

Virtual Meeting – 6:35pm

November 30, 2020

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

Guests: Janie Dretler (BOS), Howard Feng (Fin Com), Kate Marchand (Girls Softball)

**Public Comment: None**

**Director Update:** Fields are pretty much closed. Irrigation lines have been blown out/slice seeding aeration completed at Haskell. Tennis nets will be left up as long as weather stays nice. All field rental money has been collected for the fall. Field Enterprise Fund financials are in good shape, up \$85,000. This is due to the fact one half the salaries and benefits of the four Parks and Grounds employees have not be taken out of the fund yet. Mara asked what that amount will be when it is taken out. Dennis stated it will be around \$130,000. He also added the Town Funds approved at Town Meeting have not been transferred into the Enterprise Funds yet. He will have a clearer picture once the Finance Director closes out FY20. Mara asked if this was something Howard Feng could help out with. Howard stated he would check with Dennis K and report back to the Commission.

Dennis reported the Pool is very busy. Swim team season has just begun, so rentals at the pool have increased. Pool will be open at 5:30am three days a week for one of the swim teams to bring in additional revenue. Pool is generally open to the public from 7 to 4. Memberships have not been turned on yet. Memberships are being converted to credits in the system or refunded.

Recreation is working on a gingerbread house program, blanket for buddy dog, recreation programs after school, and Wild Wednesdays. He has the Recreation Staff starting to plan for summer camp. Mara asked if Recreation was breaking even. Dennis said it is, but it is a balancing act. He has low numbers in many of his programs, volume is just not there like in the past due to COVID concerns and space regulations. Mara asked if publicizing in schools would help. Dennis stated he is using Facebook and sending out blast emails to alert residents of the programs being offered.

Howard Feng stated he understood the financial issues with Recreation and also asked if there were any capital items being requested for FY22. Dennis said he thought Bill Barletta may be requesting a new UV Filter for the Pool. Everything else is on hold due to the passing of the new Community Center. Mara stated her biggest concern was to maintain staffing, since some of the salaries are paid out of revenue generated by programs.

**Discussion and possible vote on Vice Chairman** – It was unclear if the Commission ever had a Vice Chair, but Mara thought it would be a good idea. She stated she has spoken to Ben Carmel about being the position, and asked if anyone else would be interested in the position. No one commented, so a motion was made to appoint Ben Carmel as Vice Chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission. Motion received a second and passed 5-0. Dick – Yes, Bobby – Yes, Jim – Yes, Mara – Yes, Ben – Yes.

**Discussion of Tracking Spreadsheet for Commission Objectives and Tasks** – Mara shared her screen and showed an excel spreadsheet that is designed to keep track of the Commission's projects and the priority level. Mara asked to be informed if there was anything else that needed to be added. She said the intent of the spreadsheet is to make sure that projects stay visible.

**Fairbank Update** – Mara reported the Town Manager has not disbanded the Fairbank Working Group. She said 6-7 people are on the Committee. Town staff will be the direct contact for the project. The Permanent Building Committee met and is reviewing the project. Ben asked when periodic reviews will be given. Mara responded the design phase will take a year, construction phase a year, and completion of the project a year. So over all, 2-3 years for the building to be completed. Bill Barletta will be in charge of the direction of the project, and Dennis anticipates that Bill will be checking in with Department Heads as the project moves forward.

**Discussion and possible vote on representative to Rail Trail Design Task Force** – Mara nominated Dick Williamson to be the PRC representative to the Rail Trail Design Task Force. Ben seconded the motion. Some discussion on requirements for the positions. Janie informed the requirements for the position were on the Town website. Vote passed 5-0 in favor. Bobby – yes, Jim – yes, Ben – Yes, Dick – Yes, Mara – yes.

Mara will notify the Town Clerk of the appointments.

**Discussion and possible vote of using Meadow Walk Funds for Design of Feeley/Softball CPC Project Proposal** – Mara suggested using \$25,000 of the remaining Meadow Walk funds (\$250,000) and putting it towards the design phase (\$95,000) of the Feeley CPC project proposal. The design phase will determine the total cost of the project. Davis Field renovation had been discussed as a possible use of the funds. Ben asked if there was a cost estimate to the Davis Field renovation. Bobby stated the past cost estimates from a few years ago involved some in-house work by the DPW with the previous DPW Director. Bobby expressed concern that all projects now have a higher cost since in-house work is not being done as much to save money, so it gets more complicated. Bobby will contact Dan Nason and get an estimate of what it would cost to renovate Davis. He also said he is not sure what the current user groups needs are at this time. He said there may be other fields with a higher priority.

Jim Marrotta mentioned there may be some administrative money in CPC.

Dennis mentioned he heard Youth Baseball in interested in Broadacres since it abuts Featherland. He said Davis has some issues since it is wet, EEE, and further away from the other fields in Town. Curtis field has irrigation issues so he doesn't want to put a lot of money if there isn't a lot of benefit.

Jim Marotta stated it would be good to look at fields that could be upgraded and made useful for a lower cost. Mara stated if some of the Meadow Walk money was used to do a design study on Davis, they would know how much it would cost to renovate it.

Commission discussed holding a Field Users meeting to discuss needs and current status. Dennis again mentioned that would be a good time to discuss the need to increase the field permit fee. Commission decided to make the meeting part of the January Park and Recreation Commission meeting and allocate a large part of the meeting to this topic. Mara suggested collecting data from the user's groups ahead of the meeting to have a better sense of the issues. Jim stated it would be good if the users could let the Commission know the demands/needs that are not being met for the user group.

After discussion, Bobby made a motion to put \$25,000 of the Meadow Walk funds towards the design phase of CPC Feeley Field project. Motion received a second. Motion passed 5-0. Jim – yes, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes, Dick – yes, Ben – yes.

Dennis will update his CPC presentation with this information.

Jim M. requested that money from the Meadow Walk fund be put towards Davis. Bobby stated he will get an estimate on design and costs from Dan Nason.

**CPC Update - Smile Playground** – Dennis is set to present both the Smile/Haskell Playground and Feeley Softball Field renovation projects at the CPC meeting on Wednesday night. Dennis received an email from Jeanne Nam, Finance Committee, asking if contingency dollars had been included in the cost estimate. He checked with the playground vendor stated he is not allowed to add in a contingency. Dennis increased the request from \$200,000 to \$230,000. He will reflect this change in his presentation. Dennis said the estimate could be reduced if money is raised through fundraising and if the Finance Director tells him if some of the funds remaining in the Boundless Playground accounts can be used for the renovation. Mara asked if Dennis needed any help. Dennis replied he is on a tight schedule but felt he was in good shape. The presentations will be about 10 minutes, and he will be looking to reps from Softball to answer specific questions regarding number of players etc. The site walks for both requests went well.

**Master Plan Review** - Mara asked if everyone had a chance to review the virtual master plan open house. Bobby said he did and filled out the survey. Bobby thought the review was good and but was leaning more towards open space and conservation. Mara shared her detailed comments. Mara asked others to submit their comments either to her and she will forward them or directly to the Master Plan committee.

**Long Range Planning Discussion** – Reviewed the discussion from the past meeting to split working groups into the following; Community/Engagement – Ben, Recreation/Parks – Dick, Fields -Bobby, Jim, Aquatics – Mara. Mara opened the topic for discussion and showed her working document on Long Range Planning. She suggested having an aquatics user group meeting after the season in March to review needs and other items. Dick stated he will speak with the Garden Club and invite them to a future meeting. Dennis will work with Ben on a possible survey to residents to see what they are looking for in Town. Dennis stated he would like to see a meeting site for community events, possibly at Haskell. Mara suggested all Long-Range Planning areas should include; list of objectives, demographic of users, overall timeline and priorities, other groups that would be impacted, and set priorities within each area.

Bobby suggested taking the top two or three from each group and working on them. Mara created a tracking sheet to stay on top of the long-range planning areas. Bobby stated he believes Recreation should be involved with discussions on Sewataro as the decisions are made on what the Town will be doing with that location. Mara will follow up on that topic with the Select board.

Janie Dretler offered that there was some discussion of a Bandstand at Grinnell Park in the past and agreed the Rail Trails should be kept in Recreation's long-range plans. She also stated Sewataro is a high priority goal for the Select board, but it is not clear what that priority is yet. She stated there are still many questions associated with use Sewataro.

Mara stated the inclusive program should also be added to the long-range plans.

Mara discussed the next meeting and how it should be structured since the field user groups will be invited.

Bobby stated he felt the majority of the meeting should be spent on discussions with the Field user groups along with the Director update. Mara stated they would also have to include discussion on CPC submissions.

The Davis discussion will be moved to the February meeting, along with the Community Events discussion from Dennis and Ben. Dick will reach out the Garden Clubs for the February meeting.

Fields and Aquatic discussions will be on the March PRC agenda, Financials Review will be discussed in April

Dennis stated the Financials should include discussion on raising the rates for the field permits and pool fees. This is essential in order to develop accurate Enterprise Funds moving forward. The ongoing discussion on how the parks and Grounds salaries should be handled within the Field enterprise fund needs to be addressed. The Field Permit may need to be increased in order to meet the over all expenses.

Minutes will be reviewed at next meeting.

Next meetings scheduled: January 5, February 1.

Motion to adjourn; Dick – yes, Ben – yes, Jim – yes, Bobby – Mara – yes.