

Virtual Meeting 6:40pm

September 12, 2022

Commissioners: Mara Huston, Laurie Eliason, Jenn Stone

Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool

Meeting Roll Call: Jenn – here, Laurie – here, Mara – here. Bobby and Ben not in attendance

Public Comment: None

Chair Comments: Mara stated the Select Board voted to disable the chat function in their meetings and the Park and Recreation Commission can decide to do that also. The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is organizing a meeting among Towns along the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to discuss policies and rules. The Park and Recreation Commission has no authority, but she asked if anyone planned to attend. Laurie said she was not able to attend and Dennis was unsure at this time. Mara stated the Fairbank Project is moving along, the fences are up around the construction site and the new Recreation entrance is now in the back of the building.

Director Update: Dennis reported the pool reopened after the month-long shutdown. People are slowly registering for memberships again. Swim team rentals are beginning. He informed there is a CO₂ shortage, so he had a supplemental system installed to keep control of the Ph in the pool. A similar system will be installed for the dive well. Vendors are saying CO₂ won't be available for 3 months. Most fall field permits have been received. There are still issues with the well at Haskell, but he is working with Parks and Grounds on it. Recreation programs have started for the fall. Registration is low, perhaps due to people thinking the building is closed due to construction or they don't want to park and walk across the street. Fall Fest is on September 17th, details will be discussed later in meeting.

The building construction has changed the entrance to the pool/recreation offices. Room 2 is limited now due to egress door installed for emergency exit.

Pool revenue numbers were down last month due to summer camp and shut down due to construction. Field is negative as well, because the Town takes out employees benefit costs at the beginning of the year in Enterprise Funds.

Mara asked if Dennis could estimate the lost revenue due to shut down and if the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) needs to advocate to the Fincom for funds to supplement the lost revenue due to the construction of the new building. Dennis said monthly memberships were cancelled during the shutdown and the lost day passes would be difficult to know. Plus, many swimmers swim outside in the summer and return in the fall. He said the pool averages \$25,000 to \$30,000 per month, with swim team rentals. His concern is the FinCom and Town will look to use the pool's retained earnings for any shortfall. Mara did not think retained earnings should be used to cover the losses and said the PRC needs to think about how they want to handle this issue. Dennis said the pool did pick up some additional renters due to a pool that closed in Framingham. Mara felt the PRC needed to be proactive now to let the Fincom and Select Board know the concern and what the future impact of the shutdown might be for the pool. Laurie agreed and asked Dennis his thoughts. Dennis did not think the Town would do anything until the end of the Fiscal Year. He added the dates for the pool shutdown in the spring are not confirmed yet, so if it is moved it may not impact this fiscal year as much. He added it is

still not clear how the pool shutdown will impact the summer camp plans. He added the Town gave the pool \$150,000 in the past for revenue lost during Covid and some of those funds are in the current retained earnings. He said he thought the building was behind already due to some construction issues, so that may impact the future shutdown dates. If the shutdown is moved to the summer months, that could impact the summer camp due to loss of the pool.

Mara said based on her discussions with the Project Manager for the Permanent Building Committee, the spring shut down dates were fixed and non-negotiable and couldn't be shifted. She encouraged Dennis to confirm that information with the Facilities Director.

Mara asked about the Wild Wednesday program. Dennis said there is not plan to run Wild Wednesdays this year due to space issues, staffing, transportation and construction. Recreation may offer some day trips, but that has not been decided yet. Laurie commented that after school care is an issue. Mara said additional discussion on that topic will be later in the meeting.

Capital Priorities: Mara stated tonight's goal is to decide what the Commission will submit for capital requests. Deadlines for both CPC and Capital requests are in October. Mara shared the list of updated capital priority projects. **Basketball court/fencing and lighting:** She does not have a cost on fencing yet, lights are estimated at \$80,000. She reached out to the Chair of the Energy Commission expressing the hope for some support on lighting the courts. **Pool Gutters:** Mara sent a letter to the pool expert, Tom Scarlata, with questions regarding the status/safety of the pool gutters. He said the pool gutters are probably not the source of the leak in the pool, but it's more likely the pipe between the gutter trench, which is being addressed in the new building project. He said the rocking of the gutters are also being fixed in the project. He said replacing the gutters in the future would improve the appearance of the pool, but the safety issues are being resolved in the project. The gutter issue is not as critical as she thought based on past emails. **Haskell Field Path:** This was not considered a high priority this year so it was removed from the list, but will be considered in the future. **Pickleball:** Need to make decision on requesting \$20,000 or so for the sound proofing fabric for pickleball courts, **Pavilion at Fairbank:** Mara suggested requesting design funds for the outside space/pavilion and wait to see how the new space is used once open. Laurie expressed concern that requesting design funds first would delay the building process for another year or so. Mara said some type of design would have to be done for the pavilion, the outdoor space design would look for best location for the pavilion. Laurie said she would like to see the pavilion closer to the building and the basketball court moved so there is easier access to the bathrooms and building.

Jenn asked if there is any flexibility to move the basketball court. Mara suggested that would be a question for Sandra, the Facilities Director. Mara stated the new building will have a community space right outside the gym for events. Dennis expressed concern about that space since there is no fence to protect children from Fairbank Road. Mara questioned if the sloped area behind the new parking lot could be used in anyway if a retaining wall was constructed. She said there are still many questions on the outdoor space. Mara asked for Dennis' opinion. Dennis said he and his staff brought up these questions early on in the building design phase, but no one wanted to listen to them. He said it seems now the discussion is to fix what was originally promised before funds were cut. He did not think the basketball court would be moved since the funds on the building are very tight and change orders would be costly. Mara stated many of the outdoor expenses, such as the pavilion, were cut due to budget constraints and the thought was they could be funded at a later date.

Mara stated leaving the basketball court where it is leaves the possibility of adding another court later or additional parking. In its current position, the trees are a buffer to the neighbors. Laurie thought a pavilion next to the neighbors would be just as loud.

Other items on the capital list are the bus/van, which will be discussed as a separate agenda item and new funds for the SMILE playground, and Feeley Phase 2. Laurie stated the Capital Priority Ideas were discussed in the August meeting and the Commission decided on pursuing a pavilion or design funds, the bus, lights and fencing, but not requesting the second basketball court. Mara added Feeley Phase 2 and asked Dennis if anything additional was needed for the Haskell playground. Dennis said he now needs to get a design done for the playground before the Town sends the bid out. The estimate for design funds is \$15,000. Dennis was not sure if the CPC funds would cover all the expenses since the supply chain increases have increased project costs. He won't know the true costs until the design is done and then bid out. He said the project is on hold also due to the construction of the new Community Center, since the summer camp will more than likely be at Haskell next summer too and use the playground.

Dennis expressed concern with the number of capital projects and executing them all at the same time. He said the basketball lights and fencing were an add alternate in the new Community Building and thought that request should be submitted by the Permanent Building Committee. He also questioned if the Commission could request capital projects or should it come through the Department Director. He said the Department is currently in the middle of construction of a \$30,000 million-dollar building, and he is having difficulty getting help from the Town on the projects he is working on now, so he is concerned with adding more work at this time. He said the only thing he wants to submit a request for is CPC funds for Feeley Phase 2.

Mara stated the Commission can request CPC Funds and has done so in the past. She said the Commission does not sign contracts, Town departments manage the project once funds are approved.

Dennis requested additional info from Warner Larsen on Feeley Phase 1 and expects to have it by the end of the week. Once the Town reviews it and puts the project out to bid, he and Warner Larsen will have a better estimate of what Phase 2 will cost. Mara asked if he will have enough information to submit a CPC request. He said was working with Warner Larsen to meet the deadline.

After discussion, Mara made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission submit a request for fencing and lights for the single basketball court through CPC funding. Jenn seconded the motion. Dennis questioned if the Commission could put in the CPC request if other departments end up managing the project. Mara thought they could, but suggested voting down the motion and she would make a new motion. Vote: Jenn – no, Laurie – no, Mara – no. Motion failed.

Mara made a motion for the Park and Recreation Commission to support a submission to the CPC for funding for fencing and lights for the single basketball court outside the new Fairbank Building. Jenn seconded. Vote: Jenn – yes, Laurie – yes, Mara – yes. Motion passed 3-0. Goal is to have the CPC request ready for approval at the next PRC meeting.

Mara will ask Ben to look into the roles and responsibilities of the Commission to see if they can request funding through CPC. Feeley information is not available yet, but will hopefully be ready by the next meeting so it can be voted on.

Dennis or Laurie will reach out to Sandra, Facilities Director, to discuss the pavilion to get her opinion.

Fall Fest: Mara responded to an email from the Sudbury Foundation telling them the summer concert had been moved to a fall activity due to scheduling conflicts. She suggested a supported/funded by Sudbury Foundation sign be posted at the Fall Fest. Laurie will take care of that and reported she and Jenn have been working closely with Tricia, Program Coordinator, in regard to planning the event. Flyers have been distributed along with posting on Facebook and the Town website. Jenn suggested using a sandwich board at different areas to gain more visibility for the event. Plan is for children's entertainment and music for adults, along with food trucks, ice cream truck and field games, inflatables along with face painting. High school volunteers are expected to assist during the event and Police and Fire will also be represented. Senior Center, Therapy Boston, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Goodnow Library, Historical Society will have tables and a Radio Flyers will give a demonstration. Mara suggested having information on the new Fairbank Community Center at the Recreation table available at the Recreation table. Dennis will check with his staff on their plans for printing material on Recreation programs. Laurie stated she expected most of the Park and Recreation Commissioners to attend along with a few Select Board members. Laurie mentioned the Town Republican Committee was interested in having a table at the event. She felt it was fine to have them and others at the event as long as there was no active campaigning. She did check with the Town Manager and thought in the future there should be some type of Town policy regarding who can be at Town events. DPW will assist in bringing over additional trash barrels. The goal of the event is to bring the community together.

The event will start at 3:30 and end at 7pm. Vendors are responsible for their own setup and teardown. Recreation will produce a field map for tables and activities for the event.

Summer Camp Recap: Dennis said it was a successful summer even though it was hot and camp had to be held across the street at Haskell. The plan for next year is still up in the air as far as location. Camp dates are historically publicized in January with registration in late February/early March. As the project moves forward, there should be more clarity on pool shut down dates. The Fourth of July is on a Tuesday next year so that may impact the first week of camp. Mara asked about camp numbers. Dennis said he had approximately 70 kids per session, and on average about twenty-four per week for Sudbury Adventure, which is more than last year, but still less than the numbers before Covid.

Community Programming Needs: Mara stated the Commission wanted to be proactive and think ahead to where the needs would be with the new Community Building. Ideas included after school care as well as inclusive programming in addition to regular programming. Mara asked Dennis if there was a need to advocate for additional staff in the next budget cycle. Dennis said he was planning to request additional staff, but said it is still unclear how the new building will be used and the hours of operation. He said if the Town expects the building to be open into the evening it will require more staff. He added due to the configuration of the new building it will be difficult to separate the pool from the rest of the building. He said it will be difficult to predict the needs until he sees how the new building operates. The Pool Supervisor will not be able to be in charge of the Recreation side of the building if they have to guard the pool. He said it is also difficult because the Pool is in an Enterprise Fund and is not funded by tax dollars.

Mara stated she had expressed concern in the past to the Select Board about who can rent the rooms, what fees will be and the need for a consistent policy.

Mara asked about after school care needs and said Sudbury Extended Day is not able to meet the current demand. Laurie agreed and said the thought is to work towards determining the needs and

wants of the community. Her hope is that in the future there will be some type of transportation from the schools to the Community Center for different type of activities throughout the year including adaptive and inclusive programming. Mara asked Dennis, excluding a bus, which is next on the agenda, what would it take to create and run an after-care program in the new facility. Dennis said it would be a huge undertaking and basically be like running a summer camp during the school year. It takes a great deal of effort for the summer camp and that is just 6 weeks. He said the Town would have to decide if that is what they wanted Park and Recreation to do, and then it would require additional staff, and may impact other programs Park and Recreation could offer due to limited space.

Jenn asked if the after-care program could be outsourced. Dennis said possibly, but it would still impact the inhouse programs Park and Recreation could offer depending on the size of the after-care program. Transportation would still be an issue no matter who ran the program. Dennis said the Town has to figure out how they want Recreation to operate and increase the budget since Recreation gets very little money from the Town budget. The Pool and Field are in Enterprise Funds and the Recreation Programs are in a Revolving fund. The Department does not receive any funds from the Town for operating expenses. He stated the Town would have to fund the start of an after-care program until it is up and running. He felt staffing would also be an issue, since it is difficult to find staff now.

Mara stated the Commission would gladly advocate for what Dennis felt was needed for the programs and felt the department should have operating expenses in their budget. She felt it was important to identify the needs so the Commission could advocate for some changes in the next budget cycle. Laurie and Jenn offered to help.

Dennis stated he would be requesting additional staff in the upcoming budget cycle and said if an after-school program is developed there would need to be some type of "buy in" from the schools to assist with transportation. Laurie questioned it there should be a vote to form a committee, but Mara said it can be an action item, no need for a vote.

Charlie Russo, Select Board Chair, speaking for himself not the Board, stated that for CPC funds or any fully funded program there would need to be a full understanding of what a full year of expenses would be for the program. He said the Select Board would need to know that information before any decisions could be made on how to fund that type of program.

Mara asked Laurie if she would be able to prepare an action plan for this type of program for the fall funding cycle. Laurie thought the timeframe was too tight to come up with a plan in the next month. She said there is a need, but would like to put some type of committee together to discuss, collect data and come up with a plan. Dennis said it's difficult to plan because he is unsure when the new building will be ready and how it will be staffed. He is planning to request an additional full-time aquatics staff member that would be funded by the Town in some capacity. He said it's difficult to know the staffing needs of the new building at this time, so he is hesitant to start a new program without that understanding in place. He said the operating model for the pool and recreation changed during the Covid time, and the pool hours have been reduced. He said when the new building opens, he is not sure what the operating model will be and that model will determine the staffing needs.

Dennis said he envisions starting an aftercare program with a pilot program (funded by the Town) on a smaller scale to see how the program would run in the new facility. If successful, the program could move to operate in an Enterprise Fund.

Dennis discussed other after care programs too, that might offer programs for one school on different days.

Mara said once Dennis figures out the program or plan for the new center and staffing needs the Commission and assist and advocate with letters and support in various meetings.

Dennis suggested he and Laurie set up a meeting with Sudbury Extended Day to discuss their program and current issues to get more information on what is involved in running an after-care program. Mara will keep this item on the agenda in October.

Van for Park and Recreation: Mara spoke with the Chair of the Energy Committee and discussed the transportation challenge the Recreation Department is facing and the needs of the community for continued after school care.

Mara offered her assistance with the van. Laurie said Dennis is waiting for information from a vendor and then the Town will decide on funding a gas, hybrid or electric van. She said the timeline varies depending on the type of van. Dennis stated the ongoing maintenance and insurance would fall under the Town policies. He suggested a percentage of the program fees could be used to cover gas and maintenance on the van. He said the supply chain issues are impacting delivery dates and costs. His original request for the van was \$100,000, which was a gasoline run van. He was to go back to the Select Board with prices/options for a handicapped accessible van, a hybrid van and electric van. These options increase the price of the van from \$100,000 to as much as \$230,000. He is waiting on information from one more vendor and then he will work with Laurie on a plan to present to the Select Board. Dennis said that gas vans are more readily available and the wait time increases for handicapped vans, hybrid and electric. Mara offered the new Fairbank Center would have two charging stations in the Senior Center Parking lot. Dennis thought the hybrid van would be a good compromise. If money is no object, the Town could go with the electric van.

Mara said it would be good to get the information by the next Commission meeting and then present at the Select Board meeting and to the Energy Committee.

Mara will now work with Dennis on the van. She asked for all information to be sent to her and thought they would try to get on the Select Board meeting agenda. Mara thought the order of operations is to continue to get all the information, and then present the various options and different funding that might be available. Mara will do some research to see if there are any grants to apply for in regard to a handicapped van. The Sustainable energy committee next meeting is October 12.

Review approve minutes: Motion made to approve the May 5th and August 15th meeting minutes as amended. Seconded by Laurie. Laurie – yes, Jenn – yes, Mara – yes. Motion passed 3-0.

Next meetings are scheduled for October 3 and November 7th. December meeting date will be decided at the next meeting.

Motion to adjourn, Seconded by Jenn. Laurie – yes, Jenn – yes, Mara – yes. 3-0 meeting ended 9:02pm