

Virtual Meeting 6:33pm

Jan 10, 2022

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

Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool

Meeting Roll Call: Laurie - here, Ben - here, Dick - here, Bobby - here, Mara - here

Public Comment: None

Chairperson Comments: Mara reviewed the Fairbank project and shared the layout of the new building. She had a conversation with the Council on Disability Commission and other members of the public regarding locker rooms and universal locker room. After feedback, changes have been made to the universal locker room. She also shared information on fixtures and finishes proposed for the new building. She shared the color palette and various flooring proposed for the building, and stated some things may change based on budget. Laurie asked for clarification on the hallway toilet areas and their connection to the pool locker area. Mara stated the pool locker room doors will be locked when the pool is closed. Mara shared the update she received on improvements planned for the pool. She stated the new water filtration system is a capital improvement request to be approved at the spring Town Meeting. Other improvements include repairing/replacing damaged tiles, repair damaged grout, fixing issues with water pipes, repairing some areas of the concrete wall. In addition, deck graphics around the perimeter of the pool to show depth, no diving etc. will be added.

Director Update: Dennis sent out latest financial reports on the Pool and Field Enterprise Funds, and said he received the three Revolving Fund Articles, Recreation/Teen/Youth, that need to be signed by the Commissioners every year. He requested the Commissioners come into the office to sign the documents, or possible DocuSign. He said they are usually on the consent calendar at the Town Meeting. It was decided the Commissioner will stop by the office to sign the documents. Dennis said he received an email from Beth Sudemeyer, Planning, regarding the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. She requested to be on the next agenda to discuss the design. Dennis will send out the information he received from Beth so it can be reviewed before the next meeting.

Mara asked for an update on the air quality issues at the pool. Dennis stated a contractor was called in and made a few adjustments and replace one part. He said it is an old system and will need part replacements from time to time.

Ben asked if the articles the Commissioners need to sign have changed since last year. Dennis stated he did not make any changes, explained how the Revolving Funds work and said he may at some point look to dissolve them and have just one Revolving Fund. He said all the Revolving Funds roll up to the Revolving 53E1/2 Fund.

Mara asked Dennis how the new pool memberships have been received by swimmers. He said 100 people have signed up so far. Mara asked how many members were at the pool before Covid. Dennis said about 2100, which included all memberships and punch passes. Mara asked the response to the increase in fees. Dennis said no real response, everyone is happy to be able to swim without reservations. Mara said she saw on Facebook that the senior age stayed at 60, rather than move to 65 and grandfather previous senior members at 60. She said the Commission had voted that policy in back

in 2020. Dennis said it was a financial consideration, so he kept it at 60 and will revisit the age requirement for seniors within the next year after he looks at the financials. He said the Town Manager could be involved if necessary. Bobby asked if Dennis thought some seniors might not join if there were different fees for seniors. Dennis said it was a little bit of both with concern for revenue and setting up additional memberships without a consistent front desk staff. He didn't want to add confusion to offering memberships.

Laurie asked Dennis a question regarding transportation and his request for ARPA money to be used for a van. Dick added he wrote a letter from the Commission in support of Dennis' request for ARPA funds and it was sent to the Select Board. Laurie thought this was an immediate need, asked if Dennis had discussed with the Town Manager and Finance Director, the possibility of other funds since there is a great deal of competition for the ARPA funds. She suggested seeking all revenue opportunities as this is a very important need. Dennis said he did discuss transportation issues/needs with the Town Manager but not specifically other funding opportunities. Laurie thought it was a good idea to seek other funding options if the ARPA Funds are not approved since this transportation to activities is an important issue.

Mara stated the Commission just found out Chris Felt was retiring at the last meeting, and was wondering if the Commission wanted to do anything for him. She stated he has worked for the Town and Parks and Grounds for a long time. There was discussion of a card and possible gift. Mara said she would get a card and drop it off at the Recreation office for others to sign. Once signed she will take it to Marianne Bilodeau for mailing.

Bobby thought a gift would be nice. He asked Dennis if the Town did anything for Chris for his retirement. Dennis stated not that he knew of. Mara said the card will be in the Recreation office along with the Warrant Articles for signing.

Pool Windows - Mara stated one of the requirements of building the new Fairbank Community Center was the existing Center would stay open during construction. The decision was made early on to keep the pool and build around it. That decision impacted keeping the windows the same at the Atkinson Pool. Mara shared her screen which showed the layout of the new facility. New locker rooms will block the windows currently overlooking the volleyball/basketball courts and the new gym will block the windows that currently overlook the parking lot and Haskell Field. Mara stated the discussion now is on how can the loss of natural light into the pool be handled, and how can we get some natural light back into the pool. She showed the plan to add windows to the new outside wall by the parking lot. This wall is currently an interior wall of the lobby. She said there may also be some light coming in through the windows that will now face the new gym. The Planning Board is proposing adding windows to the south wall that is next to the dive well. One problem is the scoreboard is there and would be expensive to move and due to its age is considered fragile. Mara shared some of the options on the different type/size of the windows and showed the new location of the scoreboard. One of the options is to put seven narrow windows on the south wall below the scoreboard. Estimated cost for the windows is \$100,000, which would mean something else would have to be removed from the project to cover that cost. She showed a picture of what the view would be out of the new windows. She said notes from the project team state these windows were not part of the original plan. The Planning Board is meeting on Wednesday and the project team is asking for the Park and Recreation Commission's thoughts on the windows. Mara asked the Commission for any comments. Laurie asked about the sun and potential glare, and said it was difficult decision to lose the current windows and natural light. She was

appreciative that there will be additional windows in the viewing area. The view out the proposed dive well windows will be of woods and it is unclear how much light will actually come in.

Ben questioned what the tradeoff for the windows in the dive well would be. It was thought that would be important information. Mara opened up the discussion to the public.

Matt Schlessman, 40 Possum Lane, said his best estimate is the timing system and a new scoreboard would cost between \$25,000 and 30,000. If it was damaged during relocation.

Nidhi John, 147 Haynes Road, was curious why the discussion was on the windows, was it for the spectators or swimmers. She thought \$100,000 was a lot for 5-foot windows and wondered if sky lights or other natural light options had been considered. Mara responded the project team did not think skylights were a good option.

Chrissy Murray, 50 Kato Drive, a member of the Sudbury Swim Team Admin Board, asked for more explanation on the pool viewing area. She stated Safe Sport and USA Swimming doesn't allow for any recording or pictures/videos behind the starting blocks so windows in the dive well wall could present an issue. Mara stated that issue hadn't been brought up yet.

Chrissy asked how many people could fit in the viewing area. Mara stated the viewing area would be expanded and there is also a request is to put viewing screens in other areas of the new building.

Matt Schlessman said he thought the natural light was a good idea, but he has had the opportunity to swim in many pools around the country that did not have windows and it was a good experience. His recommendation would be to invest in indoor lighting, spectator viewing and air quality of the facility.

Bobby asked, due to the long agenda, if there was anyone who was in favor of adding windows to the dive well area. Kristen Kasarnowich, Stearns Lane, said she agreed with Matt that the pool doesn't need natural light and would like to see the money spent in other ways that are more beneficial. She asked about the windows that will now be across from the gym and questioned if they would need to be covered with privacy screens due to security concerns. Mara stated one of the benefits of the windows across from the gym is that it will be added viewing for spectators. She stated there was not conversation about putting privacy screens on the windows since that would defeat the purpose of allowing spectators to view swim meets, and is not being considered at this time.

Mara stated that it was apparent from all the comments that no one was in favor of windows in the dive well wall. Mara suggested drafting a letter to the Permanent Building Committee with Park and Recreation's opinion on the windows in the dive well wall.

Mara made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission write a letter to the Planning Board and The Permanent Building Committee recommending against installing windows on the south wall of the dive well. Bobby asked if Dennis had any comments on the windows. Dennis said he was in favor of windows as he has said from the beginning, but not windows in the dive well and not at the expense of something else being removed from the project. Ben asked to amend the motion to state the Commission's motion is based on recommendations from the Park and Recreation Department and users represented at the meeting tonight. Motion amended and received a second. Ben – yes, Laurie – yes, Dick – yes, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes. 5-0 in favor of motion.

Field Fee Restructuring - Mara Huston stated this was a continuation of the discussion and proposal from past meeting regarding changes in the fee structure for users of the fields. Dennis said he did not have time to see how the proposed changes to the fees would impact the Enterprise Fund. He said it is a bit more complicated and he needs more time to review the proposal. He doesn't want to rush the process and has to be sure the fees generated meet the budget required to operate the Field Enterprise Fund with salaries and health benefits that continue to increase. Mara asked Dennis how to move this forward since users are asking how their clinics will be charged. She offered to help out with any analysis. Dennis said he met with youth soccer to better understand their needs, learned new things about the program needs, and now plans to meet with other youth groups to get feedback from them. He will bring the feedback received back to the Commission and use that along with the field fee proposal from Mara and Laurie to develop a new field permit. Mara stated she will keep this item on the agenda at future meetings.

Sudbury Foundation Grant Opportunities – Mara mentioned grant opportunities are available through the Sudbury Foundation. She said some deadlines have passed, but felt there may still be some available. She asked Dennis if there was a community-based program he would like to apply for funds a grant opportunity. He stated he would have to think more about it at this time. Mara stated she would add the topic to the next meeting agenda. Laurie mentioned camp scholarships and wondered if that would be a grant opportunity. Mara asked Dennis about the current state of camp scholarships. Dennis said at this time there is no scholarship money for camp. Mara stated she thought someone donated some scholarship money.

Laurie mentioned the van, which would cost about \$200,000, as a possible grant request. Laurie will review the Sudbury Foundation website to see what is required to apply for a grant. Mara will add this topic to the next agenda.

Roles and Responsibilities – Ben gave an update on the legal opinion about fees and ownership regarding the Park and Recreation Commission. Ben has had a number of back and forth conversations with the Town Manager and Town Counsel. He said there is still one area of ambiguity on fee setting that is left. He has time tentatively booked later this week to meet with Town Manager Hayes and Town Council. He summarized the legal opinion which basically said the Town Manager has the authority to set fees for anything that impacts the budgets. The specific piece of language under discussion is that the Park and Recreation Commission is the body authorized to spend fees collected from recreation programs and activities. He felt there was a potential conflict in how that was viewed, and once that is clarified, the mission and mantra of the Park and Recreation Commission can be created.

Mara asked if Ben received clarification on the legal agreement statement stating “setting fees in collaboration with the Park and Recreation Commission”. Ben did not, but will ask Town Counsel. Mara asked if another Commissioners was attending the meeting with Ben. Bobby will attend with Ben.

Mara will add this topic to the agenda in February for follow up.

Dogs at Haskell Field – Bobby added this topic to the agenda due to the increase in dog activity at Haskell field. He said there have been some issues recently with dogs off leash and the interaction between dogs and owners. Bobby stated the dog officer was aware of the dog bites and came down to the field to inform dog owners of the leash law. Bobby commented that the Commission had addressed this issue before and talked about the loop hole in the leash law, which also includes dogs under voice

control off leash. He wanted to make the Commission aware of the issue and also spoke with the Chief of Police, who is happy to work with the Commission. Bobby said he uses the field with his dog, but wanted to bring up the issue in case incidents increase and the Commission/Recreation Department/or Town Manager has to let dog owners know what is expected of them when using the field. Mara stated the Commission should try to encourage responsible dog ownership while using Recreational space. Dick relayed instances of dog issues at Davis Field in the past.

Laurie questioned why the Town doesn't have a dog park or a fenced in area for dogs. Comment was a dog park has the potential for many issues and would be something the Town would have to vote on. Laurie said she would be interested in discussion on something like this in the future. Mara stated the next capital planning cycle will be in the fall, she said the new Chairperson for the Commission could add the topic as an item on the September agenda. Bobby added he thinks dog parks can be wonderful and he has used them in other communities. He said they also come with a host of issues of operational issues.

Vote/Review and Approve Annual Report - Mara Huston sent the commissioners a copy of the revised annual report for 2021, which she based off the 2020 report. She said she made various edits to the 2020 report and added what was done in 2021. Dick said he had reviewed it and it looked good.

Laurie offered she thought the report should have more detail under Recreation and summer camp and Wild Wednesdays and how COVID impacted the numbers and transportation to Recreation activities. Mara edited the report to include that information.

Dennis stated the skating rink at Haskell is no longer offered. Bobby asked if that was due to resources or materials or other issues. Dennis stated it was a little bit of everything, but the main reasons were the swim teams exiting on to the outside deck, no longer being able to lock the fence gates and cost to fill the rink. It was also difficult to operate due to weather over the years and actual usage of the rink. Hockey volunteers set up and maintained the rink and the Parks and Grounds Staff prepped the area. Chis Felt contacted representatives from youth hockey to let them know the rink would not be set up if they wanted to pick up any of their materials. Bobby said he wanted to make sure the rink material did not get thrown out when the new community center is built.

Mara edited the report and made a motion to accept the 2021 annual report as amended. Ben seconded. Ben – yes, Dick – yes, Laurie – Yes, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes, Bobby – yes.

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes – Approval of minutes moved to next meeting.

Future Meetings – Mara stated the next Commission meeting is February 7 and several items discussed at tonight's meeting will be added to that agenda. Mara asked if Ben would be at that meeting since she will have to recuse herself during the Rail Trail discussion. Ben will attend. Mara proposed March 7 and April 4 as meeting dates. Mara stated she would like to hand over the chairperson role in the next few months.

Bobby asked Mara to add the proposed path around Haskell Field to the next agenda. He was concerned because only a portion has been plowed from the last snow storm. Dennis will investigate, he said he knows the department is shorthanded for plowing.

Bobby stated he was concerned for the senior walkers using the path. Mara stated the Council on Aging put in an ARPA Fund request for a walking path around the inside of Haskell Field. Mara asked for Dennis' opinion on the path. He said he wasn't contacted and isn't in favor of it. There is a path already, that includes Hudson Road. The proposed path would be on the inside of Hudson Road and would impact the field layouts and walkers could be injured by lacrosse/soccer balls. Field space is already limited by the permanent baseball fence.

Bobby suggested adding this to the agenda for February

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Laurie seconded the motion. Dick -yes, Laurie – yes, Bobby – yes, Ben – yes, Mara – yes.