

Virtual Meeting 06:33 pm

May 12, 2025

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

Guests: Andy Sheehan, Town Manager, Victor Garofalo, Asst Town Manager/Finance

Park and Recreation: Dennis Mannone – Director

Roll Call: Bobby – here, Laurie – here, Ben – here. Mara -here, Granger not in attendance.

Mara stated she was technically not on the Commission because she didn't have a chance to get sworn in after Town meeting. It was decided she would participate in the meeting, but not vote.

Chair Comments: Ben stated guests, Andy Sheehan, Town Manager, and Victor Garofalo, Asst. Town Manager/Finance will be discussing feedback and action items after Town Meeting. Role discussions will be moved to the next meeting along with approval of past meeting minutes.

Public Comment – None

Action Items, Feedback, and Next Steps from Town Meeting: Andy congratulated and thanked everyone for the hard work and support in regard to the pool articles that passed at Town Meeting. Andy stated they will move forward with executing the contract to renovate the Atkinson Pool. The pool will be shutdown August 16th, right after summer camp with the plan to reopen around November 15th in time for swim season. Victor said there will be ongoing project meetings with the contractor, OPM, Andy, Victor, Sandra and Dennis. Mara asked if there would be a benefit to have a Park and Recreation member attend meetings. Andy said typically Commission members are not included, but it is something they can review. Ben asked if the new roof will be solar ready. Andy stated it was in everyone's best interest to get solar at the new Fairbank building. He added there have been issues with the supply chain dating back to Covid, so there could be some delays in delivery, but they won't know until they get into the designs and talk with the contractor.

Ben asked about the CPC Article, which includes the pavilion, basketball court and work at Haskell field. Victor stated the Town can move forward with the intent because the funds have been approved at Town meeting they just can't pay bills until July 1st. He added the most important project right now is renovation of the Atkinson Pool because the plan is to complete it before swim team season. Laurie asked about early action items such as the pavilion. Dennis commented this was Sandra's project so he was not aware of the schedule. He thought it would be too risky to start anything before camp and thought the work would start next spring. Victor agreed with the spring timeline. Ben will add this topic to be discussed at the next Commission meeting after the Field Needs Assessment Survey meeting. Ben will ask Sandra Duran, the Combined Facilities Director, to attend. Ben asked about the Article setting up a Revolving fund for the Fairbank Community Center. Andy stated the purpose of this Revolving Fund is to have a vehicle for the funds generated by renting rooms and any expenses incurred. Andy and Victor will provide updates either through Dennis or attendance at Commission meetings.

Laurie asked the about the Field Needs Assessment. Andy said he too is looking forward to the results and Victor added they formed a Capital Expenditure Committee to review the Town's 5 to 15-year plan. Discussions will be held on future projects and how they will be funded and added that Dennis is part of the committee.

Bobby asked about the status of the Open Space and Recreation Plan since it plays into potential Park and Recreation Grants. Andy said Adam Burney, Planning Director, is working on this, but it is something they will move forward on now that the Field Needs Assessment is drafted and almost complete.

Bobby questioned if there were pieces of the Haskell/Fairbank project that could be completed sooner. He also questioned if Dennis was going to be involved in the project since it was requested by Sandra Duran, under the Facilities umbrella even though several of the areas involve Recreation.

Laurie would like to see the basketball court started right away. Dennis expressed concern starting any project with the upcoming pool construction starting in August and the acoustic ceiling work starting in early June. He added he wasn't convinced there was a need for another basketball court, but perhaps some hockey or other type of facility that could be used in the winter. Mara stated once the Field Needs Assessment is done, Feeley Phase 2 needs to move forward. Dennis said once the Field Assessment is completed, there will be a better idea of what is needed by the youth groups.

Dennis reported renovation of the Smile playground is scheduled to start June 25th. Notices will be posted regarding the closing. Plan is to have the playground back for use by mid to late summer. Dennis noted that acoustical tile work will be done in the Recreation offices from June 9th and will last approximately 2 weeks. A summer concert will be held on June 18th at the Fairbank Community Center near the basketball courts.

Laurie asked about shade structures at the Smile playground. Dennis said they need to see how much contingency money is left and then decide on the shade structures.

Laurie asked about the parking at the new Community Center. Dennis said there really isn't enough parking at the facility especially with electrical vehicle chargers taking up 4 spots. Parking across the street is not ideal. He mentioned the Combined Facilities Coordinator planned to make a fire lane in the area by the basketball courts which is used for bus drop off. Dennis expressed concern about the parking if there is a second basketball court.

Mara expressed concern regarding the decisions being made about the parking on the Recreation side without input from the Recreation department or Park and Recreation Commission. She said the area in front of the basketball court was supposed to be a bus drop off area. Ben suggested this topic be discussed with the Combined Facilities Director.

Field Needs Assessment Update: Dennis will post the draft from Gale once he receives it and will let the user groups know of the Park and Recreation Commission meeting. Gale representatives will present their findings to date and field questions from the Commission and user groups.

Dennis added he spoke with the Planning Director who is preparing an RFP for the Open Space and Recreation Plan which will hopefully go out to bid in the summer. Once that contract is signed, the vendor will reach out to various groups for input perhaps about dog parks, gardens, splash pad and other recreation ideas.

Ben confirmed he will post the agenda for the next Park and Recreation Commission meeting and the only agenda item will be discussion/presentation of a draft of the Gale Fields Needs Assessment Study. Commissioners asked to review a draft of what would be presented before the meeting. June 2nd, 2025 is the scheduled date for the meeting.

Dennis asked to include the topic of leash laws in Sudbury for dogs on the fields and better signage at a future meeting. There was a suggestion to invite Lori Capone, Conservation, to a Commission meeting.

Commission discussed a second meeting in June, possible the week of June 9th. Ben will reach out to Sandra Duran to see if she can attend. Ben will also add the dog leash conversation to that agenda and follow up to the Field Needs Assessment meeting.

Motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Laurie. Vote: Bobby – yes, Laurie – yes, Ben -yes. 3-0 in favor.