

Virtual Meeting 6:36pm – May 15, 2023

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

Public Comment - None

Comments from the Chair – Mara thanked Town meeting members who voted in support of the Recreation articles. Recreation will again offer 3 summer concerts, one in June 15th, July 13th and August 2nd from 5:30pm to 7:00pm at Haskell Field. Recreation will also offer the Fall Fest again this year. The Atkinson Pool is currently closed with the plan is to reopen early July. The next planned pool shutdown is scheduled for the first week in November, when employees will be moving to the new Fairbank facility. The entire building will be closed. Windows in the new building are almost complete, the roofing is also being completed, and once that is done the interior walls will be next followed by the exterior surface. Mara asked about a tour of the building and a possible video tour for residents. She is hopeful a tour for the Commissioners can be arranged once interior walls are up. Mara mentioned requesting another grant for the next Fall Fest. She mentioned the Atkinson Foundation was looking for a report on the grant and Laurie said the report was completed and sent, but she will resend it.

Director's Update – Dennis is on vacation, no report. Jenn mentioned Dennis' email regarding the van and that the order had been cancelled and will not be filled this year. Mara did not have any additional information, but thought it was a topic for discussion at the next meeting. Laurie said she spoke with Dennis and he is looking into other options. Mara reported that Dennis said the Feeley project is scheduled to begin this week.

Fall Fest 2023 Planning and Grant Request – Mara spoke with Tricia in the Recreation Department and the plan is to run the Fall Fest again in September of 2023. Mara asked if the Commission wanted to submit a grant request to the Sudbury Foundation again. The next deadline is July 1st, but Mara said the plan is to go forward with the Fall Fest even if the grant request isn't funded. She was unclear where the money would come from, but suggested the Revolving Fund. It was reported that some of the funds for the Summer concerts were received from solicited donations, so donations may be received for the Fall Fest too. Laurie suggested a few more food trucks.

Ben made a motion that Mara work collaboratively with Tricia, Recreation Program Coordinator, to write a request to receive funds from the Sudbury Foundation for the Fall Fest. Bobby seconded the motion. Vote: Ben - yes, Bobby - yes, Laurie - yes, Jenn - yes, Mara - yes. Vote in favor 5-0. Laurie said based on the experience from last year, the Commission should decide what type of tables and organizations they want at the Fall Fest. Mara agreed and said once the date is finalized the Commission should have a conversation at a future meeting about the set up and groups and organizations that will be invited.

Rail Trail Update – Laurie reported the Rail Trail CPC Article was approved at Town Meeting which is to advance the development of the CSX portion. A ground-breaking ceremony for the Rail Trail is planned for this Saturday, May 20 at 11:30 am at Station Road and Union Avenue. Laurie will not be attending but encouraged others if they are interested. She also reported the Select Board changed the BFRT Advisory Task Force to the Rail Trail Advisory Task Force with the purview to include all rail trails. Laurie presented pictures of rail trail work at Broadacres at Morse Road. Laurie pointed out the work being done on the rail trail parking lot which is very close to the recreation fields. Bobby commented

that he was surprised at the size of the parking lot. There was some discussion on the placement of the parking lot and rail trail amenities in relation to the proposed recreation field at Broadacres. Laurie said she will bring up this issue at the next task force meeting.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Discussion with Director of Planning and Development – Mara asked Adam Duchesneau to attend to give an update on the Open Space and Recreation Plan approved at a previous Town Meeting. He said the Open Space and Recreation Plan will work with the Athletic Field needs assessment. He informed that part of the difficulty in getting this started is staffing. The Environmental Planner position has not been filled yet and he will be leaving his position as the Director of Planning for the Town of Sudbury this Friday. The loss of staff will cause some projects like the Open Space and Recreation Plan to fall behind until new staff is hired. The funding for the project is available, it will just be up to the new staff to prioritize the projects once they are hired. Mara asked if there was anything the Park and Recreation Commission could do to move the project forward. Adam suggested contacting Elaine Jones, in the legal department. She has worked on many RFPs and would be able to give advice and help on what could be done to get some of the information ready. Laurie asked if they would have to wait for the new staff. He said if the Commission wanted to move forward sooner and complete the work, they would need to discuss that option with the Town Manager. He said the Park and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission and Planning Board are the 3 groups typically involved in the Open Space and Recreation Plans.

Bobby thought it was worth talking with the Town Manager to get his thoughts on moving forward with the plan. Craig Blake, 300 Old Lancaster, wanted to make sure the Park and Recreation Commission realized the RFP should be written to select the most qualified consultant to complete the Open Space and Recreation Plan so the RFP will have to be detailed in scope. Mara agreed the last Open Space and Recreation Plan did not have a lot of recreation components in it. Craig suggested the Commission speak with Elaine Jones who would be able to step them through the RFP process.

Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of PRC – Mara said it was an honor to serve as the Chair, but felt it was time for a change after 2 and half years. Mara made a motion to nominate Ben Carmel to be the new Chair and Laurie Eliason to be the new vice Chair of the Park and Recreation Commission. Seconded by Jenn. Vote – Ben – yes, Laurie – yes, Bobby – yes, Jen – yes, Mara – yes. Vote in favor 5-0.

Initial Discussion of Upcoming Year Priorities – Ben shared his list of Park and Recreation Commission priorities from discussions at previous meetings. The notes showed the priority list:

1. Conducting the Open Space and Recreation Plan with Field Needs Assessment
2. Finishing BFRT
3. Finishing Fairbanks
4. Understanding how Sewataro fits into Park and Recreation
5. Establishing a plan for Broadacres
6. Ensuring equitable Town Funding for Park and Recreation staff and programming
7. Inventory parcels of under the jurisdiction of Park and Recreation
8. Other tasks as driven by the Open Space Plan and Assessment
9. Transportation to the Community Center

Other Areas: include outdoor recreation use as Haskell/Fairbank, Haskell pathway, court policy and usage, pool projects, technology for the department, Inclusive programming, Feeley Field project, SMILE/Lyons playground project.

The plan for the Commission would be to discuss which items are active and need oversight and determine the priority of the projects. Mara added the Commission would need to start thinking about the next capital budget cycle very shortly.

Ben said he received questions from residents on the field at Curtis and would like the Commission to know who is responsible for the maintaining the different aspects of the fields. Commission discussed inviting the Town Manager to a meeting within the next two months. Jenn thought it would be good to invite him to the next meeting to discuss the Open Space and Recreation Plan since so many of the priorities cannot move forward without the plan.

It was decided to discuss the finance questions at a separate meeting. Ben and Laurie will set up a meeting with Dennis first to get more understanding and develop a plan.

Review of Minutes – Mara sent changes to Pat regarding the vote on the Feeley Project. Mara made a motion made to approve the amended minutes from April 10, 2023. Laurie seconded. Vote: Laurie – yes, Jenn – yes, Ben – yes, Bobby – yes, Mara – yes. Motion passed 5-0 in favor.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 12.

Motion to adjourn by Bobby. Seconded by Ben. Vote: Ben – yes, Jenn – yes, Laurie – yes, Bobby – yes, Mara - yes. Vote: 5-0 passed in favor.