

Virtual Meeting 6:36pm – April 10, 2023

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

Director, Dennis Mannone, Director Park and Recreation

Public Comment: Andy Sheehan, new Town Manager, introduced himself and said he would be attending a portion of the meeting.

Chair Comments: Mara stated the state legislature approved remote meetings to continue until March 2025. Mara attended a Council on Disabilities meeting to talk about Recreation focused Town Meeting articles. Mara spoke on the new Fairbank Community Center and said windows will be going in soon, and once that is done the building will be weather tight and interior work will move faster. The Town website will be updated to show the milestones being achieved on the project. She was involved in discussions on paint color for the interior of the building along with the Recreation staff. Colors coordinate well with the furniture, floor tile. The Planning Board will be discussing the multi-sport basketball court article at its meeting on Wednesday night, which is part of the of the CPC fence and light article. Mara cannot attend but said it would be great if another Commission member could attend.

Director Update: Pool and Field Enterprise expense/revenue numbers sent out to Commissioners. Dennis reported the pool will be shut down May 11th through mid-July for work to be completed as part of the new building construction. Jenn asked if those registered for summer camp have been informed. Dennis said he is waiting until dates are confirmed before sending anything out. Ben asked about the financial impact of closing the pool for two months. Dennis estimated the lost revenue to be around \$50,000 to \$60,000 dollars, but isn't sure because many members cancel their memberships and swim outside for the summer. Dennis expressed concern regarding the pool memberships and loss of revenue during the two-month shut down. He is also concerned that renters who had to find new locations may not return. He said the plan is to use the Haskell playground in a similar manner to last year in regard to the Sudbury Summer Camp.

The fields are open for spring and most field permits have been received. He expressed concern that the permit fees may need to be increased due to the park and grounds salaries and maintenance expenses that have been deferred over the last couple of years. In addition, the Haskell well was fixed this year for \$8,000. Mara asked about the \$10,500 taken out of the Field Enterprise Fund for the Field Stabilization Fund. Dennis spoke with the Finance Director and he will take care of it. Mara asked about the Pickleball Tournament hosted by the Park and Recreation Department. Dennis stated the donations received will be deposited into the Recreation donation account and any profit from the tournament will be go in the Revolving Fund. Donations will be used to purchase items for the tournament and necessary equipment. He said revenue from the program would not be deposited in the Field Enterprise Fund since all the work and preparation is being done by the Recreation staff.

The Commissioners and Dennis discussed the issues with the Field Enterprise Fund and what expenses should actually be paid by the field permit fees in addition to understanding the other Recreation Funds. Dennis said he did not have new information on the status of the Recreation bus. Feeley 1, Phase 1 the update is he met with the contractor on Friday. Town Manager needs to sign the contact and the plan is for work to begin on or around May 1.

Atkinson Pool Discussion with Combined Facilities Director – Mara invited Sandra Duran to discuss the pool articles that were removed from the upcoming Town Meeting. She asked Sandra to summarize the work that will be done at the pool during the 2-month shut-down and discuss the long-term plans for

improvements for the pool. Sandra stated the plan is to repair pipes in the dive well and valves in the lap pool to address leaks. Both pools will be drained. Sprinkler systems will be installed along with new windows in the dive well area. Interior will be painted and some minor tile work repair will be completed. It was decided to pull the two pool articles from the Town Warrant and take a look at the bigger picture of all the needed repairs at the pool. Sandra will be studying the dehumidification system, and complete a roof study, since the roof on the pool is the original. She said there is a crack in the masonry in the back-filter room that needs to be addressed along with the tile work in the pool and possible new grout. She said it is a 40-year-old pool that has not had a lot of work done on it over the years. She is also concerned about the filtration room and said when it was originally designed, she didn't think the corrosive environment was taken into consideration. She would like to see the boilers and filtration system in different areas along with adequate ventilation. A structural engineer will need to take a look at the site to see if reinforcements are needed before a new roof top unit is installed.

The possibility of a fall Town Meeting was discussed. Sandra said she and the Town Manager are discussing how to deal the issues regarding pool and how to approach the repairs in a way that is fiscally responsible but also address the urgent needs of a 40-year-old pool structure. Sandra said the repairs would be costly and involve more shut downs at the pool.

Jenn asked if the pool repairs were' considered as part of the new building construction due to the added expenses. Mara clarified the building project only said there would be small repairs made to the pool. Mara asked Sandra to keep the Commission informed on the long-term plan for the pool and associated expenses.

Bobby expressed concern about the projected costs for pool repairs and the impact to the Recreation Department. He is concerned about the cost benefit to the community even though the pool is a wonderful resource for the Town.

Pickleball usage at Featherland and Feeley – Dennis forwarded an email he had received regarding Pickleball. The email included complaints about how Park and Recreation is handling the Pickleball activity at the courts. He learned a particular group in Town is using software to sign up players prior to showing up at the courts. He believes it excludes others from playing at the courts and heard that everyone is not able to sign up in advance and the software was slotting players by their ability. He said all Towns are setting policies on how the tennis/pickleball courts can be used and he suggested putting up similar signage at the Sudbury Courts. It is currently difficult play if you just show up to the courts because they are already full. He said the Recreation department has been running many pickleball classes over the year, so the number of players is growing. The concern is the group started out with an email chain that has now developed into the sign-up software. He believes the sign up should be open to the everyone or the group should pull a permit for use of the courts if there will be restrictions on who can play. Mara offered that to be a part of an organized incorporated group they would need to have liability insurance. Mara stated perhaps some courts should be open for reservations and others left as a first come first serve. Mara stated she has played and was invited to play with others on the court. She said one of the issues is the Town does not have pickleball nets at Featherland and only one net at Feeley. The nets are currently being provided people in the group.

Dennis offered the Recreation department has just purchased a new net for Featherland that does not have to be built before every use. He said if the usage of that net goes well, he will purchase additional nets with funds generated by the pickleball programs offered by Recreation. The department does offer use of the gym for pickleball as a recreation program during the winter.

Dennis proposed developing some open play protocol signage for the courts over the next month or so. He showed an example of what Natick uses on their courts. Bobby asked if there were any issues with

pickleball and tennis players. Dennis said they haven't run into that at this time, but it may be something the Commission would want to prepare for in use of the courts.

Craig Blake, 300 Old Lancaster Road, said he felt the information presented on the pickleball group was not correct and found it very frustrating. He said he understood the need to come up with policies, but he did not want them based on fear that the group was limiting pickleball play in Sudbury. He said the referenced group is a number of pickleball players that has grown from a small number a few years ago to over 100 that play at various times and courts in Sudbury. They use the sign-up software to make it easier for players to play and not have to wait around if a large number of players show up to play. He said Natick used the open play policies and there was such an overflow of players that many players left and played in other Towns. He said the group has always been welcoming to new players, but some players are so new they don't feel comfortable playing with experienced players. He said they have never showed up and kicked someone off the courts and are always respectful. They have asked tennis players if they would mind moving to the tennis courts with the basketball nets in stead of playing on the ones with the pickleball courts. He said they are interested in expanding the play opportunities so that everybody can enjoy playing the game.

Mara said she thought the new net will take some of the pressure off the group for the use of their nets. Craig said there are residents and non-residents playing in Sudbury. He said the break in the group is about 60/40 non-Sudbury to Sudbury residents, and they don't limit who can be in the group. Craig agreed that Towns are faced with the same overflow of players at certain times for pickleball. He is in agreement with Dennis that they want to facilitate play of pickleball.

Bobby asked how the open play plan differs from the software signup. Craig said it is basically the same except the sign-up whiteboard is onsite instead of signing up on line. He found the whiteboards in other Towns did not hold up well when exposed to the outdoor elements. Craig said people are playing most week days and Sunday morning from 9 to 11 when the courts are available. They look at the Park and Recreation program schedule and adjust the playing times based on the clinics offered by the department. If he sees a clinic will only use two courts, he will only schedule two courts for play in the software. He said the Town programs always have priority over open play. Mara asked Dennis if the Park and Recreation Pickleball programs connect players. Dennis does not connect players, but said with the new net, players will be able to go down and play and not have wait until someone with a net shows up. It was decided a policy of some sort is probably needed at some point in the future. They may even have to discuss if non residents should be able to play on Sudbury courts. The sport has grown so fast that additional discussion is needed to decide the best way to make sure the courts are available for play. Jim Acton, instructor for Sudbury pickleball programs, said every town is trying to figure out how to manage pickleball courts and the number of players. He said the biggest issue is the availability of nets. He thought once Sudbury puts nets on the courts people can play at all time during the day. Software scheduling apps are used by many Towns and there are still problems with overcrowding on the courts. He added some Towns have moved to set certain day and times for tennis and other days and times for pickleball play.

Marie Roy, 42 Blacksmith Drive, plays pickleball at Featherland and said people just want to have fun, play with different people, enjoy the experience. She is a taxpayer in Sudbury and believes she should be able to play on the public courts.

Lisa West, 42 Hawes Road, said the group looks similar to youth soccer and others who pay permit fees to use the facilities and felt this option should be consider for scheduled use on the courts.

Diane Williamson, 52 Country Village Lane, asked if the Recreation Commission or Director is going to put certain policies in place for pickleball could the players be involved in the discussions to add valuable information on what actually occurs at the courts by those who are playing.

After the discussion, Bobby asked Dennis what he would like from the Commission now or before the next Commission meeting in regard to this topic. Dennis will continue to work with other Towns and then come up with some policies and procedures for the Sudbury tennis/pickleball courts. He also encouraged the pickleball group to not offer the sign-up genius if it is restrictive to users of the courts. Jen stated the Commissioners should discuss what defines a group for permit purposes. The Commissioners agreed that was a bigger issue and would be added to a future meeting agenda.

ATM 2023 Recreation Focused Articles – Mara created a chart showing the Town Meeting Articles that have a Recreation focus. Some of the articles are on the consent calendar and the Commission has already voted on. The items in bold the Commission has not taken a position on yet. Dennis did not think all the articles involved Recreation since he was not involved in any discussions. He said the Commissioners could certainly weigh in on them, but they are not all Recreation Articles.

Mara made a motion the Park and Recreation Commission support Article 15 - Fairbank Community Center A/V Equipment and Associated Funding. Laure Seconded. Vote: Laurie – yes, Ben – yes, Jenn – no, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes. Vote in favor 4-1.

Article 31 Authorization to Proceed with Fairbank Community Center Solar Project – Commission did not take a vote.

Article 43 – CPC-BFRT – CXS Extension. Laurie said she would like to take a vote on it even though it is on the consent calendar. Laurie made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission support Article 43. Bobby seconded. Commission discussed. Vote: Laurie – yes, Bobby – yes, Ben – yes, Jenn – yes, Mara – yes. Vote in favor – 5-0.

Article 44 CPC – Curtis outdoor wellness space - Jenn made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission support Article 44 Curtis Outdoor Wellness Space. Laurie seconded. Commission discussed, Dennis said he was not involved in any discussion on this project. Vote: Jen yes, Laurie – yes, Ben – yes, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes. Vote in favor 5-0.

Article 45 CPC - Feely II Improvements. Commission previously voted 4-0 to submit the CPC article. Motion made that the Park and Recreation Commission supports Article 45. Seconded. Vote: Bobby - yes, Ben - yes, Jenn – yes, Laurie – yes, Mara – yes. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Article 46 CPC - Fairbank Multisport court fence and lights - Bobby made motion that the Commission support Article 46 as written. Jenn seconded. Vote: Bobby – yes, Jenn -yes, Ben – yes, Laurie – yes, Mara -yes. Vote in favor 5-0.

Mara asked if someone would be able to attend the Planning Board meeting on Wednesday night to share the Park and Recreation Commissions support of this article, if not, she will send an email. Ben may be able to depending on the time.

PRC Charter Approval – Ben discussed the edits and comments received on the Charter since the last meeting. A copy will be posted with the meeting minutes.

Mara made a motion to support the Park and Recreation Charter as presented. Jenn seconded. Vote: Bobby – yes, Laurie – yes, Jenn – yes, Ben – yes, Mara – yes. Vote in favor – 5-0.

Renewal of Master Gardener Volunteer Permission for Heritage Park – Request from Heather Hallsley, member of Massachusetts Master Gardner Association, for permission to volunteer at Heritage Park. Motion to allow Heather Hallsley to volunteer and work at Heritage Park. Motion seconded by Ben. Commission Discussion. Vote: Laurie – yes, Jenn – yes, Bobby – yes, Ben – yes, Mara – yes. Vote in favor 5-0.

Review and Approve Minutes – Motion to approve the March minutes with corrections. Seconded. Ben – yes, Laure – yes, Jenn – yes, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes. Vote in favor – 5-0.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 15th, with the June meeting proposed for June 12th. Dennis said he may be on vacation on that June date.

Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Vote: Ben- yes, Bobby- yes, Laurie – yes, Jenn -yes, Mara -yes.

Meeting adjourned 9:18pm.