

Virtual Meeting 6:32 pm

September 8, 2025

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

Guests: Victor Grafalo, Asst Town Mgr/Finance Director, Andy Sheehan, Town Manager, Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director

Dennis Mannone - Dir Park and Recreation

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

Statement of Remembrance – Dick Williamson: Mara offered a remembrance of Dick Williamson, a former Park and Recreation Commissioner (2010 to 2022), who passed away recently. He was an advocate not only for the Rail Trail but for all forms of Recreation and was an avid member of the Radio Flyers. Ben and Laurie recalled fond memories of Dick on the Park and Recreation Commission and stated he was a great asset to the Park and Recreation Commission and to Sudbury.

Public Comment: Rebecca Cutting, 381 Cutting Maynard Road, reviewed the Field Needs Assessment Draft and thought it was well done and an incredibly useful document. She stated the scoreboard at Cutting Field doesn't work and thought it might be better used if located somewhere else. The land abuts her property and she proposed installing a fence of some type, which she offered to pay for, to limit people dumping trash on her property. Mara suggested Rebecca send an email with her proposal and a map of the area she is referencing and the Commission will review at a future meeting.

Director Update: Dennis provided an update on overall field usage, but did note that Haskell is being utilized extensively for various sports activities, while Davis remains underutilized due to lack of interest by the youth groups. Unfortunately, Haskell he is not able to rest Haskell field, so that may set back maintenance. Dennis reported a successful summer camp season, with increased participation and a new science camp that attracted 80 children along with a sports camp at the end of the season. He has plans for a Halloween Trunk or Treat activity, but may have to consider an alternate location due to the pool renovation work and use of the parking lot. He is also discussing with the Town Manager's office staff the Recreation departments involvement in a Winterfest activity. Ben asked for an update on the various Recreation CPC projects along with who is in charge and requested the possibility of adding monthly updates to the agenda.

Dennis asked Gale Associates to take a look at Feeley Phase 2 and prepare a plan to execute bidding documents along with an associated fee. He will take that information to Victor and Andy and determine how to move forward with the project. The goal is to put the project out to bid late winter for a start this summer. Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director, discussed the RFP for the Fairbank Community Center Outdoor Space Project that includes the pavilion, basketball court and walking circuit at Haskell. She said the RFP is being revised based on feedback and is on track for advertising in September. Mara stated the Commission will be discussing the draft of the Field Needs Assessment at the next meeting.

The Commission also discussed the Open Space and Recreation Plan, with Dennis noting the RFP should be ready by the end of next week. Mara asked if anyone on the Commission had been able to review the proposed bid requests. Dennis will review the request with the Town Manager. The plan is to get the request for proposals out this fall/ winter and then have something start in the spring/summer.

Granger gave a brief update on CPC deadlines and improvement plans for processing requests this year.

PRC Charter Discussion: Mara and Ben met with the Town Manager and Asst. Town Manager regarding collaboration and cooperation between the PRC and the Town related to the charter. Ben suggested the Commission discuss the Charter again at future meeting to review the role of the Commission with clarification on policy making and long-range planning.

Update on Atkinson Pool Renovations: Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director, provided an update on the Atkinson Pool renovations, noting that testing identified broken skimmers, missing tiles, and a cracked pipe in the dive well along with rotted wood in the roof area that will require a change order to the original contract. The mechanical room has been demolished, old sand filters are gone. Tile work has begun along with the work on the roof. The roof work, including the removal of rock and installation of a new roof deck is progressing well. Sandra confirmed the current work is within budget and scope. Sandra informed the project team continues to meet weekly to review all the specifics. The pool is currently scheduled for reopening December 1st, with Sandra confirming no red flags for delays. Laurie noted that the Town swim teams have been communicated with regularly regarding contingency plans and schedules. Mara asked Sandra to provide an update to the PRC at the monthly meetings.

Update on Smile /Lyons Playground: Victor Garafalo, Asst. Town Manager/Finance Director, gave a detailed presentation on the Smile playground located at Haskell field which focused on the playground projects delays, costs, and future plans. He presented details on the original project Article 21, which was approved at the 2021 Town Meeting for \$285,000. Victor explained the increased cost were due to additional design work, staffing changes, contractor availability, playground being used for summer camp and other unforeseen expenses, totaling 287,623. Dennis provided further context on the design work and bidding process, which was necessary due to the complexity of the project and ADA compliance requirements. Dennis provided details on the playground equipment and surfacing changes, including removal of unsafe swings, and the addition of new PIP surfacing. Ben questioned the budget allocations and cost increases, which Victor and Dennis addressed by reviewing the various line items and explained how costs were incurred. Dennis mentioned he is replacing the two swings that were deemed unsafe and a spinner that was also removed due to safety concerns. These will be replaced with more appropriate swings and new parts for the spinner.

Victor said the next step is to replace the structure that was removed, which was not included in the original plan, add a shade structure and add additional PIP surface. He also said they will explore planting new trees. Andy, Victor, and Dennis met with 3 playground contractors. Victor presented 5 playground equipment options from the contractors that focused on a 1,500 square foot area. He mentioned there are two areas in the playground that must remain with wood fiber due to the need to be accessible to two septic tanks. The presentation included various designs, including options for shade structures, musical instruments, and ADA accessible equipment with costs ranging from \$220,000 to \$322,000. He mentioned that these projections include contingency funds that would be returned if not needed. The plan would involve replacing wood chips with poured in play rubber, adding a shade structure, and installing new playground equipment. After Victor's presentation the Commission expressed a preference for a continuous structure over individual components, and emphasized the importance of maintaining toddler friendly accessibility while adding shade. Picnic tables and benches may also be added in the new play area. It was decided to select the best option before asking the contractor detailed information, since only one contractor will be awarded the bid. Victor stated he plans to submit a Community Preservation application by September 20th for the maximum amount with the possibility of reducing it later depending on the option that is selected. He also mentioned the plan to preserve the new wood chips that will be replaced for use in the future. As

the discussion on playground improvements continued, Victor explained that while trees would be planted, they won't provide immediate shade. It was decided the CPC playground request/updates would be titled Phase 2 of the Dr. Bill Adelson Playground at Haskell field. Laurie expressed concern over the use of phrase playground replacement and suggested "playground enhancement", since it may set up expectations that won't be realized. Mara mentioned the Commission and Town Manager's office received many letters/emails in support of adding more equipment and shade to the playground. Malinda Macari, Dutton Road, expressed support for the plans and emphasized the importance of the playground to the Community. Ben will continue to serve as the Park and Recreation Commission liaison for the project as it moves along the various approval cycles. Kay Bell texted in a comment saying that while wood fiber chips might be ADA compliant, they are too slippery and not truly accessible. She encouraged removal of all except those around the septic areas. Kevin LaHaise, also texted in a comment asking for a comparison of what was originally planned for the playground and what was actually delivered. Mara asked Victor to include that information in his presentation and Mara clarified what was in the original project.

Dogs on Recreational Properties: Mara stated there have been a series of issues with dogs in Town on Town properties. Commissioners discussed enforcing leash laws on recreational properties and agreed to support the installation of signs reminding dog owners of the 6-foot leash requirement.

Mara made a motion that the Commission agree to enforce the Town's by laws related to dog ownership and leash laws on all recreational properties in Sudbury. Laurie seconded the motion. In discussion, Ben expressed concern about what the motion was saying on enforcing the leash law rather than on what would be written on the signs. Vote: Ben-no, Laurie – no, Granger – no, Mara – no. Vote 0-4 did not pass.

Ben made a new motion that the Park and Recreation Commission agree to place signage on parcels under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission that effectively point out that it is Town of Sudbury law that all dogs must be on a 6-foot leash when on Town property. In addition, the Commission will have the chance to review and approve not only the wording on the signs but also the location. Granger seconded the motion. Vote: Ben – yes, Granger – yes, Laurie – yes, Mara – yes. Vote passed in favor 4-0. Dennis will handle communication about the vote to Town staff, as funding for these signs needs to be determined.

BFRT Sculpture Location: Laurie, representative to the Rail Trails Advisory Committee, stated the art structure is complete and the Friends of the BFRT are now looking for a location. It was proposed to put the structure at Broadacres Farm on the cement pathway that connects the parking lot to the eventual fields at Broadacres. This placement caused concern to the PRC because the cement pathway was always meant to lead to an accessible path to the fields. One option was to place the sculpture on the cement and move it at a later date if necessary, but the Commission had concerns about that plan. Bobby and Laurie met with Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director, at the suggested location at Broadacres, and alternative locations were discussed. It was decided that Laurie would send communication to the Select Board, Rail Trails Advisory Committee and others involved in deciding the Broadacres pathway location was the best location stating the position of the PRC the need to find a new location. The Commission expressed concern that the PRC and the Park and Director were not involved in the early discussions regarding the location for this sculpture.

Story Walk at Smile/Lyons Playground: Mara stated Linda Jensen, from First Connections, contacted her regarding putting up a story walk book at the Haskell playground for the month of October. The

story boards will be attached to the fence with zip ties. Dennis expressed concern for vandalism. He also expressed concern that once you allow one group to put up something others may come with requests to hang something on the playground fence.

Mara made a motion that the PRC allow First Connections in Concord to install a story walk for the month of October for the book Frybread. Laurie seconded the motion. Vote: Laurie – yes, Granger – yes, Ben – yes, Mara – yes. Vote passed in favor 4-0.

Review and Approve Minutes: moved to the next meeting.

Next meeting is Wednesday, September 17th. Mara sent out a straw poll for the October meeting. She said the next meeting will focus on the Field Needs Assessment and big picture view of capital projects.

Motion to adjourn: Seconded. Vote: Granger-yes, Laurie-yes, Ben-yes, Mara-yes. Vote passed in favor 4-0.