

Virtual Meeting – 6:35pm

October 5, 2020

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

Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool

Guests: Janine Dretler, Jennifer Roberts (BOS),

Public Comment: Jennifer Roberts, BOS liaison to the Park and Recreation Commission, asked about the policy of face masks at the Haskell playground. She heard residents were concerned masks were not being worn at the playground and was wondering about guidelines and signage. Bobby stated there are signs recommending face masks if social distancing isn't possible. He did not think there was a mandate from the state to wear a mask. Dennis stated it would be difficult to enforce wearing a mask since it is not a state mandate and there are some exclusions due to health reasons to enforce wearing a mask. Dennis stated he would recommend if people were uncomfortable, they should not visit the playground when it is busy or when people are not wearing masks. Bobby said he will check, but thought the signs say masks should be worn. Ben Carmel stated when he has been at the playground it is mixed, some wear masks and others do not. Mara suggest it might be helpful to email the database again and remind people to wear masks outside at the playground if they can't social distance.

Director Update: Dennis stated his staff has been working on fall programs and planning for new winter activities. Finishing up fall swim lessons and the plan is to keep offering lessons. Lessons are taught from the deck and we have received positive feedback on them. Recreation is offering in-house and vendor programs, in addition to Wild Wednesdays for after school activities on ½ day Wednesdays. Several of the programs offered did not run.

Dennis reported the financials of the department, but stated the Town still hasn't closed out the previous fiscal year. He stated the pool is currently \$12,398 short, against the 1/12 budget. The Field Enterprise budget is looking better, but at this time the Park and Recreation Salaries are not being charged against the Fund. Revolving is basically where it was last month, trying to bring in enough revenue to cover expense and salaries. Bobby asked how the Field Enterprise Revenue compares to last year. Dennis wasn't sure since he wasn't able to get reports from the Finance Director. Dennis stated he is still waiting for payment from a few user groups and others paid reluctantly. Dennis said some groups felt they were not using as much space or didn't need as much room so they talked about paying hourly verse paying the per registrant field permit fee. He also stated that the hourly fee may be something to look at in the future. Dennis stated he is incurring a fee of over \$1,000 to clean the bathrooms weekly and the Field Enterprise fund is paying that bill. Commissioners commented that cost may be something that could be covered by the Cares Act, funds for Covid expenses.

Bobby asked Dennis about vandalism issues at Haskell. Dennis said they don't know who ran into the fence but it cost over \$900 to repair. He said teenagers have been sitting on the Haskell dugouts and pulling shingles off, and a few weeks ago kids moved the heavy soccer nets and put them on top of each other. Park and Grounds guys replace them, but this can be dangerous because the goals are staked and when they are moved the stakes are moved also and the tractors can run over them causing damage to the tractor in addition to putting the driver at risk.

Dennis informed Chief Nix about the issues at Haskell. Chief said he would add some extra patrols watching over Haskell at night.

Bobby stated this topic could be added to the next agenda, but he thought cameras or added lights could help the situation. Chris stated that cameras at the end of the field would be difficult because there is no power outlet. Mara suggested some type of solar powered camera if available, possibly attached to the back stop. Bobby said motion lights might be an option. It was suggested that more options should be explored along with prices and then decide which way to go. It was unclear where the funds to pay for the cameras would come from, but was suggested to speak with the Chief of Police and the Town Manager.

General CPC Update on Featherland: Mara stated she verified the remaining Featherland CPC funds could be used for the acoustic soundproofing. The plan would be to install it along the Concord Road side and a little around the corner (Morse Road side).

Dennis received the signed paperwork from the Town Manager with approval to purchase. The total cost is \$19,008. Bobby asked what the Town will actually get for \$19,000. The Town will purchase acoustic panels, which is a heavy fabric that will deaden the sound by 50%.

Mara stated the funds are part of the CPC articles so she did not think a vote was necessary.

Janie Dretler asked if there was a decibel level that has to be reached to be an annoyance and asked if anyone had looked into what was an acceptable level. She said \$19,000 was a lot of money and felt that was something to look into before moving ahead with this large expense. Bobby stated he had concerns too about the price of the acoustic fabric.

Dennis stated there aren't a lot of products like this on the market. It is a sole source vendor. Dennis has information on the product he could send out to anyone who was interested.

Chris Felt stated his shop is about 600 yards from the tennis courts and he can hear the noise from pickleball and it can be loud.

Janie asked if any one has looked at the number of hours people are playing. Is it eight hours a day seven days a week? Janie also asked if anyone can put a portable pickleball net on the tennis courts.

Mara responded that two courts at Featherland are lined for pickleball and one court at Feeley, but portable nets could be put on any court.

Janie said she was not against pickleball, but was just trying to get a handle on future expenses the Town may incur if acoustic nets have to be put at other courts to control noise.

Dennis said he has had some complaints about noise at Feeley too. He stated this could become an issue at some point in the future. Bobby Beagan suggested discussing this further since it could become a more expensive issue for the Town if we put acoustic fabric up at only one location.

Mara thought it would be difficult to put acoustic fabric at Feeley since it would block the view of the tennis courts and the police would not be able to see anything that was going on at the courts. Featherland is different since it would be only be on one side of the fence.

Dennis said he can wait to order the fabric, it doesn't have to be done anytime soon.

Bobby asked when the tennis nets come down. Chris F. stated the usually take them down after Thanksgiving, but pickleball players could play at anytime with the portable net unless there is a decision to lock the courts.

Mara wasn't sure what the benefit would be to wait. She said any remaining funds in the Article will be returned to CPC once the project is completed. The money will still be available if she files the report stating the project isn't complete yet.

Ben Carmel asked if there are different pickleball racquets that would be quieter. Mara stated that would be difficult to mandate and enforce.

Bobby suggested looking at more options before we move to spend almost \$20,000 at one location. Parks and Grounds staff would be installing the acoustic fabric. The fabric would stay up through the winter.

It was decided to think about this a bit more before a decision was made to spend the \$19,000. Bobby will take the lead on this item and research it further.

Featherland Road Signs – Mara expressed concern the signs don't represent the actual use of the fields. Both Upper and Lower Featherland signs have a small sign attached to the bigger sign that says Home of Lincoln Sudbury Youth Baseball. Mara felt that the Lower Featherland sign was fine because three baseball fields are there, but the Upper Featherland sign does not reflect the tennis, basketball, softball that is played at the park. It was decided to reach out to Youth Baseball and see if they had paid for the signs.

Dick Williamson stated that this sign has had discussion before back about 20 years ago due since they are Town signs and not signs for specific youth groups. Dennis M. stated the Town Manager at that time had an issue with the baseball signs and wanted the reference to Little League removed. Bobby stated that baseball has put a lot of money into the fields and suggested something additional be added to reference the other sports played at Featherland showing it is a multi-sport public park.

Bobby stated that if a vote needed to be taken it could be at another meeting.

Discussion and vote on Feeley/Softball CPC Project Proposal – Dennis, Dan and Chris met with Warner Larsen (architect) to take a look at the plans that had been discussed with Girls Softball. Dennis said the meeting was informative and is looking for approval from Commission before the CPC meeting. Warner Larsen took a look at the proposed plans from Girls Softball and made some additions and recommendations. They broke up the plan into a couple of different sections. Dennis shared the project/expense form that resulted from the meeting. The report covers requests from Girls' Softball and how the design broke them out into individual cost centers with more detail.

Feeley 1 - 150,000 plus 15% design services \$22,500 – 2 dugout roofs only with benches and fence enclosure, retaining wall, concrete pad, bleacher, asphalt walk and grading for accessibility, timber guardrail to protect existing batting cage.

Feeley 2 - \$190,000 plus 15% design services \$28,500 – 2 dugout roofs only with benches and fence enclosure, retaining wall, concrete pad, bleacher, asphalt walk and grading for accessibility, loam and seed disturbed areas and construction cleanup.

Upper Feeley - \$145,000 plus 15% design costs \$18,000 – 2 dugout roofs only with benches and fence enclosure, concrete pad, bleacher, asphalt walk and grading for accessibility, netting for foul balls, loam and seed disturbed areas and construction cleanup.

Improved Drainage at Feeley 1 & 2 - \$200,000 plus 15% design costs \$30,000 – interceptor drain along top of slope with diversion pipes to daylight on low side of field, underdrain along toe of slope to daylight, sand-slit shallow drainage system under all grass area.

Irrigation at Feeley 1 & @ \$175,000 (assumes \$25,000 for electric and water supply (piping, backflow, meter, enclosure) 15% for design cost \$26,250 – recommended along with sad slit drainage system to avoid summer burnout over sand trenches.

Total estimated cost of the project \$995,250.

Commission discussed the best way to present the request. Discussed requesting all design fees upfront, since the design may impact the other costs and impact construction phases. Dennis stated Girls Softball is starting a fundraising campaign and has committed to donating at least \$10,000 to the project.

This is an underused facility due to the drainage and safety concerns. With the proposed improvements it would allow additional use for Sudbury Girls' Softball program and other users.

Dennis spoke with Adam D. (Planning) and it was suggested that Dennis submit the expense for the entire project and see how CPC responded to it and what funds were available. Discussion on requesting design fees first and then go with phases. Dennis stated that was possible, but that would put any renovation off another year. It can be presented anyway they want.

Design costs alone for Feeley would be around \$100,000. Dennis' thought, after discussion with Adam, was to let the CPC know the scope of the project and then let them make the decision on what they can or cannot fund this time.

Discussion centered on requesting \$400,000 for design and critical components that would be completed first.

Mara asked for a moment to review the numbers and put them into a spreadsheet for review.

Bobby moved on with meeting and will return to review the spreadsheet on Feeley CPC expenses.

Discussion/Vote on Memorial Tree Donation from Peter Anderson - The Commission discussed this agenda item at the last meeting, but since it wasn't officially on the agenda it is being discussed again at this meeting. Bobby stated the Town received a memorial tree request from a former Sudbury employee. He has moved to the west coast and sent in a donation (\$500) for a memorial tree to be planted in his name somewhere around Town hall.

Chris Felt stated Peter was looking for some type of evergreen to be planted in the vicinity of Town Hall perhaps Heritage Park. They settled on a Colorado blue spruce, but there was concern that it would grow too big and may block the visibility of Cricket Pond from Concord Road. They changed the tree to a small ornamental Alberta dwarf tree that will grow to about 10ft.

Anu Shah stated his concern that Heritage Park is a public park and while he appreciates tree donations, he questions just putting a tree in the park without an overall landscape plan for Heritage Park. He said this has happened before with the new tree at Town Hall and now we have a large tree blocking our historic building. He felt that before any tree is planted in Heritage an overall plan for the park should be addressed.

Chris Felt stated the Memorial Tree Program is a Town Program and usually the tree has a plaque underneath it. The Parks and Grounds staff is usually in charge of planting and puts thought into the best location

Stacy Zeder, 21 Saddle Ridge, felt design of the parks is a very important issue and doesn't want to see the parks become cluttered with plants/trees just thrown together without a landscape plan. She stated there are so many beautiful trees native to New England that she would prefer not to see another evergreen or Christmas tree.

Taryn Trexler, 253 Concord Road, stated she uses Heritage Park every day and the proposed location was concerning to her since it would impact the view of the pond. She agreed with what other people have said about this historic landscape in Town. She would like to see a picnic table in the park or a bench around the pond. She also suggested looking at Grinnell Park for the location for the tree.

Frances Shashoua stated she lives around the corner with a historic house and walks through that park every single day. She is in agreement that the tree would impede the walking trail around the pond. She would like to see more planning done before just planting a tree.

Bobby thanked everyone for their comments.

Janie Dretler offered the Board of Selectmen just approved irrigation for Grinnell Park.

Bobby Beagan suggested reviewing this agenda item further with all the comments received and vote on it at a later date, perhaps the next meeting. Chris Felt reminded that Heritage Park was only a suggestion the tree could go anywhere around Town Hall.

Bobby Beagan suggested anyone with information regarding the tree could email him at the Park and Recreation Commission email address.

Mara asked if a Commission member would like to take the lead on finding out the overall landscape plan for Grinnell and Heritage Park. Dick Williamson offered to take the lead on this item. Dick will find out what the overall plan is for Grinnell Park and who is in charge of landscaping the park. The plan is to decide about the Memorial Tree at the next meeting.

Commission returned to discussion on Feeley CPC article – Mara shared her spreadsheet with the proposed CPC projected numbers for work at Feeley based on the numbers Dennis had in the CPC proposal.

Kate Marchand stated that originally Phase 1 was supposed to be Feeley 1 and Upper Feeley. Phase 2 would be the other areas. She deferred to Dennis for the latest plan. Mara stated from what she read there would be savings the design phases were grouped together

Kate Marchand offered that Girls Softball came to the Commission back in 2019 just wanting dug outs for the players so they would be safer and out of the sun. She stated they were very confused and

frustrated with the process. Kate stated they submitted capital plans in the past, but were told that wasn't the way to go. They designed plans on their own for renovations and after the Warner Larson the price has gone up significantly and it is so much money Girls' softball can't do it on their own.

Bobby asked Dennis and Chris their thoughts. Chris stated anything done on Town property has to go through the bid process, proper procurement and pay prevailing wages so it does become expensive.

Mara suggested the Commission put in a CPC request to design everything with specified phases and construction of Phase one. The second round would include construction of Phase two. To show good faith she suggested using some Meadow Walk funds towards the design fees perhaps \$50,000. The CPC request would be for the rest of the design fee, \$48,000 and construction for \$298,000. The total requested would be \$400,000.

Next year, the Commission could request the rest of the money for completed renovations at Feeley. Mara stated there is \$3 million sitting in a Malone Stabilization Fund that could possibly be used for some of the renovation once the Town decides how the funds can be used.

The Commissioners discussed the various stages and possible phases of the project. Dugouts, drainage, batting cage, irrigation, etc. It was decided that the design of the project will dictate the phases.

After continued discussion Mara made a motion to authorize the Park and Recreation Director to submit a CPC request for \$400,000 to cover complete design and construction of the initial phase of the Feeley Field renovation project. The design will dictate the initial phase.

Bobby seconded the motion. Vote take – Bobby yes, Mara yes, Dick yes, Ben yes

Motion passed in favor 4-0.

Ben Carmel will be the point person for this project

CPC Request for Haskell Playground Renovation – Dennis reported the playground rubber surface is being pulled up by tree roots. He will be submitting a CPC request for \$175,038.

He spoke with the SMILE playground group and they are hoping to do some fundraising to bring in roughly \$25,000 which would add an additional shade structure and additional playground items.

The one original playground structure will be removed due to safety concerns.

Dennis stated that DPW will take care of the tree work and dumpster costs along with other miscellaneous costs to get rid of the old rubber etc.

Bobby made a motion to accept and submit the CPC application for \$175, 038 for the specified work to be done at the Haskell Smile Playground. Motion received a second from Ben.

Mara – yes, Dick – yes, Ben – yes, Bobby - yes. 4-0 in favor.

After review, a motion was made to accept the Park and Recreation Commission minutes from August 17 and September 8 approved with corrections. Motion received a second from Bobby.

Ben – yes, Mara – yes, Dick – yes, Bobby – yes 4-0 In favor. Bobby Beagan: Yes. Williamson.

Fairbanks Update – Mara reported it passed at Town Meeting and now it is up to the voters. She stated there is a ballot committee formed.

Mara informed when the ballot comes in the mail there will be pro and con statements on Fairbank Community Center. Bobby thanked everyone for their hard work.

The discussion and vote on the next Park and Recreation Commission Chair will be postponed until the next meeting.

Motion to adjourn.

Ben – yes, Mara – yes, Dick – yes, Bobby – yes 4-0 In favor.