

Virtual Meeting 6:32 pm

July 28, 2025

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

Guests: Victor Grafalo, Asst Twn Mgr/Finance Director

Dennis Mannone - Dir Park and Recreation

Roll Call –Mara – here, Bobby – here, Ben – here, Granger – here, (Mara noted Laurie Eliason would late.)

**Public Comment:** None

**Director Update:** The Commissioners reviewed the budget numbers for the pool and field Enterprise funds. It was noted field maintenance spending was lower due to deferred maintenance while pool maintenance and utility costs were higher than expected. Victor Grafalo, Asst Twn Mgr/Finance, stated the Town had secured new reduced rates for gas and electricity for the next three years with a plan to eventually put solar on the Fairbank roof to reduce electrical expense. Mara asked about the need to raise field permit fees. Dennis said that would be discussed during the upcoming budget cycle. Victor informed the Commissioners that the Meadow Walk Mitigation Fund had \$225,000 left in it for Recreation. Dennis reported the pool renovations are scheduled to start August 16<sup>th</sup>. The dehumidification system will be installed in May of 2026, which will necessitate a second shutdown. He reported the Haskell playground renovations are complete and the playground is back open. Dennis received the okay to hire a new staff position; he is reviewing which funds would be used to pay the new position.

Mara stated the plan for the August PRC meeting is to discuss capital items. Dennis said he will be on vacation at that time, he may be able to do a zoom meeting. Mara mentioned the Haskell playground was completed earlier than expected, but noted a series of conversations online regarding the playground and asked Dennis for an update. Dennis gave some history on the project and reported the playground renovation project was completed ahead of schedule. He said the project was budgeted at \$285,000 and approximately \$30,000 remains. Discussion centered around adding a shade structure and possibly an ADA swing. The original plan for a new play structure was not feasible due to budget constraints. Victor advised holding on to the remaining funds rather than returning to CPC and use them along with a new request in the next CPC funding cycle to purchase the new playground structures. Ben and Granger will research the new playground structure options and present the ideas in the August meeting. Victor will work with the DPW Director and get quotes once the concept is finalized. Dennis stated he was in the middle of camp and currently too busy to take on additional playground work at this time. It was confirmed the Community Preservation Committee applications are due September 21. Commission discussed preparing a capital plan for Recreation for the next 5-15 years to include future playground improvements.

Dennis updated the Commission on the field assessment survey and said the next draft of the document is expected by Friday. Once the survey is delivered, Gale will start work on a quote for Phase 2 of the Feeley Field project. He gave an update on summer camp and said fall programming should be out late August with programs starting the middle of September.

**Liaisons:** Commission discussed liaisons for SPS and LS. Mara suggested a discussion and vote at the next meeting.

The Commission agreed to assign liaisons to SPS and LS School Committee at the August meeting.

**Charter Review:** Commission reviewed the Charter, discussing their role in advising the Director and making decisions on Recreation facilities and areas under the PRC supervision. The Charter is now posted on the PRC Town website page. It was approved by the former Town Manager and legal department in 2023. Mara stated she will email the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager the Charter and let them know of its importance particularly regarding project involvement per section nine of the charter.

**Memorandum of Agreement with SPS regarding Fields:** Mara presented information about the existing MOA that states the Town is responsible for maintaining playing fields at the schools, while the schools handle other recreational assets. She stated liaisons will help the Commission have conversations about the fields and other recreational assets, such as basketball courts that are in disrepair, and lights at LSRHS turf fields. The liaison conversation will continue at next month's meeting. It was discussed that Recreation in the past used some school space during the summer, but Dennis stated he doesn't ask for school space during the summer at this time.

**Dogs at Haskell:** Mara said she spoke with Lori Capone, Conservation Coordinator, regard leash laws. Bobby asked about Davis Field, Mara clarified the agenda item states dogs at Haskell Field, but Davis is also a field with concern about dogs and leash laws. She stated Lori has discussed this issue with the police chief and Dennis. They are working on developing a unified enforcement of the leash laws in Town across all properties. Lawyers are reviewing the bylaws, and there are different rules regarding public and private property. All dogs should be on a 6-foot leash when walked on public property. The Commission discussed implementing signage to enforce leash laws at Town Fields, with Bobby and Dennis agreeing that clear, concise signs would help educate the public and support the enforcement by the police chief. A decision was made to vote on the signage at the August meeting. The discussion also touched on the need for consistent messaging across all fields and the potential for social media posts to raise awareness about the leash laws. Commission also discussed the possibility of a dog park in Recreation future capital plans. (Laurie joined the meeting at 8:10pm)

**Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Sculpture Location:** Mara stated the Commission is being asked to approve the location of the Rail Trail sculpture at Broadacres. She discussed her participation in the discussion with the State Ethics Commission and filled out the required forms with the Town Clerk today so she can participate in this discussion as an abutter to the rail trail since the sculpture is not near her house. Laurie presented the proposed location of the sculpture at Broadacres, which was chosen for its visibility and accessibility. She said the sculpture was commissioned by the Friends of the BFRT using iron from the original railroad and Broadacres was identified as being the ideal location for the sculpture. Mara noted that Park and Recreation was not involved in any of the discussions on location for the sculpture. Mara expressed concerns about the potential impact on future recreational use and suggested waiting until the field survey is completed. The Commission discussed alternative locations, including the intersection of the BFRT and Mass Central Rail Trail and the possibility of adding a new cement pad at Broadacres to accommodate the sculpture while maintaining access to the recreational fields. Dennis said the location is nice, but with the Gale Field Study finishing up there are many options for field needs so he didn't have any comment on locating the sculpture at Broadacres at this time. Laurie offered the Friends of the BFRT are interested in placing the sculpture as soon as possible and said she it was being held in storage at this time. Mara was not in favor of putting the structure where it is being suggested

since it will inhibit recreational assets and recreational use. She would like to wait until they know how the Broadacres field will be used by residents and Recreation and where paths will be to the fields. Len Simon, Meadowbrook Circle, responded to the concerns of the Commissioners. He explained that other locations were considered, but the chosen location at Broadacres would not interfere with future recreational field plans. He stated the sculpture could be moved, if necessary, at a later date with minimal cost and effort. It would not be permanently affixed to the ground. He added there is currently no plan for the field and development may take anywhere from 2 to 10 plus years. He said he discussed the location with the Facilities Director, Sandra Duran. The Commission learned that there is funding available for both the initial installation and the possible relocation of the sculpture at a later date. However, the Commission expressed concern if the funding would be available down the line for a relocation of the sculpture. Mara again raised concerns about the long-term recreational use of the Broadacre property, but Len assured the Commission there are options to accommodate future field access while maintaining the sculptures current location. Commission continued discussion about the placement of the sculpture at Broadacres, considering its impact on future recreational field access and the potential need to relocate it at a later date. They agreed to consult with Sandra Duran, Facilities Director, to understand what would be involved in moving the sculpture, installation options and ADA access. Janie Dretler, Goodman Hill Road, said the proposed location will showcase the rail trail for Sudbury. She said use of the rail trail is Recreation and hoped the Commission would take that into consideration as they reviewed the suggested location for this sculpture. The Commissioners will gather more information and continue the discussion at the August meeting rather than take a vote tonight.

**Review and Approve meeting minutes:** Bobby made a motion to approve the April 14<sup>th</sup> Park and Recreation meeting minutes. Ben seconded the motion. Laurie asked a question about her appointment to the Rail Trail Advisory Committee. Ben said it could not be done until the minutes were approved. Vote: Bobby-yes, Ben-yes, Laurie-yes, Granger-yes, Mara-yes. Motion approved in favor 5-0.

Bobby made a motion to approve the May 1<sup>st</sup> Park and Recreation meeting minutes. Granger seconded. Vote: Bobby-yes, Granger-yes, Ben-yes, Laurie-yes, Mara-yes. Vote passed in favor-5-0.

Bobby made a motion to approve the May 12<sup>th</sup> Park and Recreation meeting minutes. Granger seconded. Vote: Bobby-yes, Granger-yes, Ben-yes, Laurie-yes, Mara-yes. Vote passed in favor 5-0.

Granger made a motion to approve the June 2nd Park and Recreation meeting minutes. Laurie seconded. Vote: Granger-yes, Laurie-yes, Bobby-yes, Ben-yes, Mara-yes. Vote passed in favor 5-0.

Laurie made a motion to approve the June 9th Park and Recreation meeting minutes. Bobby seconded. Vote: Laurie-yes, Bobby-yes, Granger-yes, Ben-yes, Mara-yes. Vote passed in favor 5-0.

**Next Meeting:** Next meeting is scheduled for August 25<sup>th</sup>. Capital project suggestions will be discussed. September meeting date yet to be assigned. Motion to adjourn by Laurie. Granger seconded. Vote: Laurie-yes, Granger-yes, Bobby-yes, Ben-yes, Mara-yes. Vote 5-0 in favor.