 12% increase for non-residents. In addition, Melissa stated that the pool was currently tracking to overspend at this time and that the retained earnings had been used to cover overages in the past years. Unfortunately, there are no retained earnings left to cover overages in the Pool Enterprise Fund.

Kayla stated that she is in the process of creating new policies to track revenue and invoice vendors.

Jim M. asked Mara how she felt about the increase. Mara responded that she felt there were additional opportunities to program at the pool. She rents lanes at the pool during 1-3 in the afternoon, which is a quiet usage time. She felt the pool could offer more private lessons, the service she is providing, and stated she often refers clients to other pools elsewhere when she cannot work with them.

Kayla stated that additional programming has been looked into and will continue to be a focus; however programming revenue alone will not close the gap enough to get the Enterprise Fund where it needs to be to cover its expenses. The minimum wage is going up in FY 17 to \$10hr and will go up again in FY 18 to \$11hr.

After much discussion, **a motion was made to approve the proposed rate increase for the Atkinson Pool for an across the board increase of 10% for residents and 12% for non-residents. In addition, the Commission will revisit the proposed increase in the field permit in six months. Motion was seconded and approved 4-0.**

Featherland Tennis Courts – Melissa stated she was still waiting on information from the Park and Recreation Commission to support the request to renovate the Featherland Tennis Courts for the presentation to the Fin Com, CAIC and Town Meeting. The Commission responded with some of the reasons; heavy user demand, good location, high school use for practice and JV matches, central location, repair of an existing asset to the Town, and a recreation facility that all ages can use.

Misc. – Kayla distributed an overview of Park, Recreation and Aquatic activity from February and March. She stated she will distribute something like this at the Commission meetings regularly so the Commissioners will be aware of the activity in the department.

Bobby expressed concern about the condition of Haskell field and asked why the lacrosse and soccer layout was the same as last year. He was under the impression that the layout was supposed to change to allow sections of the field to rest. Bill Place stated that if baseball were not at Haskell it would allow for a change in layout, but heavy field usage requests restrict that option.

Bobby also commented that perhaps the retained earnings in the Field Enterprise Fund could be used for and outside vendor to come in a do work on Haskell field. He is very concerned about the current condition. Melissa and Bill offered to arrange a time with Kayla and the Commissioners to walk the field to assess the current condition.

The Commissioners thanked Kayla and Melissa for their presentations and the information that they have been asking for regarding the Enterprise Funds.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.