

Virtual Meeting 6:41pm
April 4, 2022

Commissioners: Mara Huston, Laurie Eliason, Dick Williamson, Bobby Beagan, Ben Carmel
Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool
Meeting Roll Call: Laurie – here, Bobby - here, Dick – here, Mara – here, Ben – here

Public Comment: Bettina Westerberg, 39 Raymond Road, said neighbors are still dealing with the pickleball noise at Feeley. Mara informed Bettina the pickleball discussion was moved to the May meeting and that she informed Bettina’s husband and pickleball users of the change in dates

Chair Comments: Mara thanked Dick Williamson for his 12 years of service on the Park and Recreation Commission. She informed the Fairbank Community Center bids for construction have been sent out to pre-qualified bidders. Mara stated the Atkinson grant application was submitted and thanked the Park and Recreation Staff for the information they provided. She stated the Town Manager was very supportive and they expect the response sometime in mid-June. The Garden Club will be attending a Commission meeting in the next few months to have more conversations about Grinnell and Heritage Park.

Director Update: Dennis sent out the latest Pool and Field Financials. He said there is a shortage of lifeguards/counselors. He is waiting to see how construction timelines will impact the office/summer camp and the pool operations. Camp registration went well and camp is full, with some sessions having a waitlist. He capped the numbers for each session until staff is hired. Laurie mentioned she would like to have a discussion in the future about how Park and Recreation can help Sudbury families meet child care after school needs since Sudbury Extended Day is full. Mara asked Dennis to comment on after school programs in the new Fairbank Community Center. Dennis agreed there is a need in Town and that it will come down to staffing, space, and transportation. He will continue to explore how the Recreation staff can help with the after-school care need. Laurie suggested the Commission needs to make a case for more support from the Town on this issue. Mara suggested discussing this again in September during the new budgetary cycles for the next Fiscal Year. Dick commented that a van for transportation had been requested from the ARPA Funds. Mara said the first round of ARPA Funds was designated for time critical needs and wasn’t sure what fell into that category. Ben commented they should discuss the core priorities for the Commission to advocate for in the future for the Department.

Laurie said camp scholarships have been discussed in the past, but wanted to advocate to find a mechanism to offer a scholarship process in the future. Laurie would like to see the summer camp registration process allow registrations from scholarships from places like Hope Sudbury. Mara asked Dennis if he was able to put any information on scholarships on the website. Dennis did instruct his staff to add a link to the sites on the website and added the Town Social Worker could assist since there are over 50 scholarships for residents subsidized by the Sewataro agreement.

Ben asked for clarification on the scholarships and the Sewataro agreement. Bobby said it was thought whatever the Sewataro management company puts towards scholarships is taken off what they have to pay the Town as part of their profit share. Ben said he will research the answer to that question.

Park and Recreation Funding Model: Ben restated the understanding of the budget and fees. Town Council made it very clear that budgeting and fee setting is a Town responsibility. The Town Manager owns the budget, the department, meaning the Recreation Director presents the annual budget to the

Town Manager, who can either approve, reject or adjust it as he/she sees fit. Commission is not responsible for the department budget and should not do anything that will positively or negatively impact the Town Budget. Ideally, but not necessarily, the department would initiate any budget or fee-based discussion with the Commission for their input. The Department would finalize the budget and submit to the Town Manager for review. The role of the Commission would be a resource for the department in terms of sharing Community engagement, research, and sharing of options with user groups.

Ben left the meeting, Bobby took over discussion of this topic. He presented a draft of a Commission Charter for the Park and Recreation Commission. He suggested not voting on anything until Ben is available to review comments on the Charter. Bobby reviewed the proposed Charter with the Commission.

Mara questioned the definition of collaboration. She restated the process discussed by Ben, which was for the department to do the analysis and come up with a recommendation, bring it to the Commission for a discussion. The Commission would discuss, include any feedback from Sudbury residents, perhaps make some adjustments, and send to the Town Manager for approval. She thought that sounded like a good collaborative process, but expressed concern about how much information is shared so the Commission can do an appropriate review. Bobby stated the Town Manager felt it was important that the Commission not institute any policy that would put a strain on the department. Bobby asked Dennis if he had conversations with the Town Manager on this subject. Dennis replied he hadn't and added the Park and Recreation Budget just includes some salaries. He said there are two Enterprise Funds and a Revolving Fund. He agreed collaboration is important, but he didn't think it would be productive to have to review everything. He said there are powerful user groups in Town but he is charged with making the financial models work within the Town. He said some of issues in the Field Enterprise Fund occurred when the user groups were able to get fees adjusted by requesting adjustments to the Commission, which impacted revenue. Dennis stated his understanding is the budget is up to the Director, the Finance Director and Town Manager.

Bobby said there may need to more discussion with the Town Manager to get an understanding of the collaborative process so it isn't burdensome to the department, but allows the Commission to represent the Community. Bobby added he disagreed with Dennis that the user groups were dictating user's fees. Mara agreed with Bobby in regard to the user groups not dictating fees.

Commission reviewed draft of the Charter for the Park and Recreation Commission. Bobby suggested reviewing it tonight so they might be ready to vote on it at the next meeting. He and Ben will get a better definition of what collaborative means, but said there are other areas where the Commission can provide value and support to the Recreation Department. Bobby read the 13 duties and responsibilities of the proposed Commission Charter. Commission reviewed, discussed and made comments on the proposed duties and responsibilities. The goal is for the Charter to not interfere with the day to day operations of the department, but to define the responsibilities of the present and future Park and Recreation Commission. Dick suggested taking the word owns out of the responsibilities. Mara suggested grouping the duties and responsibilities in categories. It was decided not to take a vote on the Charter until Ben can attend the meeting. Mara asked for any additional comments on the Charter to be emailed to Bobby or Ben.

Mara discussed the need for the Commission to have a budget line item that the Commission can use to support Community events and the Recreation department. Bobby agreed and said the Town Attorney was surprised the Commission did not have funds at their discretion to spend.

Bobby is looking at other Towns, similar to Sudbury, to see how they compare and operate financially. Mara reminded Bobby about the Meadow Walk funds and that they were given to the Commission to use on the fields and wanted to make sure that was in the Charter. Additional comments and questions on the Charter should be sent to Ben. It was decided hold a special meeting just on the Charter.

Field Discussion - Clinic Use Policies/User Fee Update: Dennis discussed the Field Enterprise Fund and various line item expenses and the Park and Grounds budget which is under the Department of Public Works. Bobby asked about the split of salaries for the Parks and Grounds staff in the Enterprise Fund. Dennis said it is something that should be looked at because it may not be sustainable as the salaries increase without continuing to increase the field permit fee.

Discussion moved to the Clinic Use Policy. Laurie presented what she and Dennis worked on over the past months. Laurie stated it has been confusing, but the solution proposed is to integrate the camp and clinic per participant to an hourly rate model. Laurie stated recommendation is less than 50 would be \$86.25 per hour for residents, 50-100 youth would be 1.5 times the base rate to \$129.50 per hour, and greater than 100 youth would be 2 times the base rate to \$172.50 per hour.

Commission discussed various scenarios and thought this provided flexibility the users are needing and revenue the department needs to compensate for the use of the fields. Steve O'Keefe, 30 Paddock Way, asked for clarification on the hourly fee if clinic ran for some fraction of an hour. Dennis stated that warm up or cool down time should be included in permit request and would be billed by the hour. Steve O'Keefe explained the plan for Sudbury Soccer clinics over the summer.

Laurie stated the thought is any type of additional skills session or clinic would fall into the hourly rate schedule if it is outside the season. Dennis stated he thought the new rates could start as soon as possible or July 1. He stated the camps and clinics rate within season would start in the fall. Mara stated existing permits would not be affected by the change, but new requests would need to follow the new rates. Dennis and Laurie will work to modify the current field permit forms.

Dennis expressed concern on making any type of motion in regard to user fees in regard to the proposed Charter. It was decided to use the word recommendation to the Town Manager.

Laurie made a motion to recommend a policy change in regard to camps and clinics to move to a standardized tier hourly approach as presented. Seconded by Bobby.

Steve O'Keefe offered information on why he the camps and clinics are a valued part of the youth in season program for youth players. After additional discussion by the Commission and Dennis on the motion and change in fee policy vote was taken. Vote: Laurie-yes, Bobby-yes, Dick-yes, Mara-yes.

Atkinson Pool Discussion: Postponed to a future meeting.

Town Meeting Articles - Recreation: Mara shared a document that showed all the Town Articles that have a Recreation focus. Article 4, 6, 7, 12, 15, 16, 57, 22,23,33,48and 51. She said some will need the Commission's advocacy and some will not and discussed with the Commission the various articles and the possible votes or statements on these articles at Town Meeting.

Mara discussed Article 22 and 23, funding for audio visual and furnishing at the new Community Center. She stated the original feasibility study allocations were low and explained the current cost for

equipment and furnishings. She felt it important that these articles pass. Dennis commented that he did not feel Recreation would gain much from the articles since many requests had been value engineered out to save money. He didn't think the \$100,000 for pool windows was helpful to the overall budget. Mara stated she is aware of the window budgetary concern and is still working on the issue.

Mara made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission support Articles 22 and 23 for the Fairbank Community Center and send a notification to the Select Board of their position. Seconded by Dick.

Laurie stated she was in favor of the articles. Bobby said he would abstain since he didn't feel he knew enough about them. He expressed concern that a basketball court was taken away and there are no lights in addition to other reductions. He said he isn't voting against, just not voting for it. Mara stated that given the budgetary constrictions the project has always been focused on the building infrastructure in order to get the building built. She said they would need to look at other mechanisms to add additional external items. Vote on the Motion: Mara-yes, Dick-yes, Bobby-abstained, Laurie-yes. Motion passes 3-0-1 in favor

Mara made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission support Article 33, the Pool filtration system. Seconded by Bobby.

Vote: Mara-yes, Bobby-yes, Dick-yes, Laurie-yes. Motion passed 4-0

Mara made a motion for the Park and Recreation Commission to support Article 51 the Open Space and Recreation Plan, Fields Needs Assessment and Open Space ADA Assessment. Seconded by Laurie. Vote: Laurie-yes, Dick-yes, Bobby-yes, Mara-yes. Motion passed 4-0

After discussion and explanation from Beth Sudemeyer, Planning, Mara made a motion for the Park and Recreation Commission to support Article 48 on the Rail Trail. Seconded by Dick. Vote: Dick-yes, Laurie-yes, Bobby-yes, Mara-yes. Motion passed 4-0.

Mara left the meeting due to discussion on the other Rail Trail Articles since she is an abutter. Bobby asked Beth Sudemeyer to review the Articles for the Commission. Beth reviewed Article 19 Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Phase 2D- Acquisition of Land, Article 20, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Phase 2D-Grant of Easements and Article 47 CPC-Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Design and Construction North of Mass Central Rail Trail. Beth stated the Park and Recreation Commission already voted to support Article 18. She discussed details and informed the Commission on any changes to the Articles since she last presented Article 19 and 20 to the Commission.

Bobby made a motion for the Park and Recreation Commission to support Articles 18,19 and 47. Seconded. Vote: Bobby-yes, Laurie-yes, Dick-yes. Motion passed 3-0.

Mara rejoined the meeting.

Review of Commission Minutes: Moved to next meeting due to length of meeting. Mara clarified the June meeting is on June 13 not June 6.

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force Delegate - Dick officially resigned as the Park and Recreation delegate to the Rail Trail Task Force.

Dick made a motion that Laurie Eliason be the Park and Recreation Commission Rail Trail Task Force delegate. Seconded by Bobby. Vote: Dick-yes, Bobby-yes, Laurie-yes, Mara-yes. Motion passed 4-0.

Mara suggested that the Park and Recreation Commission send an email to the Select Board requesting that Dick Williamson be added to the Rail Trail Task Force as a non-voting member for his years of service and efforts regarding the Rail Trail. Dick said he would accept that offer.

Mara made a motion to make Dick Williamson a non-voting member of the Bruce Freeman task force and send an email to the Select Board requesting the appointment. Seconded by Laurie. Vote – Laurie-yes, Bobby-yes, Mara-yes Vote passed 3-0 in favor. Mara will send email the Select Board and will copy the Commission.

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded. Dick-yes, Bobby-yes, Laurie-yes, Mara-yes.