

DRAFT

Virtual Meeting 6:33pm

September 13, 2021

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

Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool

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

Public Comment: None

Chair Report: Mara reported the new Community Building has moved into the next phase of design development. The value engineering process took place which listed areas for reduction since the project is over budget. The process has a design and construction contingency. She said the design contingency was used to cover some of the overages. The Building Committee is controlling the process; Mara said Dennis was involved in the last meeting, but she was not. Mara shared a list of Recreation reductions suggested by the Permanent Building Committee to bring the project back in line. One basketball court with lights has been removed and the overall building will be reduced by 2,000 square feet. Parking will be reduced, with the plan for most parking to be across the street. One of the moveable partition walls has been removed in the program rooms and the pool filtration equipment was deferred along with other pool renovations. Dennis said he was not in favor of the reductions, and is still not clear on the actual reductions, since the plan seems to keep changing. Ben asked if someone was looking at the financial impact to the Department when making cuts or just the overall budget. Dennis said Recreation is the only department that needs to generate revenue to run the department, so certain cuts could impact the ability to run the department.

Bobby expressed concern that when residents voted for the new Fairbank building it didn't include losing any resources, such as the volleyball and basketball courts. He was not pleased the Recreation Commission was not involved in the discussions because the decisions on the new building will affect the Recreation/Pool for years to come. Laurie agreed. Mara said she and Dennis have been involved in most of the conversations, but she was not invited to the last meeting by direction of the Town Manager. She said only Department Heads and staff were involved in the discussions. Laurie expressed concern that one of the bathrooms in the Preschool has been cut. Mara mentioned another concern is the indoor basketball court is not as big as originally planned. It will be bigger than the current indoor basketball court at the Fairbank Community Center, will still have the volleyball height and be lined for three pickleball courts. The locker room floors will not be tile, but a less expensive flooring. Bobby said it will be completely irresponsible if the new gym is not a full size. Dennis said the issue with the gym is the 5-foot spacing around basketball court. There will not be a stage in the new gym, his concern is there will not be enough room for game benches or scoring tables. Bobby asked Dennis to share these concerns with the architects. Mara invited project managers to come the Commission meeting tonight, but they were not available. She will email them with the comments and concerns mentioned in the meeting tonight.

Bobby asked about parking. Mara said the parking will be reduced by 33%. Dennis expressed concern for staff and seniors having to cross Fairbank Road to get to the facility. He thought using the Haskell

parking lot for overflow was fine but not for the majority of parking. Laurie agreed that it wasn't ideal to depend on Haskell for a majority of the parking. She was concerned about the sidewalks and lighting at Haskell. Dennis expressed concern about the drop off and pick up of swim team members in the new parking lot configuration. Mara did not feel it would be an issue. Bobby suggested to keep pushing back until Dennis and the department feels comfortable with the plan and hopefully the Commission can get more involved in the process to make sure concerns are being heard. Mara will send an email to the PBC and copy the Commission.

Dick said the Town has been lucky no one has been hit crossing Fairbank Road, so he thinks it is very important to get the crossing signal installed if the traffic is going to increase coming out of Haskell parking lot.

Ben asked how easy it will be to get \$60,000 for the basketball court at the new Fairbank building. He asked if that would be a CPC request. Mara said this will be discussed later in the meeting, but the two funding sources would be the Town Manager's budget and CPC. She was unsure if grants would be available. Bobby felt the Commission should be more involved in the process because he has heard that in the Permanent Building Committee (PBC) process the users can get lost if they don't have a direct voice to the PBC.

Mara received an email to the Commission requesting handicapped parking be located closer to the tennis courts at Featherland. Dennis said it is currently being worked on by the highway department.

Director Update: Dennis sent out financials showing the department financials for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2021 and the numbers for the first 3 months through September 9, 2021. Pool numbers as September 9th, do not reflect the summer camp revenue. He reported that nothing major was done during the shutdown due to the new building. There was discussion about draining the pool, but the architects were able to get the information needed on the pool without draining it. He received a report on the pool stating there was a leak in the dive well and lap pool. Mara asked how that would be fixed, and Dennis replied he was unsure but should be in the overall budget of the new Fairbank Center. Dennis is not pleased that the pool will be losing all the windows. He is concerned about the chlorine odor and the possible effects of it oxidizing on office furniture and equipment. He is concerned about fogging on the remaining inside window and not sure how the architects are going to address these issues. Mara stated the architects addressed this concern and said the issues were due to ventilation and the new facility will have improved ventilation and air pressure controls so other areas of the facility will not be impacted by the pool odors. She also said the issue of loss of natural light will be addressed by the architects.

Lifeguards are still an issue, Ben asked if the lifeguard shortage was due to pay. Dennis responded that municipal salaries are not competitive with the private sector. The loss of a year of training lifeguards, due to Covid, is having an impact on all pools. In addition, he doesn't have anyone on staff to teach swim lessons. Memberships may be offered in the future. Bobby expressed concern that the resources and the expense required by the pool is great when the resident to non-resident use is about 30 to 70 percent. It is more concerning since the new Fairbank Community Center is being built around the pool. He was concerned about the future. Dennis said he does spend a great deal of his time on the pool either guarding, due to staffing issues, or scheduling due to the Covid changes. Hours for pool use have been reduced. He is working to rebuild the staff and managing expenses to keep the pool operating. Dennis said he thought most of the swim teams would be returning this winter. The Field Enterprise

Fund financials are in good shape and Dennis is not concerned at the moment. Winter is slow and then field requests should pick up for the spring. He will need to bring in \$230,000 for the fiscal year. He said at some point the field permit fee will have to increase to cover fixed costs, salaries and benefits.

Fall Recreation programming has started, but some programs were delayed to allow for more registrants. Terrific Twos will run, but he is unsure about Wild Wednesdays and the Nashoba Ski program due to bus issues and the change in school hours.

Commission Roles and Responsibilities: Ben said they have a number of inquiries out to similar sized Towns and Parks and Recreation departments to ask how they operate and their policies and procedures. The Commission discussed the possibility of voting to ask the Board of Selectmen to request the Town Manager to ask Town Council for an expanded opinion on exactly what the roles and responsibilities of the Park and Recreation Commission are defined as of today. Bobby recommended scheduling a short meeting in the next week or two for the Commission to discuss and vote to get this request on the Board of Selectmen meeting agenda. He said once that definition is received from the Town Council, the Commission would have a clear picture of what the focus should be and where they could help the Director. Laurie suggested asking Town Council to attend a Commission meeting so they questions could be asked rather than just trying to interpret the written opinion.

The plan is to have a short meeting to vote on this request the week of September 20th. Mara suggested that Bobby and Ben draft something ahead of the meeting that can be ready to be voted on at the meeting.

Capital Improvements Priorities and Funding Requests for FY'23: Items to discuss; Feeley courts, Recreation planning and the Pool Filtration system. Mara stated the pool filtration system was in The Town Manager's capital budget before Covid, but the funding was removed and used for Covid related needs. Mara said the point is to get it back on the Town Manager Budget and for the Commission to vote to give Dennis instructions to submit a request to the Town Managers Capital Budget. Dennis said he didn't think it would be received well until it is determined what pool repairs are funded in the Fairbank project. His other concern was he has many projects and is not sure he has to time right now to manage another. He said he was not involved in the first submission, Bill Barletta submitted the request.

Mara stated the cost estimate for the pool filtration systems is \$140,000. Dennis said he did not know what was being done for that figure. Mara stated she was concerned if a submission deadline is missed it will have to wait another year. Mara will send an email to get information on the pool filtration system to the Facilities Director and the OPM for the new building and copy the Permanent Building Committee and the Park and Recreation Commission.

Mara made a motion to ask Dennis to submit the pool filtration system as a capital item in the Town Manager Budget based on the information that will be received from the Fairbank project team. Bobby expressed concern that Dennis said he was already very busy with other major projects. Mara said a decision would be made based on the information received from the OPM and Facilities Director. Bobby seconded the motion. Vote: Ben – yes, Dick – yes, Laurie – yes, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes. Vote passed in favor 5-0.

Mara discussed the need for new Open Space and Recreation Plan so the Town would be considered for any available grants. She reached out to the Director of Planning and Conservation to see about an

updated plan. Dennis was on vacation but was copied on all the emails. She said the Planning Department was going to submit a request to the CPC requesting funding to hire a consultant in addition to the Open Space and Recreation Plan. She said the Director of Planning will write and submit the request, but is asking for the Commissions input. She read from his email stating they will need assistance in determining the needs of the department and Commission to determine the scope of the work and how much funding will be needed. Mara stated she would be happy to respond to email to the Commission.

Mara made a motion to that the Park and Recreation Commission support the Planning Department in their submission of a CPC article for an Open Space and Recreation Plan, as well as a detailed recreation plan and potential field study. Seconded. Vote: Ben – yes, Dick – yes, Laurie – yes, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes. Vote passed in favor 5-0. Mara will inform the Planning Department of the Park and Recreation Commission support.

The Feeley tennis courts were discussed in the past with the Asst. DPW Director, Bill O'Rourke, regarding sound absorption panels. Mara reported Bill stated the sound absorption panels on the market are basically windscreens and not very effective. He said the fencing and resurfacing of the courts will have to be done in about four years. He did not suggest doing anything at Feeley at this time. He did say moving the pickleball courts could be done for "short money". Mara also discussed with Bill the option of making Feeley a multi-use court like Featherland. Bill suggested not doing anything at this time until the fences are replaced.

Dennis said the multi-use courts cause more trash and additional conflicts between users. He did not think it was worth moving the pickleball courts due to the existing cracks on the courts and conflicts with tennis players on either side of the pickleball courts.

Commission decided to leave the courts as they are at this time.

Field Fee Restructuring: Mara and Laurie had discussions on this and Laurie created a comparison chart of field fees structures of other Towns. Mara stated the goal is to create a framework for discussion on understanding field fees and possible restructuring the current model. Three surrounding Towns, Wayland, Concord and Acton, were used to compare to the current model of how Sudbury handles field permits. Laurie said it was difficult to compare the Towns on fees, since each Town had their own funding sources. Laurie described some of the similarities and differences between the Towns and their seasonal fees, hourly fees and one-time usage fees, resident and non-resident fees and youth and adult team fees and the fee difference for grass or turf fields. She also reviewed the field policies she could find from each Town. Dennis offered that Wayland's field permit fee is similar to Sudbury because of the shared Recreation Director in the past. He said the other difference is that Sudbury uses an Enterprise Fund for the field permit revenue. The Field Enterprise Fund includes half the salaries and benefits of the Park and Grounds staff. Dennis said the difficulty is that the salaries and benefits will continue to go up along with the other expenses, which will impact the revenue needed to offset the expenses. He said the question is how to charge for those requests along with third party groups. Mara stated the point of this exercise was to learn what other Towns were using as their field permit models and work toward a model that will work for Sudbury. Mara asked Dennis if there was any historical data available on the field permits. Dennis said past data was not computerized and difficult to find. He said it would be difficult to track because not all permits were filled out correctly. He thought the best approach would be to contact user groups and ask them for their data from the past 5 years or so. Dennis said in some

cases the user group numbers are down, but the field requests are up because they are practicing more, offering camps and clinics and want the same location so coaches don't have to travel to different fields. Mara thought there was a need for a new reservation system so that users could reserve their own fields. Dennis thought allowing users to reserve would be difficult to control cause more issues.

Mara stated LSRHS uses google sheets for their reservations and user groups can see what fields are available. She said it is a matter of defining the system and then finding a process that makes the reservation of fields easier for everyone. Mara will reach out to the four major users, Soccer, Lacrosse, Football and Baseball and report and information at the monthly Commission meeting. She will also work with Dennis and Laurie on any feedback she receives from the user groups.

Vote: Liaison Assignments – Community Preservation Committee (CPC), BFRT Advisory Task Force:

Mara said she was happy to continue as the CPC representative, but also asked if anyone was interested in replacing her. After discussion, Commission decided that Mara would continue on as the representative at this time. Dick agreed to stay on as the BFRT representative Bobby made a motion to have Mara Huston represent the Park and Recreation Commission on the CPC, which is a 3year term. Ben seconded. Vote: Bobby – yes, Laurie -yes, Ben -yes, Dick – yes, Mara – yes. Vote 5-0 in favor. Bobby made a motion to have Dick Williamson represent the Park and Recreation Commission on the BFRT Advisory Task Force, a 3-year term. Ben seconded. Vote: Bobby – yes, Ben – yes, Laurie – yes, Dick – yes. Mara – yes. Vote passed in favor – 5-0. Mara will submit new appointment letters.

Vote – Review and approve meeting minutes: Motion to approve the August 16th minutes. Seconded. Vote: Dick – yes, Bobby – yes, Laurie -yes, Ben -yes, Mara – yes.

Next meeting Dates: October 4th, November 1st, December 6th.

Mara made a motion to adjourn. Seconded. Vote: Dick -yes, Laurie – yes, Ben -yes, Bobby - yes, Mara – yes