

Virtual Meeting 6:40pm

May 9, 2022

Commissioners: Mara Huston, Laurie Eliason, Jenn Stone, Bobby Beagan, Ben Carmel

Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool

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

**Public Comment:** None

**Chair Comments:** Mara stated most articles the Commission supported passed at Town Meeting. Town is waiting for bids to come in on the new Fairbank Community Center. The Permanent Building Committee (PBC) is meeting on Thursday to review bids, lowest bidder will be awarded the contract. Mara stated the PBC will be managing the project. Communication on the project will come from PBC and Select Board. Ben asked about updates on past CPC Articles. Mara stated the Feeley update will take place at tonight's meeting and then work with Dennis to develop a process to communicate the status on other projects. Atkinson Pool membership review will be added to a future agenda along with the funding model for the Recreation. Mara asked Ben to send out a draft of the Charter with edits from the past meetings

**Director Update:** Dennis said he has given updates on the Haskell playground in the past in the Director's update and will continue to update projects in this forum. The Haskell playground is at a standstill due to paperwork issues in the bidding process and has been pushed off for another year or two due to construction of the new Fairbank building, staffing issues and some supply chain issues. A representative from Warner Larsen will speak at this meeting in regard to the status of the Feeley Field project. Dennis will give monthly updates on these projects, but is not in favor of having a Commission liaison assigned to a project. He felt that would lead to a great deal of confusion.

Dennis stated the Articles passes at Town Meeting on field assessment and master plan will be handled by the Planning Board with input from Recreation. Mara stated the Commission will have representation on the projects and input.

The Pool and Field Enterprise Funds are in good shape with two months left in the Fiscal Year. Dennis said he was spending field money to catch up on some of the maintenance that was deferred due to Covid. Laurie asked if the new pool filter was going to be installed before summer. Mara responded that funds will not be available until after July 1 and the timetable for the new pool filter installation is next spring when the pool is shut down.

Laurie asked Dennis if additional spots will open for Sudbury Summer. He said the staff is currently working through the waitlists and handling any cancellations. Sudbury Adventure has lower numbers, but the hope is they will grow as summer gets closer. If additional counselors are hired, he will have more flexibility to open more slots. Laurie mentioned the school's SMILE program and if registrations impacted the Town camp. Dennis said he hasn't seen too many cancellations yet, but it is a concern.

Dennis said it will be a struggle once construction on the new building begins. Camp will be impacted and there is a concern for some financial loss. He was disappointed there wasn't more support from the Town and is concerned about the impact to the pool and recreation programs during construction. Mara

suggested the Commission get involved in the fall budgetary cycle to start advocating for funds to support the lost in revenue.

Jenn asked if communication has gone out to families regarding the changes in Sudbury Summer Camp due to the construction. Mara said the camp will be located at Haskell, but the campers will still have access to the pool, the gym and program rooms in the Fairbank building. Dennis stated all camp literature informed that camp would be at Haskell. The camp staff will work out of the concession stand. The gaga pit has been moved over to Haskell, picnic tables will be moved and tents will be installed.

Ben asked if the Town Manager was aware of the funding impact concern due to the construction. Mara asked Dennis his thoughts and he said he has some brief conversations regarding the concern. It is still not clear what the impact will be, but he is concerned about the pool closings and potential loss of memberships. It was decided to wait until the next meeting to see if new information had developed and then possibly speak with the Town Manager and see how he plans to handle this potential loss of revenue.

**Feeley Field Project Update:** Josh Millonig, Landscape Architect at Warner Larson who was selected to work on the two-phase project at Feeley Field, said Phase one is dealing with more hard scape type of materials and then phase two is going to focus on the drainage issues at Feeley. Josh shared a series pdfs and photos of designs for Feeley Field. He said at Upper Feeley, a five-foot asphalt walkway would connect the field to the existing pavement to make the field ADA accessible. The dugout shelters will be upgraded to have an overhead canopy roof and for foul ball control, a 20 ft athletic ball net is being proposed. Additional netting will run down the first baseline and behind the backstop. Around the existing batting cage, the proposal is to add some sort of guard rail system with ends open to provide accessibility. This is expected to provide some protection from vehicles.

Feeley 1 and Feeley 2 have drainage issues, so they are proposing a drainage infiltration trench with an outlet pipe so the water doesn't continue to roll down the hill into the field. Feeley 1 the proposal is to upgrade the team areas with new benches with overhead structures and provide accessibility from the parking lot to both team areas. Feeley two will have a stone dust walkway providing access to Feeley 2.

They have contacted a geotechnical engineer, MacPhail Associates, who will dig a few test pit areas to look at the overall soil profile on both upper and lower Feeley fields. The results of these tests will help with the improvements to drainage in Phase 2. Next step is to move to construction documents and finalize product selection, specs, and details.

Mara asked about Feeley 2 and the team areas. Josh said that could be incorporated into Phase 1 or Phase 2. Right now, the plan provides a stone dust walkway to the two dugouts. Josh said any upgrades to that plan would be up to the Town. Dennis said Phase 1 didn't take into consideration the Feeley 2 upgrades because Phase 2 had to deal with drainage issues. He said until the drainage issues are understood it doesn't make sense to put money into the lower fields because they will always be too wet. Mara asked about stairs in the slope. Josh said that was not in the plan. Dennis said the fields could be accessed from the different parking lots.

Bobby asked about ADA and the requirements. Josh stated when you have athletic facilities there is a requirement to provide access to all the areas of the site so he said it is in the best interest of the Town to provide universal access to all the field amenities.

Bobby asked about the funding from CPC for this project. Mara stated the design would dictate the phasing, the total requested was estimated at \$398,000. She said the Commission contributed some funds through the Meadow walk Fund for the design process and Sudbury Girls and Woman's Softball was contributing funds too. Bobby asked if the ADA features were part of the estimate and if there would be enough funds to cover the requirements. Dennis said contingencies were built in, but won't know, due to inflation and the actual price tag, if funds requested are enough. He said the big question is will the Warner/Larsen report say the lower fields are able to be drained properly and at what cost. Dennis said there were ADA issues in regard to access to the concession stand and was unsure how that would be funded. Bobby asked how much has been spent already. Josh responded about a third of the Warner Larson fee (\$29,500) has been spent to date. Mara asked how long construction would be; Josh responded eight to twelve weeks.

Dennis shared financials for the project year to date. He said he would be coordinating with the softball schedule to go along with the construction. Jenn asked how involved girls' softball is in the project. Dennis said he has been working with Kate Marchand of girls' softball.

Ben asked if the funding of \$350,000 is enough to do all the work required at Feeley. Dennis said that is the goal. Josh said he can start working on a cost estimate since the design seems to be accepted. He will coordinate with Dennis on the projects, but felt that number quoted was in the ball park.

Mara asked if the Meadow walk funds had be received at this time. Dennis said no and funds from girls' softball hadn't been received either. He said he would follow up with the Finance Director. Kate Marchand, girls' softball, said they will be doing fundraising and if the \$10,000 is not raised, they will use some of their other funds to balance off the difference. Jenn asked when the funds would be needed. Josh thought by the time the Town is ready to sign the contract. Dennis agreed, when the bids come back the Town has to have the funds in hand. He said when Josh runs the different cost estimators they will get an idea of where we are at in the budget for the project.

**Pickleball Feeley/Featherland:** Mara stated the plan is to review concerns raised by neighbors and the articles they sent the Commission which discuss how other communities have handled the noise. Mara visited the courts and raised the possibility of the sound barrier on the fence that could muffle the sounds. She stated she did not support removing pickle ball from the courts as she felt it was an important recreation opportunity. It is a growing sport and an active sport for all ages. Bobby suggested all Commissioner express their thoughts on the topic. Bobby said he also went down to the courts and did hear the noise of pickle ball and could see how it might bother people. He questioned how the sound might change if the pickleball court at Feeley was moved to a tennis court on the opposite end or possibly the middle court. He said when the courts were first painted at Feeley it was in response to requests from residents to have a court to play on and the Commission was trying to provide the Community with another recreation activity. He said he would support signage that would limit play to Sudbury residents only even though that would be difficult to enforce.

Ben stated he thought whatever the plan is regarding pickleball, it should be a phased approach, and he is looking for Dennis' input. He said it may take time and funds to purchase sound dampening if that is the plan. He said there may be other locations that will be a better home for pickle ball, such as Sewataro. Mara added that the LSRHS has painted pickleball courts in the parking lot by the tennis courts. She questioned if they could add pickleball courts to their tennis courts as well.

Laurie agreed in looking for other areas to play pickle ball, or potentially moving the court at Feeley, but also agreed there shouldn't be one location where pickleball can't be played. She also thought set times for pickleball could be a response.

Mara stated the Commission has no authority over Sewataro or the LSRHS courts, but they could be asked about adding pickleball courts. Jenn asked what other communities had done to handle concerns regarding pickleball noise and wondered if anyone had reached out to see what might be working. She would also like to revisit the use and costs for the soundproofing material. Mara said other communities have shared time on tennis courts for pickle ball and tennis and some have separate courts. Mara stated one of the issues with the soundproofing at Feeley is it would block the courts views from the street and could be a safety issue. It was suggested to have the police weigh in on this thought.

Mara stated in the past the commission had discussed setting times and adding signage to courts, but had not decided to enact any of those policies at this time. Bobby asked for Dennis' thoughts before the discussion was opened to attendees. Dennis said he reached out to local communities and some Towns do have designated times for play. Natick offered memberships to play on their courts. he didn't think there were large groups of players at Feeley since there are only two courts and they are not in the best condition. He thought moving the pickle ball court at Feeley to the center court could cause issues since both tennis and pickle balls could end up on more courts. He said Recreation has started to offer more pickleball clinics on the Town courts. He added pickleball courts are planned for the new Fairbank Community Center. He did think that if large groups were using the pickleball courts a permit should be requested and it might be something the Commission wants to review.

Action items after discussion were; Mara will email the Chief of Police and ask about the sound barrier and then send his response out the Commission. Bobby asked if Dennis could get a cost estimate on moving the pickleball court and painting over the existing pickleball court. Dennis will do that. He said the Field Enterprise Funds should not be used to pay for this expense. He said it would have to come out of Town funds because pickle ball players do not pay a permit fee at this time. Parks and Grounds Staff has a budget for maintenance, so there may be some extra funds there, but he was unsure.

Mara asked if any meeting attendees wanted to speak on this topic. Dennis suggested limiting comments to two to three minutes. Bobby suggested only new information, not repeating what has been discussed before. It was decided to give 2 minutes for discussion.

Marie Royea said the discussion has been good and thought moving the court at Feeley to the opposite side might be helpful since there is a tree buffer line. She thought putting the court in the middle would be very busy and a potential safety issue.

Kevin Westerberg, 39 Raymond Road, said he appreciated everyone's effort to address the noise issue. He asked that the Commission move as diligently as possible to address the noise issue.

Featherland: Discussion by the Commission on whether pickle ball should be considered a user group and pay a permit fee to reserve the courts. Mara said basketball players, tennis players are not required to pull a permit to play so she questioned why pickleball players would need permit.

Bobby thought if it was an organized group with a distribution list and playing at certain times it should be looked at as different than a pickup game. Laurie agreed with Bobby and Mara asked

how that would compare to tennis players who decided to play every Tuesday night because that is when they were all available. Laurie said there may have to be some type of threshold to determine if a permit is required. Ben asked who defines a user group. Mara said usually permits are pulled by groups where people register to be part of a team and pay a fee to the organization. She stated the courts are public and should be free and accessible for everyone to use.

Dennis stated the courts are permitted at times to the LSRHS and the Recreation Department uses the courts to teach tennis and pickleball clinics and vendor programs such as tennis clinics run through The Longfellow Club. He said he would also rent them out for private tennis lessons, but private coaches don't always request a permit.

If a large group is playing pickleball and someone sees them on the court, they may not ask to play and may think it is a private group because it is so large. He felt if it is an organized group with a distribution list and everyone is told when to show up then it would qualify as a user group. Mara commented if they want guaranteed court time then a permit should be pulled, but if not then they should be treated like tennis and basketball players who are playing on public courts. Featherland is busier since there are four pickleball courts.

Bobby said the Commission should define a user group and perhaps check with what other Towns are doing. Mara agreed but said it should be fair to everyone.

Dennis commented that he has received emails that some pickleball groups are less welcoming to new players. Mara said many groups play on the courts and knows that some are very welcoming to new players and thought that may be outside the Commission's scope.

Craig Blake, 300 Old Lancaster Rd, said that pickleball play at Feeley is a pick-up sport similar to basketball play on an open public court. He added that Pickleball can't be played without a net, and the current courts only have painted lines for Pickleball. He said there are not leagues or teams playing. He said at one time the Town supplied a net, but it was stolen, and hasn't been replaced.

Dennis will contact surrounding Towns Recreation Departments to see how they are handling Pickleball use, signage, fees, and hours of play. Due to potential confusion, it was decided that Dennis should contact the Chief of Police regarding the sound barrier issue at Feeley. Mara asked Dennis to copy the Chair and Commission members on the response. Bobby asked for a future agenda item to discuss the definition of a user group.

**Afterschool Programming Needs in Sudbury:** Laurie added this agenda item to discuss the concern in Town for after school care for working parents in Sudbury. She said Sudbury Extended Day does not have enough openings or space for all those who need after school care. She added the change in start times of the elementary and high school has contributed to the issue. The elementary school now ends before the high school which impacts the availability of babysitters and part-time staff of high school employees for Sudbury Extended Day. She wants to proactively plan for after school activities in the Community Center with Recreation once the new facility is complete and make sure it is in the budget. She felt it should be a top priority of Park and Recreation to provide this service to the Town. She is aware that transportation is one of the big issues and dedicated transportation will be needed.

Dennis stated he was aware of the ongoing issue and thinks the Town will have to decide if they want Park and Recreation to offer a full-fledged after school program when the new building is finished. It will take coordination, planning, transportation and funding to develop and staff an after-school program and it is unclear at this time how many children a program could accommodate. This type of program may impact other Recreation programs offered after school in the new facility. He has asked for funding for a van to transport children from schools to after school Recreation programs. He added in order to start a program like this the Town would have to contribute some funds initially until the program became self-sufficient. Laurie agreed and said there was definitely more discussion needed regarding space and funding and thought transportation was key part of the issue.

Mara asked if it made sense for Laurie and Dennis to create a business model for an after-school care program as a part of the next budgetary cycle. Laurie was in favor of it and Dennis agreed but said before Recreation takes on another program he would have to look at the staffing and support the Town has for the program. He would like to see some funding for Recreation similar to Sewataro and other departments. Laurie agreed and would like to keep the conversation and issue in the forefront and discuss in future meetings.

Jenn stated she felt it was a good idea to start the conversations and be ready with potential programs when the new Community Center opens. The Commission and Recreation should be proactive in offering programs to help the community and be ready with offerings when the new Community Center opens. Jenn offered her help as well.

Marie Royea, 42 Blacksmith Drive, was heartened to see the proactivity to try to figure out how to offer these programs. She commented that the senior center vans are used all the time and might be available for shared use. Dennis has looked into that, but they are not available due to the way they were funded and insurance issues.

Mara shared her screen with a draft of Sudbury Park and Recreation Commission Core Priorities that Ben compiled. Mara suggested discussing two items on the list related to the Fairbank project for potential capital projects requests in the fall. One is the second basket ball court and lights to the courts. The other is new gutters for the Pool. After discussion on some other potential needs for the new facility, Bobby suggested adding this topic to the next agenda and said he would like to add Davis field to the list for discussion.

**Review and Approve Minutes:** Approval moved to the next meeting.

Future Meetings: Next meetings scheduled for June 30, and July 11<sup>th</sup>. Virtual meetings are set to expire on July 15<sup>th</sup>, but the feeling is that date will be extended. At this time no meeting is set for August.

Motion to adjourn, and seconded. Bobby – yes, Ben – yes, Laurie – yes, Jen O- yes, Mara – yes.