

Virtual Meeting 6:33 pm

July 8, 2024

Commissioners: Mara Huston, Laurie Eliason, Granger Atkeson, Ben Carmel, Dennis Mannone - Dir Park and Recreation
Guests: Lisa Kouchakdjian, Select Board, Lori Capone, Director of Conservation, Dave Henkels, Conservation Commission

Roll Call: Laurie - here, Granger - here, Mara - here, Ben - here.

Public Comment: Lori Joyal, 30 Codjer Lane, started a group in Town and is looking for a place to meet once a week, with perhaps breakout rooms. She asked if there is a plan for how the new Community Center will be used and the possibility of renting rooms. She expressed frustration that there isn't a plan already in place for residents to use or rent the rooms.

Director Update: Dennis stated the new Fiscal Year started July 1, and he should have close out numbers for FY24 by the next meeting. Feeley Field Phase 1 is just about complete. Nothing new to report on the Smile Playground. He will contact the architect of record for a timeline for work to be completed, which should be either late fall or next spring. Summer camp will not be using the Haskell playground for its home base this summer, but will use it as a recreation block during camp. Sudbury Adventure will use the tent at Haskell for their drop off and pick up site. Preschool Pals will use the preschool room. He said additional sheds and use of the grass fields at the Community Center will make the camp run even smoother next year. Mara asked if the dive well was available. Dennis said the dive well is still closed. He has a meeting in a few weeks to discuss the plan for the dive well and the pool renovations that will take place next year. A risk assessor is supposed to check if the dive well leakage is acceptable and then decisions will be made on reopening.

Mara asked that use of the Community Center be added to a future agenda. Ben informed he met with the Town Manager and asked him to attend an August or September meeting. Ben will also ask Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director, to attend. Granger said answers to how the facility can be used will be helpful in developing the facility use request policies. Laurie would like to learn more about the software program Sandra mentioned in past meetings that will assist in rentals of the rooms at the Community Center. Dennis mentioned he is having licensing issues with the Terrific Two program due to code requirements in the new building.

The van has been delivered and will be inspected this week. The van will be used for summer camp and after-school programs in the fall. The first draft of the Field Assessment RFP from the Director of Planning was sent out. Dennis said he had a few edits and suggestions, but overall thought it was a good start.

A new Program Coordinator has been hired and started in June. Dennis said the basketball court, which is also lined for pickleball, is open. Summer camp is using the court from 8am to 3pm Monday through Friday. At some point the Town may have to come up with a schedule for court use. There has already been some damage to the court by bicycles and skate boards, so he had signs made up prohibiting their use inside the court. He is working with the vendor and in-house staff on the basketball lights and timing system. Lights will be off at 10pm each night. Dennis stated the trash has been unacceptable so far and he spends a great deal of time in the morning picking it up before camp. Mara had a suggestion to keep the courts locked for a few days to encourage people to clean up.

After-school Discussion with Lisa Kouchakdjian – Ben stated this discussion was a follow-up to the previous discussions on after school care. Lisa, 30 Meadowbrook Circle, also a Select Board member and the liaison to the Park and Recreation Commission, said she had requested the Select Board discuss the after-school care topic on the May 28th agenda. She said the discussion on the topic starts at the 49th minute. She is looking forward to hearing the Town Managers findings since the Select Board asked him to determine the current state of the aftercare need. Lisa contacted a few organizations that supply after-school care as an interested resident and relayed the information she gathered to the Commission. She clarified that she did not make the calls at the direction of the Select Board.

Ben thanked Lisa for the information and said the Commission is very interested in hearing the Town Manager's thoughts on the issue. Dennis said if a third party vendor was brought in to run the after-care program it would be handled differently than an in-house program. Licensing and staffing would be an in-house program issue, while transportation would be an issue for both options. He said a third-party vendor running the after-care program would impact the flexibility of using the new facility for Recreation programs after school. This fall will be the first time he is able to run Recreation programs in the new facility and he will have transportation with the new Recreation van. He added that there are still some building issues, drainage, acoustic issues, AV equipment install, that will cause some disruption in the new facility in the fall along with two elections that will shut down the facility for a few days. Laurie was hopeful the van and Recreation after school care programs could help relieve some of the pressure from extended day. She thought this would be the best short-term solution.

Mara stated the conversation by the Commission supports the need for a Town Managers' working group. She encouraged Lisa to let the Select Board know all the issues can't be handled alone by Recreation. Lisa stated she would relay the requests to the Town Manager and Select Board if it's the consensus of the Commission.

Ben said the Town Manager assured him this topic would be discussed in July at the Select Board meeting and will discuss it when he attends the Park and Recreation Commission meeting.

Ben recognized Mari Weldon, Director of Sudbury Extended Day, and a resident of Sudbury, 15 Harness Lane. She asked to speak to let the Commission know that the organization has been serving the community for 40 years and has a great deal of insight into what does and does not work within the after-care programs. They are aware of the current waitlists and need for additional after-care space. She said she would welcome the opportunity to present her information to the larger group.

Granger asked what the drawback is to establishing a Town Managers working group for after-school care. Lisa stated some of the Select Board members were concerned that the schools were not involved, but the schools said that after-care was not in their purview. The Select Board also wanted more information on the subject. The Town Manager was asked to do research on the issue and present the information at the next Select Board meeting.

Collaborating with ConCom – Laurie gave a synopsis of the past conversations regarding Bobolinks and nesting at Davis Field and the sign ConCom requested to put at Davis to raise awareness of the Bobolinks. Lori Capone, Conservation Director, said they have been working with the DPW over the past years on a strategy to maintain the fields without mowing down everything during the Bobolink nesting period. She clarified that the Bobolinks are a threatened not an endangered species. Lori discussed the Davis Field area for Recreation and the Conservation wetlands that abut the field. She stated there was no intention of expanding the habitat for the Bobolinks, just trying to manage the space for the habitat that already exists. Dave Henkels, Conservation Commission, showed the map where the Bobolinks nest and said the population is at least 200 and they come in April and leave in August. They return to the same spot each year, as they fly back and forth from Bolivia. Ben stated Davis is a Recreation field which

isn't being used to full potential. The Field Needs Assessment and Open Space Plan will help determine how best to use Davis groups at this time. At this time, it is mostly used by the Radio Flyer Group and by dog walkers. Dennis recommended allowing ConCom to put up the sign for this season and then reevaluate after the Field Needs Assessment.

Mara suggested the current Recreation field dimensions be documented, so the Bobolink area doesn't creep into the Recreation space. Dennis will confirm the dimensions with the Parks and Grounds and the Engineering Department.

Commission Updates:

Rail Trail: Laurie said there is a meeting on July 17th and added the Town received the Mass Trails Grant for \$250,000 for Phase 3. The Ti-Sales driveway is currently being widened and a signal has been installed. Plantings are going in along the trails. She mentioned that work has been done at Broadacres and stated the Advisory Committee is making sure there are good connections points to the Rail Trail from key locations in Town.

Haskell Pathways: Ben informed the Combined Facilities Director received a proposal from the landscape architect, but he did not know the details. He said Bobby or Sandra will update at the next meeting.

Fairbank: Mara stated there is a sound issue in the new facility, where conversations can be heard through walls. Not sure if it is a design or construction issue and how it will be fixed. The drainage issue in the front of the building will be dealt with in the fall.

Mara asked Dennis about the preschool room and licensing issue he mentioned earlier in the meeting. Dennis said the issue came about due to the drainage issue in the front of the building. Due to the building code the architects used for the preschool room, the program needs to be licensed due to the fact the children are 2.9 and under. Dennis has discussed the issue with the Town Manager, Asst. Town Manager, Building Inspector, but at this time he is not planning to run the program in the fall. He also is unsure if the Town wants to go through the process of licensing the preschool. He suggested adding it to the list of topics to be discussed with the Town Manager.

CPC Process Discussion: Mara stated the deadline for CPC requests is in October and questioned when the Commission planned to discuss ideas they may want to submit.

Finances: Ben said this is another topic on the list for Town Manager. He had a discussion with the Town Manager about the finance discussions the Commission has had in past meetings. Ben said he would let the Town Manger express his thoughts when he attends the Commission meeting, but said the Town Manager had a different viewpoint than the Park and Recreation Commission regarding Recreation staffing and funding.

Policies: Granger reviewed the policies and there are two key points. The first is how the Town wants to rent out space for use, including staffing, insurance, fees; and the second is requests to update/add facilities to repair or improve fields from youth groups. He will put together some ideas and send them around to the Commission for review and edits and then add the topic to a future meeting agenda.

Field Needs RFP – Commission received a draft of the Field Needs RFP for review. Ben informed Dennis lost internet connection and was no long on the zoom meeting, but Dennis' RFP feedback was on parking and bathroom amenities. Mara said she would like a field resting schedule added to the RFP, in addition to how does artificial verse natural turf impact the needs assessment. Ben mentioned general maintenance of the fields, and the thought to add tennis, basketball and pickleball courts to the assessment. Laurie mentioned storage at the fields for equipment, nets etc. Mara added water spigots/water fountains so there is less need for plastic bottles. Commissioners discussed if they should advocate that Sewataro be included in the RFP. Mara questioned if ownership of various parcels of land is a Field Needs Assessment or Open Space and Recreation Plan issue. Grainger asked if Recreation is

responsible for sidewalks in Town. Mara clarified that Recreation is not responsible for sidewalks. Ben summarized the edits to the draft of the RFP as parking, bathrooms, amenities, water spouts, trash, storage and maintenance and the possibility of adding basketball, pickleball, and tennis courts to the field needs assessment. Mara added a request that the Commission be included in the reviewing process before the RFP is finalized. Ben said he would communicate that request to Dennis and the Planning Director.

Future Meetings: Ben will send out potential dates for future meetings in August, September and October. Mara suggested the Commissioners come to the August meeting with ideas for CPC requests, so they can come up with a plan for what to submit. Mara gave a brief explanation of how the CPC process works in Town. She clarified that anyone can submit a CPC request but only staff can submit requests through the Town Manager's capital budget.

Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve the May meeting minutes as amended. Seconded by Laurie. Vote; Laurie – yes, Mara – yes, Grainger – yes, Ben – yes. Vote passed 4-0 in favor. The budget presentation Mara presented will be included with the minutes as supporting material.

Ben will be working on schedules and future meeting dates. He said based on the number of topics there may need to be two August meetings so flexibility is appreciated.

Mara made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Grainger. Vote: Laurie – yes, Mara – yes, Grainger – yes, Ben – yes. Vote passed 4-0 in favor.