

Virtual Meeting – 6:42pm  
October 4, 2021

Commissioners: Bobby Beagan, Mara Huston, Ben Carmel, Laurie Eliason, Dick Williamson  
(joined at 7pm)  
Guests:

October 4, 2021 Meeting Roll Call: Ben -here, Bobby – here, Laurie – here, Mara – here

**Public Comment:** Bobby Beagan noted October is disability awareness month and the Commission on Disability purchased pins to wear to raise awareness. Bobby distributed the pins to the Park and Recreation Commission members so they could wear them during the meeting.

**Comments from the Chair:** Mara discussed two capital projects. One is a CPC request for the Open Space and Recreation Plan and a detailed recreation plan. The Director of Planning has what he needs to get the request in the CPC planning cycle. The Pool Filtration system is the other request. She spoke with Bill Barletta, the Facilities Director, to get the details figured out and he is working to get it through the Town Manager Capital planning process.

Mara introduced Jennifer Pincus, a project manager on the Permanent Building Committee (PBC) for the Fairbank project. Mara asked Jennifer to attend the meeting since the Commission had concerns regarding the project.

Mara shared the draft plan for the new Fairbank Community Center. She said the pool will be shut down at some point, but it is not clear for how long. The goal is to have minimum impact on the pool users, camp plans and programs. The front entrance of the pool/recreation will be relocated during construction. Once the new building is completed, the old building will be taken down and a new entrance will be built. The concern over the size of the gym has been addressed. One side of the gym will be larger to allow for bleachers/seating, scoring tables and players.

Jennifer Pincus, stated Dennis had some ideas for relocating the emergency exit doors that are in the corridor now. She said they are currently in the middle of design development which means the schematic design of the building has been approved by the PBC and the general layout of the building and size of the spaces and what the spaces are have been approved. She stated meetings are taking place with users to discuss furniture, equipment, and AV requirements and engineers are still working on plumbing, wiring, fire protection aspects of the building. Jennifer also met with the Commission on Disability to discuss concerns regarding the new facility.

Jennifer stated the windows in the hallway will allow people to look into the pool and gym. There will also be windows down the side of the gym by the recreation program rooms. Translucent panels in the gym will allow daylight in the hallway. Mara mentioned the concern about the loss of light at the pool, which is a big challenge. She said one of the ideas was to paint the pool ceiling white and put LED lights facing up to the ceiling to reflect the light.

Jennifer stated there will be windows on the wall facing the parking lot, directly across from the pool viewing windows that will let in some light, but it won't be direct sunlight.

Ben asked for an update on the basketball courts that were cut during the recent building reductions.

Jennifer said one court has been deferred since it is an element that can be added later if funds are available or if funds come in from other sources.

Mara stated the agenda includes a discussion on Covid state and local recovery funds with US Treasury She felt that could be an opportunity for building funds since building materials are more expensive due to Covid.

Ben felt it was important to note that we currently have somethings that we won't have with the new facility. The 2 basketball courts currently have lights, the one new court will not have lights. Mara said there is a thought to take the existing lights and move them to the basketball court. Jennifer said it has been discussed, but not determined if that idea is possible. She said the plan is to put the conduit infrastructure in for lights, so it will be easier to install once funding is available.

Bobby expressed concern that the presentations to Town residents never discussed losing amenities that currently existed and now the plan is to take away the only two full court basketball courts that are outside and the lights. He stated from his experience on the Commission, it is a long process to get lights approved in Town in addition to the difficulty in finding funds. He said it is very disappointing since the courts are heavily used and once the \$23 million-dollar project is complete it will not have simple recreation areas like the current basketball/volleyball courts.

Jennifer pointed out the original plan did not call for a full-size indoor basketball court. The request for a full indoor court added expense and therefore a reduction in the outdoor courts. It was decided the outdoor courts could be added at a later date. Bobby thought the original plan did include a full-size basketball court. Jennifer said I may have been regulation, but it did not have the required space around the court and it was not big enough for three pickleball courts. The decision was to compromise on the exterior in order to get the interior requests. Jennifer stated a presentation on the new facility is scheduled for the Tuesday night Select Board meeting and encouraged anyone interested to watch or attend. She also said anybody can attend the PBC meetings that are held every other Thursday night.

Mara said she and Dennis made it very clear to the organizers of the project that Recreation is a business center and the Senior Center and School Administration are cost centers. Bobby felt the Commission should discuss at a future meeting why some recreational programming isn't covered by the tax base. Mara agreed that topic should be revisited.

**Director Update:** Dennis discussed department financials for the first three months of the fiscal year from the Finance Director. The pool is currently in the negative \$31,000, but some deposits haven't been recorded yet. He reported an offer was made for the Aquatic Supervisor position, if accepted he will start within the next two weeks. The pool is still looking for lifeguards. The swim team season has started so that will bring in additional rental income.

Bobby asked where swim lessons revenue would be seen in the budget. Dennis said it would be captured in the program revenue line item, but since we currently don't offer swim lessons no revenue

is coming in. He has some instructors renting lanes to teach lessons, but that revenue goes into lane rental.

Mara asked if the camp revenue has been deposited in the Atkinson Pool Fund yet. Dennis said it has been deposited, but isn't seen yet in the numbers. It is approximately \$30,000. Mara said that would basically net out the pool negative in the first three months. She asked about status of the programming for deep water and aquatic classes. Dennis stated he may look to have instructors rent the lanes for water exercise programs rather than have staff teach the classes. The instructors would have their own insurance and handle registrations. Mara asked about programs to teach swim lessons and kids with disabilities. Dennis stated he currently doesn't have the staff to teach the lessons or a vendor to teach kids with disabilities. Mara asked about the new Aquatic Supervisor. Dennis stated he does not have teaching certifications at this point. He is currently referring anyone interested in swim lessons to the teachers who are renting lanes to teach swim lessons.

Mara stated she would like to see lessons and programs offered in the new facility. Ben asked what would draw people to come back for lessons/programs. Mara said one of the issues currently is the locker room, so the new locker rooms and better viewing will be better for the users and the pool will be updated a little bit.

Ben said he understood from Dennis that the reason for not doing programs now is more due to operating costs than staff issues.

Dennis said it is a little bit of both, staff is not readily available and financially it makes sense right now to rent lanes. The hours are more limited now and not as many people are signing up for programs at this time. The increase in minimum wage is also a huge issue in regard to part time staff. He said he is trying to find the right balance.

Laurie stated she would like to see the lessons come back at some point especially in the new facility and would feel comfortable knowing the long-term plan is to reinstate programs and swim lessons.

Dennis stated it is hard to find instructors, which is why he is currently renting lanes to people who are teaching lessons.

Dennis said the Field Enterprise Fund looks good, but still has some outstanding checks, from youth football from last spring and for the fall. Dennis has sent them a follow-up email. He is also waiting on a check from baseball for the fall permit. He said the second week in November is usually when the fields shut down. He said the revenue to date is \$105,000 and with expenses the net is approximately \$31,000. He said the spring permits will hopefully bring in the \$200,000 plus it costs to run the field program.

Bobby questioned the indirect costs for the field staff salaries and was concerned the \$25K would go up. Dennis stated the full benefit cost for staff is taken out at the beginning of the fiscal year. Dennis stated there will be some savings since the Park and Grounds staff is down one person.

Dennis reported Recreation is running programs, low enrollments he said he is looking for the right mix of offerings. They department will host a pumpkin carving walk through event this year. Wild Wednesday is offered again, but it is now a drop off program due to the bus driver shortage. Numbers

Laurie and Mara discussed ways to do additional marketing to get the word out on the program offerings. Mara asked about a brochure, Dennis stated he is was not planning on a brochure due to the costs associated with printing and mailing. Mara suggested using Town emails to distribute program information she thought the Town Manager would be supportive.

**Pool Policy Implementation and Updates:** Mara asked if the pool policy use form had been updated. Dennis stated it is still being reviewed and updated, but not complete yet.

Mara asked about advertizing for lifeguards. She also asked about the Sudbury swim team schedules. Dennis stated they have advertised for lifeguards and he and Lynne are working with the swim teams and their schedules.

**Commission Roles and Responsibilities:** Ben sent an email to the Town Manager regarding the Commissions request for Town Counsel input on the Roles and Responsibilities of the Park and Recreation Commission under the strong Town Manager Act. He said the Town Manager was out of the office until the 7<sup>th</sup>, but he will follow up for the response. Bobby and Ben are still gathering information from other towns and their Commission's roles. Bobby asked if the Commission binders from the past are still in the office. They are no longer available.

Mara asked Bobby and Ben for a comparison of other Towns from the information they have developed. This would give the Commission background knowledge, so when Town council issues their opinion, we can compare it to what other towns are doing and say why is there a difference.

**Field Fee Restructuring:** Mara asked Dennis for historical field use data, but the systems at Park and Rec don't have that historical data. She said the technology in the department doesn't really provide the information the Commission needs to make field fee decisions. She wants to consider this as the new systems are purchased for the new facility. Mara reached out the youth user groups for historical data on their field use and fees paid.

Bobby asked about past Park and Recreation Commission minutes that are not posted online. He thought the Town Clerk might have them. Mara mentioned a few meetings in the past years that aren't posted online and wondered where they were also. It was thought a previous Director or Commissioner took the minutes and they were never posted.

**Covid State Local Recovery Funds:** Mara stated the Select Board reached out to her. Sudbury is eligible to received 5.8 million in recovery funds, separate from the CARES Act. Mara said this was an opportunity to request funds for the Recreation/Pool Department. She felt there could be a request for loss of revenue in the Revolving Fund and Enterprise Funds due to COVID. The other possibility is to request additional funds for the Fairbank project since Covid as caused building costs to increase

Dennis said the request for these funds is the responsibility of the Finance Director. Mara said she will keep this topic on future agendas.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve the July 16<sup>th</sup> minutes as amended. Ben seconded. Bobby – yes, Ben – yes, Dick – yes, Laurie – yes, Mara – yes. Motion to approve the August 16 minutes. Bobby seconded. Dick – yes, Laurie – yes, Ben – yes, Mara – yes. Motion to approve September 20<sup>th</sup> minutes. Bobby seconded. Bobby – yes, Ben – yes, Laurie – yes, Mara – yes.

Motion to open a joint meeting with the Select Board subcommittee on Sewataro. Dick seconded. Mara-yes, Bobby – yes, Laurie – yes Ben -yes.

Charlie opened the Select Board Subcommittee meeting with the Park and Recreation Commission, seconded by Bill.

Charlie read open meeting laws and moved to open the joint meeting. Bill seconded. Present at the meeting, Charlie Russo, Bill Schineller, Mara Huston, Bobby Beagan, Ben Carmel, Laurie Eliason, Dick Williamson

Mara stated she reached out to Charlie after watching a recent discussion by the Select Board on Sewataro. She said she wanted to understand how Sewataro will interact with Recreation in Town because some things do not make sense. She said the inherent difference between the two is Park and Recreation department has financial structures that control and limit it and that doesn't exist in the contract with Sewataro. She sees a disjoint because Sewataro is seen as a Recreation asset, but it is not associated with the Recreation Department. She questioned reservation of space at Sewataro, fees collected, use and public swimming at Sewataro. Who would staff the programs? These were concerns that came about after she viewed the discussion on Sewataro.

Dick said he is pleased there is an active group setting up programs at Sewataro that is not affiliated with Recreation in Town. Mara asked Charlie and Bill to explain the user agreement at Sewataro and the programs. She mentioned a conflict last year with similar programs run at Halloween by both parties, which was resolved with two separate programs.

Charlie said the only document in place now is the contract with amendments that have been added. The original contract called for two community events per year. One was the Halloween event and the other was the Sounds of summer concert. Charlie mentioned a draft use policy for Sewataro they are working on that will be included in the Select Board's packet. He said the policy includes instructions to coordinate activities with Recreation in mind including pricing for tennis court, basketball court use etc. He said the assets of the Town have grown and now they are working to coordinate the best use of them for the residents.

Mara questioned the rental policies at Sewataro and how they compare to Recreation and if the pricing models were different between Recreation

She is concerned the two sites could be in competition and they are both Recreation sites in Sudbury and question how the Town sees them and how they will work together.

Charlie Russo thanked Mara for the questions and concerns. He said these concerns were discussed at some previous Select Board meeting. No decisions have been made on fees at Sewataro yet. He suggested any Commission members thoughts are ideas should be sent to Select Board as a whole or individually. Charlie said they don't have a real baseline for the property yet, due to COVID. They haven't gone through a normal year yet. Many groups have used the Sewataro property due to Covid and the need to be outside. He asked the Commission to give the draft policy a close examination and share their comments with them.

Mara asked what happens with the money from profit groups running programs at Sewataro. Kristin Drummy, liaison for Camp Sewataro, clarified that no money has been exchanged from any of the

groups using Sewataro. She said there was no language in the Sewataro contract regarding use of property by various groups and any associated fees. She said they are happy to assist the Town in any manner. She said there are no indoor facilities at Sewataro, so the outside venues have been attractive amid the Covid crisis.

Kristin said they contacted Recreation this year to avoid any conflicts in offerings. She said they have worked hard to have an open dialog with Park and Recreation and look forward to this being a partnership in whatever way the Town wants in to work.

Laurie thought the tennis courts at Sewataro should be rented out for the same as the Park and Recreation fee. The comment was they would be at the same fee schedule for rental of the courts. he said people would still be free to go hit balls on any courts in Town.

Bill Schneller said they were still having conversations about when certain sections of Sewataro could be used by residents. This includes basketball courts, tennis courts, possible swimming areas.

Mara Huston (She/Her): Right, and so the technology doesn't exist right so for people to use that, but if we do that, then we need to be consistent across the superstar courts to because they're still public courts, but yet they're different but they're the same but they're different.

Charlie pointed out in the current Sewataro agreement many maintenance costs for the tennis courts and grounds are picked up by the camp operator. He said the questions the Commission brought up on tennis courts rentals etc. are good and something the Select Board is in the process of figuring out.

Bill Schiniller stated the current plan to charge for reserved tennis courts at Sewataro was identical to the Recreation reservation policy.

Ben stated Recreation received an opinion from Town Counsel regarding setting fees for activities, etc. and was curious how those issues were handled with Sewataro. Bill stated anything they had discussed regarding fees etc. has not been finalized. The Town Manager has been part of the conversation, but nothing has been determined. The Subcommittee is working on a plan/policy for use of facilities at Sewataro by the residents.

Laurie asked about the timeline for making decisions regarding renewing the contract with to run Sewataro. Bill stated the timeline has not been altered from what is in the contract.

Mara thought it was important for the Commission to touch base on this subject in six months. Charlie agreed, the more coordination the better it will be for everyone.

Bobby asked Kristin Drummy how Sewataro advertises their offerings. She said they post on the Town website, uses Facebook pages at the schools, a kiosk on site. Mara thought the Town Department may not be able to use some of the vehicles Kristen uses since the camp vendor is a private entity. Mara thought Dennis could use the PTO options to generate interest in the Wild Wednesdays and other programs.

Motion to end the joint meeting with the Select Board Sewataro Subcommittee. Seconded by Bobby. Bobby – yes, Dick – yes, Mara – yes, Ben -yes, Laurie – yes

Next meeting is November 1<sup>st</sup>. Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Dick -= yes, Bobby -yes Mara – yes, Ben - yes, Laurie – yes.