

Virtual Meeting 6:34 pm
August 7, 2023

Commissioners: Ben Carmel, Mara Huston, Laurie Eliason, Jenn Stone, Bobby Beagan
Dennis Mannone, Dir. Park and Recreation/Pool, Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director

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

Public Comment – None

Chair Comments – Ben stated his chair comments will be addressed in discussion during the meeting.

Director Update – Dennis did not receive the financial data from the Finance Director in time for meeting. Pool is currently short staffed. The pool is still closed so no revenue since the middle of May. Sudbury Summer camp has 4 days left and Sudbury Adventure has 3. Fall field permit requests have started to come in to the office.

Dennis gave an update on Feeley field. Contractors are working on netting and drainage. Weather has been an issue along with dugouts and benches that are backordered. The primary season for girls' softball is the spring, so impact to summer and fall play should be light.

Warner Larson is the architect of record for the Haskell playground renovation. Dennis said they will produce the bid documents which will hopefully be delivered by the end of the month. The playground many not get done this fall if the bid documents don't go out soon. He said it may be better to put the bid documents out later this year so the timing of completion would be next spring. The playground would have to be shut down for a couple of months. That timing would also compete with the completion of the new Fairbank Community Center so there is a possibility that camp will need to be held at the Haskell playground again next summer.

Mara Huston gave some background on the Haskell playground project. She encouraged anyone interested to review the presentation Dennis did on the project back in January of 2022.

Laurie asked when the Atkinson Pool would be open to the public and not just the summer camp. Dennis said he was told additional work needs to be done on the dive well because it is still leaking. Once the leak is fixed, he will move quickly to open up the pool to the public. He is concerned because swim team season is starting very soon for some fall teams who will be renting the pool. He is hopeful to know more by the end of the week.

Laurie also asked Dennis about the Fall Fest plans. The date for the event is September 23. Mara stated the grant decision will be known in early September, but the Fall Fest will be moving ahead even if the grant is not received. Dennis checked with the Program Coordinator before the meeting, she did not have any major updates at this time. Dennis said planning will start next week, now that summer camp is over. He will let the Commission know of any updates and where the information is posted and what help is needed.

Ben asked Dennis about the Curtis Field maintenance and the relationship between the schools and Town and how it has changed over the years. Dennis said Recreation is allowed to use school fields after school is over. Parks and Grounds has historically been responsible for the maintenance on the fields.

Many of the school fields are not in great shape and are not permitted as much as they used to be in the past. The fields are hard to maintain since they are used for recess and gym during the day when Parks and Grounds would be available to do the maintenance on them so some of the maintenance is outsourced to a vendor. Dennis said it is very difficult to put field permit money into the school fields when they don't bring in the field permit revenue they once did. At one point, Dennis had irrigation installed at Curtis and spent a good deal of field permit funds to make the field playable. It is not in great shape now, and is no longer bringing in as much revenue from field permits. He recently put in between \$15,000 to \$20,000 in to the field. The irrigation system is not currently working. Parks and Grounds does line the field for middle school sports. Dennis said in the past he would run sports camps at Curtis and be able to use the school bathrooms and also the school gym. He said he no longer has the relationship with the schools where he is allowed access to the schools in the summer. He would like to see a little more flexibility in being able to use the school gyms. He is also expressed concerned with the school now running summer camps that are subsidized with Town funds that directly compete with the summer recreation camps. He stated the Town may have to put money in the school budgets to cover maintenance of the Curtis fields.

Mara stated the bigger picture is the issue of cooperation with the schools and Recreation and the Town. She thought this would be a discussion to be had with the Town Manager. Dennis said another issue is what exactly should the Field Enterprise Fund pay for in regard to field expenses. He is currently paying the cost to clean the field bathrooms 3 days a week, but should they be cleaned 5 days a week. They are Town facilities, not just for the fields. Mara suggested including Sandra in on the discussion of the bathrooms. Laurie agreed and said it would be good to have a cross-functional committee to discuss how these areas should be handled in the future. She would like to included discussions on transporting kids to the Recreation Center from schools as well as inclusive programming.

Commission Updates – Laurie reported that Marcia Rasmussen has been hired as a part time Planning Director to aid with the rail trail oversight and there has been steady development for both the BFRT and the MCRT; Fuss and O'Neill submitted Phase 3 plans to MassDOT to get on the TIP(Transportation Improvement Plan) -Sudbury received agreement on TIP funding; Fuss and O'Neill working under MassTrails Grant on Phase 3, 25% design with goal to submit in March 2024; Ongoing discussion about parking, amenities, and trail connections. She said there is a possibility for an article at the fall Town meeting for items needed to be completed during construction, such as a hydration station at Davis. Laure also shared pictures of the Broadacres site activity and the concrete slab area that will hopefully house picnic tables, bathrooms, and a future pavilion. Ben asked about discussion on cost of ongoing maintenance and other amenities on the rail trails and Laurie said that will be something the Town manager and Select Board will have to discuss.

Ben asked Mara for a update on the Fairbank building. Mara mentioned she had an introductory conversation with the Council on Aging representative. They agreed to stay in touch as needed. The update on Fairbank is the dive well still has a leak. The goal is to have it repaired by August 14th. The move in date to the new building has slipped from the end of October to the middle end of November. Work on the gym is being done now with the plan that the transparent walls will be installed by the end of August. The enhanced AV specs are going out to bid and they know they have 3 qualified bidders. She said the dive well windows, the Planning Board required, were supposed to have shades. The shades were removed from the contract. Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director, stated the shades/blinds were removed due to concern regarding the humid environment and potential mold. She said the

architect was looking in to outside shutters that would be closed during swim meets or they may have to go back to shades. Dennis suggested placing cones in the windows with some sort of card stock that would block the view from outside during swim meets and glare on the water for divers. Sandra thought that was a good idea and would work with the construction groups to see what would work best.

Jenn asked about the confidence level of the fixing the leak in the dive well. Sandra said the vendor believes they know where the leak is and that this work will fix it. She said there still may be a grout issue that will need to be repaired. The repair work is within the \$275,000 ARPA funds provided by the Select Board, which included the new pool gutters. Sandra stated she and the Town Manager are aware of the financial impacts of the pool being closed and are working to rectify the situation. She said the pool project work completed to date is within the confines of the construction budget. Sandra discussed the difficulty of building a brand-new structure and combining it with a 40-year-old structure whose needs are great due to the lack of maintenance over the years. A fall Town meeting is being discussed and articles requesting funding for the pool are being discussed. She is looking at installing solar panels on the roof to help with electricity costs and cut down expenses in the Pool Enterprise Fund. A new HVAC system article will also be part of the Town meeting.

Commission invited Sandra to come to the September meeting to discuss in more detail the pool articles that will be presented at the fall Town meeting.

Future CPC & Capital Requests – Mara discussed the two funding systems in Town for projects; the Town Manager’s capital budget and CPC, which is a surcharge to taxpayers on top of real estate taxes that is matched by the state. Anyone can submit a CPC request. The tentative deadline for CPC articles is October 6th. The Recreation Director submits requests to the Town Manager’s capital budget. Anything under \$100,000 goes on the Town Managers’ budget and is paid out of the general fund. Anything over \$100,000 must be submitted as a separate article and the Town decides the funding source, such as free cash, debt exclusion, or capital exclusion. The deadline for the Town Manager’s capital budget is the end of September. Commission discussed items for the Town Managers’ budget and CPC requests. Laurie mentioned the possibility of a pavilion. Commission discussed where the pavilion would go, perhaps Fairbank or the new Fairbank Community Center. Mara commented once the old Fairbank building is removed there will be more outside space. She said it is still undecided how that space will be used. Laurie clarified she was thinking of a pavilion at the new Community Center to support summer camp. She thinks there will be an expectation from residents for a good camp facility once the new building is completed. Dennis stated the hope is to move camp back over to the new Community Center which would free up the Haskell playground and the kids would not have to cross the street so many times during the day. It is also costly to install and take down the tents they have been using for camp. He thought the initial design of the building included a pavilion, before it was cut due to budget concerns. There was some discussion of contacting the current architects of the new building to see about a design for the pavilion. Ben summarized the discussion and questioned if the next steps were to figure out a way to leverage the ARPA funds and connect with the current architects to get an estimate on a pavilion before the CPC deadline of October 6th. Mara said the submission deadline is October 6th, but firm numbers are not needed until public hearings in late November. Ben stated the next course of action is for Laurie to follow-up with the Combined Facilities Director and Dennis as needed. Laurie clarified that she will be speaking with Sandra on both the pavilion and storage for Recreation.

Mara expressed concern on the timing and felt the Commission needed to set realistic goals for the September Commission meeting and offered to help Laurie and Dennis. They will work towards drafting a document for review at the next Commission meeting and possible funding through the Select Board or CPC. She stated the need for an overall design plan for the outside area of the new Fairbank Community Center including where storage units would be located along with a pavilion. Mara stated if funds would be requested on behalf of the Commission for design work she thought they should have authorization from the Commission which would require a vote.

Bobby did not think it was necessary since Laurie and Mara will just be asking about a potential project and stating it is a priority; Dennis or Sandra would be requesting the funds. Mara agreed and said this item should be added to the next meeting for discussion.

Ben asked Dennis if there was anything he would want to advocate for in the Town Manager's budget to cover miscellaneous field expenses as in the past. Dennis said he would have a discussion with the DPW Director. Laurie asked about the accessible paths at the fields. Dennis said that topic could be added to the discussions with the Combined Facilities Director. The Commission talked about other potential future priorities/interests.

Field Reservation Policy & Permitting Process Review – The discussion centered around groups wanting to run events on Town fields and what is and should be allowed. This would include birthday parties at the playground or baseball fields, special events etc. Do they need a permit and insurance, can they have inflatables on the fields? Dennis explained the current process for requesting to use a field in Sudbury. He said usually the requests are from youth or adult sports groups. The current field permit does not include offerings for special events. Larger Town events usually go through the Select Board and he is notified if a field is requested. He currently does not approve birthday parties or special events and it is not something he wants to get involved in due to the staffing and time involved. He said the Town does not have staff working on weekends/or evenings to clean up after these events or to check facilities if there are any issues. He said this could be a similar issue with the new Fairbank building since staffing for evening events have not been planned at this time.

Mara agreed that the current permit form and policies really focus on sports teams. She said they need to figure out how the new Fairbank Community Center community space will be used. Dennis said before deciding on policies and procedures it is important to figure out how everything will be managed, what the cost is and staffing issues. He suggested in the future if there is a pavilion at Haskell field, parameters could be set up on renting it, staffing and cleaning up etc.

Laurie asked the Town's policy on bounce houses. Dennis said they are not allowed on Town property unless it is preapproved by the Town and waivers are filled out by all who use it. Ben suggested the Commission think about the best way to proceed on special events on Town fields. He said it might be a discussion for the Select Board.

Fairbank/Hudson Intersection Next Steps - discussion moved to a future meeting. Commission wanted to see how the fall youth sport activity impacted the traffic flow.

Open Space Plan Next Steps - discussion moved to a future meeting.

Review of Minutes - Ben made a motion to approve the June 12th minutes with corrections as discussed. Motion seconded by Bobby. Vote – Mara – yes, Jenn – abstain, Laurie -yes, Bobby – yes, Ben -yes. Motion passed 4-0 with one abstaining.

Motion to approve the July 20th minutes with corrections. Seconded by Laurie. Vote – Jenn - yes, Bobby - yes, Laurie – yes, Mara – yes, Ben – yes. Motion passed 5-0 in favor.

Next Meetings – After discussion, it was decided the next meeting dates will be September 11th and October 2nd or October 3rd.

Motion to adjourn received a second. Vote – Jen - yes, Laurie –yes, Bobby - yes, Mara - yes, Ben - yes. Motion passed 5-0 in favor.