

Virtual Meeting 06:31 pm

December 2, 2024

Commissioners: Mara Huston, Bobby Beagan, Granger Atkeson, Laurie Eliason, Ben Carmel, Chair

Guests: Marcia Rasmussen, CPC Consultant, Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director

Park and Recreation: Dennis Mannone – Director

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

Public Comment: None

Director Comments: Dennis submitted the FY26 Budget for the Pool, Recreation, and Field. The instructions were to submit a zero-based budget with no additions from FY 25. He is presenting his budget next Tuesday to the Town Manager, Asst. Town Manager and Finance Director. Swim team season and pickleball memberships started today. This activity will impact parking, so he is working with the Combined Facilities Director to address several issues to insure safety. Summer camp registration will be in early January. The plan is to offer six weeks of Sudbury Summer, Sudbury Adventure and Pre-school Pals. Dennis participated, along with several other Town employees, in a meeting with Gale on the Field Assessment Plan. He said Gale will send him an extensive questionnaire which will be distributed to field user groups in Town. Gale will also reach out to the field user groups separately to get data on number of players, growth, field needs etc., and then compile the information in a report. Gale will send Dennis a timeline of deliverables which he will forward when received. He said the report will also look into fees, which will be helpful to see how Sudbury compares to other Towns. They will also look at bathroom facilities, courts etc., which will also be reviewed in the Open Space and Recreation Plan. He may add Sewataro to the list of fields, since it is a Town owned piece of property. He is hopeful the report from Gale will be received by the end of March.

Bobby suggested the Commission plan a meeting to walk all the fields/locations in Town under Recreation control to get a feel for the size and use of the different parcels. Ben will poll the Commission members to see what date works best for everyone.

Mara asked about the status of conversations on the Community residents using rooms in the Fairbank Community Center. Dennis said meetings have taken place with the Town Manager, Combined Facilities Director, Recreation and Senior Center staff regarding schedules and access to the building for outside use. Discussions are ongoing, but he thought the Town Manager would have a plan for limited use sometime after January. He said it may just be the multi-purpose room initially with Town groups at first. The difficulty is the Town has to decide who will staff it, what the fees are, and who will handle maintenance when outside groups use rooms. Mara asked about daytime use of rooms. Dennis said that was discussed, but not something that is being entertained at this time, since the rooms are set up for programs and other uses during the day. The current plan is to start with the multi-purpose rooms. Ben asked if there was anything new to add to the Sudbury Extended Day (SED) discussions. Dennis said he has continued discussions with SED to see if there is anything Recreation can do to help, but that nothing will occur until after the new year.

Ben asked about the status of the playground renovations at Haskell. Dennis will meet with the new DPW Director to discuss the next steps. Mara suggested posting the tree plan for Haskell on the website, so the information will be available in advance of when the trees start to be removed.

Ti-Sales Parkinson Signage with Marcia Rasmussen – Marcia Rasmussen, Planning Assistant for the Rail Trails, discussed additional signage at Parkinson Field and Ti-Sales. Marcia met with members of the Ti-

Sales management team in September and prepared a memo based on that conversation which was forwarded to the Town Manager and Dennis Mannone. Marcia said there are small things that they could do with signage to improve access to the Parkinson Field. In addition, she said there is a need for additional pavement markings along the driveway entrance to show where parking is allowed. She is looking to work with both Park and Recreation and Ti-Sales to make improvements to the signage and parking at the site. There is \$100,000 available through the 2022 CPA allocation for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Phase 2 to study the existing driveway to Parkinson Field. She met with DPW and Conservation Directors and they made recommendations to expand the scope of the project. There will be a redesign of the plan for the site, but she thought new signage would be beneficial in the interim. She offered to work with the Park and Recreation Commission/Park and Recreation staff to create a sign that is not only specific to Parkinson Field, but also a point of reference for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. She will coordinate with Public Works as well as the Historic District on the location of the signage. Laurie and Dennis will work with Marcia on this project.

Haskell Pathways and FY-26 CPC Submission with Sandra Duran – Sandra shared the presentation she will present to the CPC that speaks to requesting funds for Haskell field. Sandra presented the \$500,000 Fairbank Community Center and Haskell Funds Master Planning; Design and Early Action Items request for funds. The funding is to hire a qualified design consultant to create a Landscape Master Plan (LMP) that will provide a broad framework of the long-term development of the Fairbank Community Center grounds and adjacent Haskell Field with an emphasis on community collaboration. The plan includes a second basketball court for \$200,000 and a pavilion for \$150,000, in addition to the accessible pathways on Haskell field. Mara stated there have been conversations in the past on pathways at Haskell, but hoped the conversation would continue in regard to where they will actually be located. Sandra confirmed she is still looking at creating additional handicapped parking spots at the far end of Haskell field near Hudson Road. She added the accessible pathway is part of the ADA Self-Assessment completed a few years ago and that funding has already been secured. There was discussion on the path being inside or outside of the current fence along Hudson Road.

Mara said there were two different ideas in regard to the paths. One is a path for people to have a good, long walk and the other is to improve the accessibility to the fields for people with disabilities, mobility issues who use various devices. Sandra's CPC request includes hiring an architect to help work through the field needs assessment and community conversations, create concepts, along with cost estimates. Sandra added an easement does exist along the Butler Road area which is under review by legal. Mara commented on the second multi-sport court and said she wasn't sure if it should be a mixed court or just basketball. Sandra agreed and said they will be looking for input from Dennis and others regarding current use of the multipurpose court to gauge what is necessary and lights would also be discussed.

Dennis expressed support for the pathway but questioned how it would impact the field layouts for soccer, lacrosse and flag football. Sandra asked Laurie for a copy of the actual quote she received for the pavilion; she will include it in her presentation. Mara stated the Commission had already voted to support the article.

Sandra informed that staff is looking into how residents can use the new Community Center. She agreed with Dennis that the current plan is to start small and understand what it will take to develop a program the Town can support to allow community use of the facility. Sandra added that the building's AV project is completed.

Commission Updates: Ben stated updates on Fairbank, CPC, and Haskell pathways have already been given during discussions at tonight's meeting, but asked if there was anything else to report.

Rail Trail: Nothing additional to report.

Policies: Nothing new on policies.

Feeley CPC Plan: Mara stated there were two questions asked on the Feeley Phase 1 CPC article; one is can we use the current allocation for the Phase 1 for dugouts and the path to Feeley 2. The second was about the drainage. She shared the original Feeley Field article and read what was passed at Town Meeting. The article says installing dugouts, but isn't specific to a path to Feeley 2. Ben pointed out it says improvements, no specifics on the limitations. Mara did not think it would be necessary to go back to the CPC because doing work on the dugouts and pathway would be in the scope of the project. Dennis that was good news, but he doesn't currently have an architect hired to do the work. His thought was to wait for the Gale Field Assessment and hopefully use them to help with the RFP for the additional work at Feeley.

Fincom Presentation Review and Next Steps: Ben stated the discussion was concise and collaborative. He thought it was good to review the nuances of the Recreation/Pool funding and different revenue/expense accounts. Mara stated she was pleased with the discussion and thought the biggest message left was how little tax dollars Park and Recreation receives off the tax levy. The FinCom asked if more funding was available, what could be done with it and also asked how Sudbury compares to other comparable Towns. Dennis stated it was a good meeting and the Recreation funding is more complex than people realize. He said they discussed different revenue sources for Field, Recreation and Pool and the different enterprise and revolving funds along with the small amount of money off the tax levy. Mara stated the meeting included discussion on if there was more money in the tax levy to further support the Park and Recreation Department.

Dennis added that he has a budget meeting with the Town Manager and Finance Director next week, so he will have a better indication in January about the Recreation budget plan for FY26

Future Meetings: Ben will send out potential dates for meetings in January and February of 2025 and a date for a site walk of the fields. Dennis informed he will be available on Mondays for the first six weeks of 2025 since that is the night of the ski program and he may have to attend.

Meeting Minutes: No vote taken. It was decided to vote on the Sept 16, Oct 15 and Nov12 minutes at the next meeting.

Mara made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Bobby. Vote: Bobby – yes, Laurie – yes, Grainger – yes, Mara – yes, Ben – yes. Vote passed 5-0 in favor.