

Virtual Meeting 6:35 pm
July 20,2023

Commissioners: Ben Carmel, Mara Huston, Laurie Eliason, Jenn Stone
Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool

Roll Call – Laurie – here, Mara – here, Jenn – here, Ben – here.

Public Comment - None

Chair Update – Ben informed the Commission Glenn Pransky was invited to speak tonight on the Rail Trail. Ben mentioned discussion by Facebook groups about tax dollars and what they cover in the Town. He said a larger discussion on that topic in the future will surprise residents when they see how little of their tax dollars fund the Park and Recreation programs. Ben mentioned receiving an email from the Select Board liaison to Recreation asking for comments on the new community center. She is looking for answers on; how preparations are going towards the transitioning to the new building; when is it expected; what are we looking forward to the most and how do we think the new building will positively impact the community? Ben stated in the past there was discussion on a combined Select Board and Recreation meeting to discuss programming in the new facility and what the Towns' expectations are and what type of funding would be required to staff the facility. Mara would like the discussion to include how the community will have access to the building other than through programming. For instance, individuals and families may want to rent a room for a family or special event. She felt that specific policies and fees would have to be developed for the use of the building. Ben stated he received an email asking if the Town or Recreation department had a thunder and lightning policy. He said youth user groups may have their own policies on how they handle thunder and lightning, but thought it might be a good idea to develop a policy as priority. Mara said thunder and lightning should be covered by State Law in regard to the pool. Ben asked the Commissioners if they were interested in having a Parks and Grounds staff attend the meetings. It was thought they should be invited if there was a specific topic or question that the Commission need information on.

Director Update – Financials for the Field and Pool Enterprise funds were forwarded to Commissioners. The Field Enterprise Fund did not bring in as much revenue as the previous year. Expenses were a bit higher due to an irrigation pump that needed repair. Park and Grounds staff is finally full so it's a bigger expense since half of the salaries and benefits are charged to the Field Enterprise Fund. Dennis stated the field permit fees would probably have to increase next year due to salaries and the \$10,500 for the stabilization fund coming out of the fund each year. In addition, supply costs have increased greatly. He stated currently the Field Enterprise Fund pays for all the cleaning/repairs of the field bathrooms even though they are used by residents throughout the week. He is currently cleaning them 3 times a week. Ben asked when the increase would take effect. Dennis stated usually the first of the fiscal year, but youth groups would have to be notified earlier, perhaps 6 months, to include the increase in their fees. Jenn asked the last time the fees went up and how does Sudbury compare to other towns. Dennis said it is hard to compare because town's budgets are different. Laurie reminded the Commission of the presentation she did a few years ago on field permit fees and offered to forward the presentation to the Commissioners again. Jenn asked if any large projects have been deferred due to the lack of funds. Dennis said he continues to do the general maintenance, but has had to delay some of the bigger projects at times.

He said long term they have to decide what to do with Curtis. He does not get a lot of revenue from field permits for Curtis and it is expensive to maintain. The irrigation system is not working and the middle school is complaining about field conditions. In the past, he said many summer camps were run at the school during the summer, but Recreation hasn't been allowed to use the schools in the summer for a number of years. The bigger issue is to figure out who is doing what and who should be paying for the expenses, such as maintenance of the Town restroom facilities.

Mara thought the Commission should understand what the agreement is between the school and the Town for usage in the summer months since the Town Manager is responsible for both areas. She also asked Dennis about the \$10,500 for the turf stabilization account since it wasn't taken out in 2022 and looks like it wasn't taken out in 2023. Dennis addressed this with the Finance Director. Ben asked Dennis to allow a break in the Director report for the Rail Trail discussion. Mara left the meeting since she abuts the rail trail. Mara left the meeting for the Rail Trail discussion.

Rail Trail Design and Amenities Update with Glenn Pranksy, Rail Trails Advisory Taskforce - Laurie invited Glen, one of the core members of the Rail Trail Advisory Task Force, to speak on the BFRT and the MCRT. Glen gave a brief overview and update of the Rail Trails and the planned amenities and potential future amenities. He said when the rail trail is complete residents will be able to ride from Sudbury Farms to Lowell without interruption and into downtown Hudson. He said there are 5 major connections; the path to Davis Field, Broadacres field complex, Parkinson Field, the Hudson Road intersection and the diamond, which is the gateway to the commercial center and the intersection with the Mass Central Rail Trail. He said there will be benches and bike racks along the trails at specific intervals along with trash cans and several hydration stations. He said a concrete pad for a future pavilion with restrooms will be at Broadacres along with 31 parking spaces and 3 picnic tables. Glen discussed some of the items the Task for asked for but did not get in the final plan. He said there was a desire for more interpretive signs, additional benches, hydration stations and restrooms along the trail. CPC was discussed as potential source for funds. He said a top issue for people is the parking.

Dennis stated the Town will have to plan the budget and policies for how the Rail Trail will be managed. He said the DPW may need additional staff to keep up with the maintenance of the trails and restroom facilities. Mara rejoined the meeting.

Director Update Continued – Dennis said the Feeley Field contactor has been hired and the work is going very slow due to delays receiving materials and rainy weather. Summer Camp has been running since July 5th, but the pool which was expected to open on July 10th is still closed. Camp has been centered at Haskell with 5 tents and water activates located there due to the pool closure. It has been very hot, but everyone is doing the best they can without the pool. He has started to receive some complaints from parents about the loss of swim lessons promised as part of camp. He said it has been very frustrating since he hired lifeguards to guard the pool and they are at Haskell monitoring water activates on the field. He is spending more money on activities and rentals since the camp can't use the pool. Jenn expressed concern over the lost pool revenue for the pool. Dennis said he is concerned also due to the extended closure on top of the closure the previous August and the potential closure during the switch over to the new building.

The Town does not have control of the pool yet, it is still with Weston Sampson. He said vendors/swimmers are getting very frustrated with the delays and lack of a definitive reopen date. Jenn expressed concern that this is a big issue that seems to keep getting bigger. Dennis agreed and said there is talk of a fall Town meeting to request additional funds for the pool. He said residents are

also frustrated with the closure of the playground for summer camp and the loss of the basketball courts etc. In addition, he will not have access to the pool lobby during the second part of the construction so that will impact swim teams and users of the pool and the recreation programs since the Recreation side will still be under major construction.

Mara stated it was always the plan to lose the lobby in the second phase of the construction. The athletes will have new locker rooms, but spectators will be inconvenienced. She said Recreation will have access to the multipurpose room after 4:00pm and this will only be a concern for one season. She agreed that Recreation is getting the brunt of the construction and the highest impact, but it was always the plan. Dennis said that was not made clear to him.

Commission Updates – Mara received her update on the new Community Center from Jen Pincus. New piping and tiling are complete. New gutters have been installed. The lap pool is filled and ready to be used. The dive pool is still a few days behind and needs to be certified by the Board of Health. The added delay is due to an oversight with the building inspector, needed alarms and additional exit signs. The hope is this can be addressed as soon as possible. She showed a picture of the new windows installed near the dive well. The issue with the windows is the glare on the water and the need for some type of shade during swim team season. She stated the Planning Board required the windows even though the Commission advocated against them due to the swim team issues and they are located behind the starting blocks. Shades on the windows were removed from the contract by the Planning Board so now they are looking into ways to prevent people from looking in those windows.

Dennis stated he was not aware of that issue and no one had contacted him or asked for his opinion on what would be best for the pool.

Jenn expressed concern about the lack of communication between the different groups on the project. The audio-visual system for the entire building will be going out to bid within the next week.

Dennis asked if there was any discussion regarding the leak or potential leak in the dive well. Mara did not have any information on that issue.

Mara shared photos of her tour in June of the new Fairbank Community Building. She said additional pictures are on the Town Website along with commentary about the project. Mara said the current plan is for the new building to be open in early November.

Finalize PRC Priorities – Ben shared the list of Recreation Commission's Core Priorities discussed at previous meetings. Discussions at past meeting included deciding if the priority was a collaboration or the responsibility of the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC). The idea was to list out the priorities and make sure each one had someone assigned to it. Commissioners discussed the priorities and assignments and funding opportunities using CPC or Capital budget at the fall or spring Town meeting. Commission discussed talking about the projects further at the next meeting and deciding on what the CPC requests will be for the upcoming year. Laurie expressed concern about delaying a request and construction of an outdoor space at the community center for Park and Recreation, particularly for use of camps. She asked if it would be possible to submit during Fall Town meeting to possibly have a pavilion ready by next summer's camps. If not for Fall, applications should go to Spring for CPC. Dennis suggested that if there is going to be a fall Town meeting to ask for additional funds for the pool it might be a good time to ask for funds for a pavilion and picnic area at the new Fairbank facility. The old facility originally had a camp office/shed, 2 basketball courts, a sand volleyball court and concrete slab for picnic tables and tent. This was supposed to be replicated in the new Fairbank Community Center before budget cuts. Lisa Kouchakdjian, Select Board liaison, said the fall Town meeting may be in October or November, the date is not confirmed yet. She stated if the Commission is thinking of

submitting an article, time is of the essence. She offered to let the Town Manager know that another article may be submitted.

Mara suggested inviting Sandra Duran to the August meeting to see what articles and what funding she is requesting at the fall Town meeting.

Lisa said she will let the Commission know of the exact dates of the fall Town meeting and when the warrant articles are due.

Jenn suggested if Sandra is going to attend the August meeting she send the Commission information ahead of time on the articles she is submitting for the Fairbank Community Center. She thought it was critical to learn what funds Sandra is requesting to see if any other articles would have a chance of passing.

Mara stated the Town Manager ultimately owns the Fairbank Community project, so any change orders or additional funds would have to be approved by him.

Lisa said she would communicate with Ben and relay any new information she receives on the fall Town meeting.

Fairbank/Hudson Intersection Next Steps discussion moved to next meeting along with Open Space Plan Next Steps

Discuss Council on Aging Liaison – Council on Aging sent an email to Ben requesting to establish a liaison with the Park and Recreation Commission. Mara thought it was a great idea especially with the new building and shared space. Mara volunteered to be the liaison.

Ben made a motion to appoint Mara as the Park and Recreation liaison to the Council on Aging. Motion seconded by Jenn. Vote: Laurie- yes, Jenn – yes, Mara – yes, Ben – yes. Vote passed in favor 4-0.

Fall Fest Decisions – Ben opened up the discussion asking if the Commission wanted to set any policies on what type of groups will be included this year and if the grant is not received, what type of fees will be charged in addition to anything else involved in the planning for the event. Mara stated the event is scheduled to take place September 23rd from noon to 5 pm. The grant information will not be received until a few weeks before the event, so the event is happening with or without the grant. Dennis added the Program Coordinator is also working on fundraising with local businesses. This underscores the fact that Recreation does not have funding from the Town to fund community events. Dennis stated the event expenses will be scaled up or down depending on receipt of the grant. The grant request is for \$12,000. Mara stated there are three categories of community groups; Town departments, non-profit organizations, and for-profit organizations. In addition to political groups that may want to attend the event. Dennis will work with the Program Coordinator to develop a flyer to start generating interest in the event in the community along with information on how to sign up for a table. After discussion, regarding all aspects of the event Mara suggested making two motions. The first would be to set up policies on the type of tables that are allowed and what is not allowed in addition to stating no campaigning is allowed, but education is okay. The second motion would be to set the fees for the tables.

Mara made a motion that the Fall Fest, Park and Recreation program, welcomes tables from non-profit, for-profit, in Town groups and Town departments. Sign up is through the Recreation department. No campaigning is allowed, but education and engaging with the community is welcome and encouraged. Laurie seconded the motion. Vote – Laurie – yes, Jenn -yes, Mara -yes, Ben – yes. Vote passed in favor 4-0.

Mara made a motion that for-profit tables at the Fall Fest would be \$50 a table, which is \$10 an hour.

Laurie seconded the motion. Mara clarified the \$50 a table works out to \$10 an hour, but it is not an hourly table fee. Vote – Mara – yes, Jenn -yes, Laurie – yes, Ben -yes. Vote passed favor 4-0.

Dennis will work with the Recreation staff and let the Commissioners know what set-up/clean up or other support will be needed at the event.

Approval of Minutes moved to the next meeting. Next meetings are scheduled for August 7th and September 11th.

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