

Virtual Meeting 6:33pm

February 7, 2022

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

Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool

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

Comments from Chairperson: Mara stated she wrote a letter, with Bobby's assistance, with the Commission's view on the Atkinson Pool Windows and sent it to the Planning Board. She said the Planning Board is pushing to have windows in the dive well, and the project team decided not to fight it because it would delay the building schedule. Mara said it is unclear what will be taken out of the budget in order to fund the dive well windows. She said it was clear the Park and Recreation Commission, the Park and Recreation Department, and users of the pool were not in favor of the dive well windows. Mara discussed the finishing and furnishings meeting that she and Dennis attended. Estimates are expected later this month. She said they expect to get a competitive bid sometime in mid-March. The Select Board voted on the first round of ARPA Funds to approve funds to remove the water main found that needed to be removed before construction of the new building.

Field fee discussion moved to the next meeting. Mara added the new gym is being designed to allow light to enter, so there will be plenty of natural light in the facility, just not in the pool area.

Public Comment: None

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail: Beth Suedmeyer discussed two items; proposed transfer of Parkinson Land to Park and Recreation and the second to bring an update to the Commission on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail update. Both have votes associated with them. Mara said she will leave the meeting for the second discussion since she is an abutter to the Rail Trail. Beth shared her screen showing the article to transfer tax possession of the parcel to the Park and Recreation Commission. She said the parcel was never officially transferred through a Town Meeting vote to be a Park and Recreation Parcel. She said no one could think of a reason not to do this and this is more housekeeping and cleaning up the records to make everything consistent. Mara asked Beth if she needed a vote from the Commission in support of this warrant article. Beth said it is recommended but not absolutely required. She felt it would be helpful to know that the Commission is in support of the article.

Bobby made a motion to support the article to transfer tax possession of the Parkinson Land, to the Park and Recreation Commission. Ben seconded the motion. Bobby – yes, Ben – yes, Laurie – yes, Dick – yes, Mara – yes. Motion passed 5-0 in favor.

Mara recused herself for the next portion of the meeting and turned meeting over to Ben.

Beth said discussion points are BFRT update (100% design and accessories at adjacent Town owned parcels; Section 4(f) discussion and possible vote (easement at Parkinson Field, Broadacre Farm, and Davis Field); Town Meeting Warrant Article-Discussion and Possible Vote Planning (transfer control of easement area to Select Board for BFRT easements)

Beth gave an overview of the project schedule which had a 100% design submittal in January 2022, the Environmental Permitting in spring 2022, Plans Specifications and Estimates in April 2022, ROW Process

and ATM in Spring of 2022, Project Advertised for Construction in June 2022 with construction starting in Fall of 2022. She said there are three recreational areas owned by the Town of Sudbury that will be used for temporary and permanent project-associated purposes. She said this is a project the town has heavily invested in and has been working on for a very long time. Beth sent the Commission information ahead of the meeting to review with all the project information.

After discussion of all three parcels and the BFRT impact and temporary and permanent easement requirements, Beth stated that ultimately there is no requirement that the Park and Recreation Commission take a vote, but what DOT desires is a signature from someone saying that this is de minimis (minor) impact and everyone is okay with the proposed use of the property. Beth added that there is a public comment period that the DOT announced as part of the 4F review process and that comment period closes on February 12.

Motion to appoint Dick Williamson the signature authority on behalf of the Park and Recreation Commission attesting to the de minimis nature of the easements requested across Parkinson, Broadacres and Davis recreation fields. Bobby seconded the motion. Bobby- yes, Dick – yes, Laurie – yes Ben – yes. 4-0 in favor.

Beth discussed the next article at Town Meeting which will be to transfer control of an easement area to the Select Board for the BRFT easements. This article requests to transfer from the board, commission, or officer currently having care, custody, management and control of portions of the following described property for the purpose for which the property is currently held to the Select Board. Beth said this article would grant temporary or permanent easements over Broadacres, Davis Field and Parkinson's Field. The Select Board would be given the discretion to basically sign and approve all the formal legal documents associated with the temporary easements specific to the 3 recreation parcels.

Beth offered to bring any questions back to Town Counsel, since there is time before Town Meeting.

Dick made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission support the article to transfer control of the easement area of the 3 recreation parcels to the Select Board for the BRFT easements. Laurie seconded the motion. Laurie – yes, Dick – yes, Bobby –

Bobby asked if the Commission was voting on the article presented in front of them tonight. He asked if the Select Board would have control of these areas even after the construction. Beth said only as it relates to the Rail Trail, but said she did not know the long-term implications, but would ask Town Council for clarification.

Bobby said he could not vote on this motion until he understood what the vote meant for the future of the parcels. He said he was specifically concerned with Broadacres. Ben agreed with Bobby. Beth said it was a good question since it involves long term maintenance and who actually has the authority to make decisions if it doesn't revert after the construction period.

Ben thought it would be a good idea to delay the vote until they get clarification. Bobby noted that since a vote had started Ben should make a motion to cancel the previous motion and revote.

Bobby made a motion to cancel the prior motion to support the transfer of control of the easement area of Broadacres, Parkinson, and Davis Field to the Select Board for BFRT easements until clarification on long-term implications. Laurie seconded. Laurie – yes, Dick -yes, Bobby – yes, Ben – yes.

Mara returned to meeting.

Director Update: Dennis sent out department financials to the Commission. He said swim team season is coming to a close and the staff is in the process of planning for spring/summer programs. Mara asked about pool memberships and said the pool report showed revenues are exceeding expenditures so she asked if Dennis would be hiring more staff. Dennis responded memberships are a little over 100, split between seniors and adults. The membership split is still about 60/40 non-resident to resident. He is planning to hire more part-time lifeguards and supervisors, but is still concerned about potential downtime with the construction of the new Fairbank Community Center. Bobby expressed concern that the construction process will go as smoothly as suggested due to delays seen in other projects. Mara said the project team is working to limit the impact to the pool during the busy times. No questions or comments on the Field Enterprise Fund.

Mara asked about the pool memberships and said it doesn't look like they have increased. Dennis said memberships go up and down. He said memberships often increase after swim team season. He and his staff are looking at other ways to increase pool offerings.

Mara asked about the Tree Warden public hearing that took place in January regarding tree removal at Haskell Playground. Dennis said the hearing took place, no one attended. He said the project will be on hold for a bit due to supply issues with vendors. He said it may be another year before the project is completed. Mara stated the CPC money has been allocated and will not go away with a delay in the project.

Bobby asked Dennis if he had a conversation with the Town Manager regarding severe impacts on the pool offerings/programs due to construction of the new Fairbank Community building. Dennis said there has not been much discussion on that topic. Dennis is waiting for the building timetable to see how it will impact the pool and programs. He said Recreation/Atkinson Pool is the only department impacted by the new building construction. Summer camp will be across the street, parking for programs will be across the busy Fairbank Road, and the entrance to the pool and recreation programs will be moved to the back of the building near the entrance of the Senior Center. He said it will be very difficult to run programs for the next two years. He is still unsure how the pool will be impacted due to projected shutdowns and is concerned for the long-term viability of the pool. He is concerned users may cancel their memberships because they don't want to deal with the hassle of construction.

Bobby agreed and felt the Commission needs to be prepared that the construction could have a real impact on the Pool Enterprise Fund and they should be prepared for different situations. Mara said she sent an email in the past to Henry and Dennis K. regarding this issue. She felt the Commission should advocate for compensation if revenue is impacted due to the construction of the new facility. She said the Town has done this before due to the pandemic.

Laurie asked about the summer camp registration on March 1, 2022. She asked if Extended Day would be offered for camp. Information will be on the Park and Recreation website this week or the latest February break week and his plan is to send email blasts to specific age group. Dennis said the Sudbury Adventure trips are being built now and will be posted when finalized. Sudbury Summer will have one trip per sessions for the older kids. He is in the process of securing busses at this time. All trips are subject to change. Younger kids will stay at camp and have a special surprise/presenter.

Roles and Responsibilities: Ben reported on the clarification he received from Town Counsel and Town Manager regarding what collaboration means, the Commission's view of ambiguity in the legal opinion on the Commission's role/responsibility on Revolving funds and Enterprise Funds. It was made clear that fee setting is collaborative between the Commission and Department. Recommendations should be brought to the Town Manager who has the final say on everything relating to the budget. Clarification was given on the Enterprise Fund and Revolving Funds. According to Town Counsel, the PRC has the authority to spend the Revolving Fund, but in practical terms they need to figure out what that means. Ben and Bobby spoke with Dennis regarding the Revolving Fund and learned salaries, benefits and other expenses come out of that fund so much of the money is already accounted for. Ben said he learned that many nonsensical items are paid by the Revolving Fund. He said that may be something the Commission will want to work on in the future. The third area important to Town Counsel and the Town Manager is for the Commission to be aware of the impact that their policies have on the Town and Town Budget and can't in good faith set any policy that has a negative or even in some cases a positive impact. Ben said decisions must be done in a collaborative manner and policies should not be made that have an impact on the Town Budget because the Town Staff is held accountable for the budget.

Bobby agreed and said it was clear that the Recreation Department was responsible for balancing the budget and evaluated on it. The Commission can be a sounding board and provide feedback and support to the Director on plans and programs. Bobby said because Recreation does not get much Town money, there is more pressure on the Recreation Director to generate revenue from programs and manage the Field and Pool Enterprise revenue and expenses.

Dennis agreed and said because Recreation does not receive funds from the Town to cover expenses and has to generate funds for the Pool and Field Enterprise Funds and the Revolving Fund it does add pressure to run many programs and bring in field permits and generate usage at the pool. He is looking for the Commission to continue to advocate for the Department, because the last thing he wants to do is keep increasing permit fees and program/pool fees to keep up with salaries and benefits.

Ben stated Community event funding was discussed in the meeting and it was clear there was no money set aside for these events. He said the Commission was encouraged to investigate other funding opportunities for Community based events. He said it will be important to find how other communities fund these types of events and the question will be what is Recreation worth to the Town.

Laurie agreed and said this was an area discussed at previous meetings. She has drafted a letter covering these concerns she will refine it a bit based on the Recreation conversation today and will send the letter out later this month.

Mara stated she too has spoken with the Town Manager regarding these issues. Mara suggested that a future agenda item might be to review the financials of the Enterprise and Revolving funds.

Mara asked if a deeper look into the financials should be added to the next agenda. Bobby stated that after he and Ben spoke with Dennis he thought it might be better to let Dennis state what actions would help the department the most. Ben offered a subcommittee on financials may be the way to go and then have the committee come back to the Commission and present any information. Mara agreed a subcommittee made sense, but said she did not want to let this issue drop at this point and wants to be prepared to go into the next budget cycle with a focused effort. Mara asked Bobby to lead the effort and

Ben offered to work with him. Ben suggested it would be a good idea to discuss this topic on a regular basis.

Dick thought it would be useful to have 3 categories of expenditures. One that is obviously related to field maintenance. Second would be items that are necessary and the third would be items that Recreation has to absorb for some reason, but not really related to the main mission of recreation. It was agreed that some form of categories would be good. Mara asked Ben to elaborate on what collaboration meant in the discussion.

Ben said the collaboration would be between the Commission and Department and a recommendation would be brought to the Town Manager who has the final say. He said at the end of the day the Commission needs to make sure their recommendations don't negatively impact the budget.

Dennis explained for the Enterprise funds he produces a budget based on projected revenues and expenditures. He reviews the budget numbers with the Town Manager and once voted on at Town meeting. Revenue generated by the Pool is used to offset the expenses, and any surplus is kept in retained earnings. If the Pool or Field Enterprise runs short, the Town would have to make up the difference. If the fund continues to fall short, the fund may need to be closed. The Revolving Fund does not have budgeted line items.

Mara said it would be interesting to understand the history of when and why the Field and Pool Enterprise Funds started and the rationale for starting them. Dennis said the Pool was always set up as an Enterprise Fund. The Field Enterprise Fund was started about 10 years ago. The Town Manager and Finance Director at the time decided to create the Field Enterprise Fund to help offset the Town Budget by moving a portion of some of the Parks and Grounds salaries to the fund to help overages of the overall Town budget. Dennis said he was not in favor of it at the time because the fund would have full time employees and benefits. It is difficult to maintain because salaries and benefits go up every year, so the revenue has to also go up and that is difficult to maintain.

Mara thanked Bobby and Ben for all their work and looked forward to additional information on the financials of Park and Recreation. She said she looked forward to more collaboration when it comes to price/fee setting.

Sudbury Foundation Grant Opportunity: Discussion on funding sources for Community based recreation programs. Sudbury Foundation has several categories requests from Town Boards or Commissions have to go through the Town Manager. Mara stated there are quarterly deadlines for requests. Summer camp scholarships and summer concert funding were considered as potential requests. Laurie mentioned another item discussed was a Park and Recreation van, which was requested through ARPA and she said CPC may also be a possibility for funding. She would like to see funding for scholarships for camp and asked if scholarships had been funded by Sudbury Foundation in the past. Mara stated her understanding that in the past an individual gave money for summer scholarships, but now that money goes to Sudbury Foundation to support scholarships. It was thought the deadlines were too tight to get summer camp scholarships for this year. Mara stated they should look to apply in the fall or winter of for next year scholarships. Dennis thought asking for funding for a Park and Recreation van and Community wide programming would be great. Mara mentioned the Sudbury Cultural Council and grants and said that may also be a funding source in the future. Commissioners questioned if a van request would meet the requirements for the Sudbury Foundation Grants and CPC funding and would be better as a capital

request in the fall. Mara asked Dennis if he or his staff could provide details on expenses and offerings if the Commission asked for funding for 12 months of Community Programming. She said the deadline for submission is April 1st, so the request would have to be discussed at the March meeting. Laurie will work with Mara on the request for funding. Dennis said they should meet with the Park and Recreation Coordinators to discuss details and programs. Mara asked Dennis to mention the request to the Town Manager, if possible. Mara and Laurie will bring information on the grant to the March Park and Recreation Meeting in order to meet the April 1 deadline.

Walking Path at Haskell: Mara shared her screen with the currently walking path at Haskell Field. She stated the request is to move the path inside the fence. Dennis expressed concern that a path inside the fences would impact the field layouts. Mara said she thought this would be a great idea and wouldn't be that expensive to complete. She questioned if the layout of the fields could be reorganized. Dennis said that it will be difficult to reorganize the fields due to the permanent baseball fence and adding a path inside the fence. He said the irrigation lines may also be impacted by an inside path. Mara said this could be something to consider in the next capital discussion.

Mara asked if the engineering department could propose some potential layouts. Mara suggested sending an email to the Dan Nason, DPW Director, asking about field layouts and the implications to constructing a path inside the fence at Haskell. It was decided that Dennis would be the contact point with Dan Nason regarding the field layouts. Dennis said he knew that the DPW Department was short on staff right now. Mara will draft an email and send it to Dennis to forward on to Dan to see what the impact to the field layout would be with the proposed inside path.

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes: Mara reviewed the December minutes and questioned if she made the statement of a finite number of contractors. She requested not to approve the December minutes until she was able to review her actual comments.

Motion to approve the January minutes. Seconded by Bobby. Laurie – yes, Bobby – yes, Ben – yes, Mara - yes, Dick did not vote wasn't sure he was at the meeting.

Future Meetings: The next meetings are scheduled for March 7 and April 4.

Meeting adjourned.