

Virtual Meeting 6:33 pm

November 17, 2025

Commissioners: Mara Huston, Granger Atkenson, Laurie Eliason, Bobby Beagan

Director, Park and Recreation: Dennis Mannone

Guests: Victor Garofalo, Asst Town Manager/Finance, Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Dir., Bryon Woodman, Select Energy.

Roll Call: Granger-here, Laurie-here, Bobby-here, Mara-here

Chair Comments: Mara stated she would be moving the Solar, Pool and Haskell Playground agenda items to the beginning of the meeting since Sandra and Victor need to leave to attend the Finance Meeting.

Public Comment: None

Solar Project at Haskell Parking Lot: Mara asked Sandra to give a high-level description of overall project how it may impact Recreation users of Haskell field. She stated the project was in the preliminary stages and asked Bryon Woodman, a representative from the installation company, to attend the meeting to answer any technical questions in regard to the project. He informed the project involves installing solar canopies across three parking lots, with construction expected to take 12 to 14 weeks which would require minimal lot closure. Bryon explained the financing model of the project. The Commission raised concerns about parking lot access during construction and the impact on recreation users, particularly during peak times like fall soccer season and winter swim meets. Other potential solar sites would be the Curtis Middle School parking lot, and the Police Station parking lot. Sandra added the Fairbank Community Center roof has been prepared for solar panels. Granger stated this was the first he had heard of the project. Laurie asked if there was lighting. Bryon said there were lights, but no security cameras. Laurie also questioned safety with young children in the parking lot and visibility. Byron stated 14ft would be the low point of the roof, so emergency vehicles, snow plows, etc. would fit underneath. The expectation would be large wastewater management trucks and the trucks used for picking up dumpsters would not fit. Bobby mentioned the negative impact on the character of Haskell Field. Mara asked about lost parking spaces, Bryon responded there would not be a loss of many parking spaces.

Victor sent out an executive summary report on the pool earlier in the week. The pool is on schedule for a December 1st opening date. He also sent out 5 options for the CPC Haskell playground renovation submission, which involves removing more wood fiber, replacing it with additional pour-in-play surface, and a universal playground piece of equipment. The Commission agreed to discuss the new playground options further at the December meeting and take a position at that time. Victor stated he assured the CPC Committee that there would be no cost change to the project he presented a week ago. Victor noted the Haskell improvement costs came in a little higher than expected so the have been increased. Some of the work will be done in-house to keep fees down. He said the hope would be the bathrooms could be done at the same time as the playground renovation. Sandra and Victor left to attend the Finance Meeting.

The Commissioners continued discussing supporting the solar project at Haskell Field. The Commission expressed concerns about the project's scale, aesthetics, safety, and potential impact on recreation space at Haskell field, noting that they felt they were not informed on the project before the presentation.

Granger made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission support the Solar Panel installation at the Haskell Field parking lot, as presented in the meeting, including a future review by the Park and Recreation Commission once the design of the project is completed. Motion seconded by Bobby. Vote: Bobby-no, Granger-yes, Laurie-no, Mara-no. Motion failed 1-3.

Mara asked which Commissioners will be at Town meeting in December if there are questions on this article. Granger offered to represent the Commission. Bobby may also be able to attend.

Mara proposed the Commission hold a dedicated meeting to discuss capital planning.

Director Update: Dennis asked that Marcia Rasmussen be able to speak on the CPC Parkinson Field Lot and Driveway discussion first and then he would continue his Director update. Marcia presented the plans and costs the consultant working with the Town came up with for the parking lot at the Parkinson Field. The plan is estimated at \$1.3 million dollars, includes 63 parking spaces, of which 4 are handicapped accessible. The preliminary estimate includes stormwater management, lighting of the parking lot as well as bringing water to the site. Dennis had expressed an interest in providing irrigation for the field in the future along with potentially lighting the field. Marcia added that removing the electricity, water and limiting the paving would only drop the price to \$856,000 and that Lori Capone, Conservation Director, Tina Rivard, DPW Director, Adam Burney, Planning Director, Dennis and herself have all been in discussions regarding this project. The driveway is problematic along with the wetlands on the property which cause limitations in the design. Marcia has not had an opportunity to meet with management at Ti-Sales yet, but is hoping to meet with them next week regarding the driveway to the field.

Granger made a motion for the Park and Recreation Commission to support the Parkinson Field Parking lot project contingent further review of the design after Marcia speaks to other Commissions. Bobby seconded the motion. Vote: Granger-yes, Bobby-yes, Laurie-Yes, Mara-yes. Motion passed in favor 4-0.

Mara asked Dennis about the Recreation programs and if the Recreation bus was being used for after school programs at the elementary schools. Dennis reported the bus is being used for after school programs and for Wild Wednesday trips for the middle school. They still haven't figured out how to best use the bus for the elementary schools. It is difficult due to the fact there are 4 schools and the bus only holds 10-12 riders. Recreation programming started out slow, as it usually does in the fall as school begins, but has picked up with sign-ups for dodgeball, Puzzle Palooza, running club, ski program, basketball programs and the Lego club program on early release Wednesdays. The pickleball program is going well with memberships, clinics and court reservations. In addition, the toddler room is being used by residents and non-residents with memberships or drop in play time. In addition, the room is used for Preschool Pals for six weeks in the summer. Pool memberships will start up again on December 1st, and swim teams will return along with swim lessons, and other pool rentals. He will follow up with the Planning Director to get the latest status on the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Mara asked for the status on residents being able to use rooms at the Fairbank Community Center rooms. Dennis met with the Town Manager, Combined Facilities Director, Asst Town Manager/Finance

Director and the Senior Center Director a few times to discuss this topic. He said they are working on a document with policies and procedures to allow residents to rent space in the building. It was thought they would focus on utilizing the multi-purpose room first and figure out all the logistics and something may be in place after the first of the year.

Liaison Updates (CPC, Rail Trails, SPSC): Granger provided updates on the Recreation CPC projects, and mentioned the Hop Brook Pathways proposal. Once he has more information on the pathway, he will inform the Commission. Laurie mentioned an upcoming meeting to discuss Phase 3 design updates for the Rail Trail. She will share relevant information at the next PRC meeting.

Field Needs Assessment (Planning for future improvements): Mara proposed a structured approach to analyze the Field Needs Assessment, emphasizing the need to determine project order, stand alone projects and interdependences and suggested a dedicated meeting to discuss the survey results. This information could be used in the development of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Commission discussed areas of the Field Needs Assessment recommendations and the pros and cons of artificial turf versus natural grass. The Commission also discussed the CPC budget and how it relates to the current proposals and request for funds. They agreed to have a dedicated meeting to review the recommendations and timelines by location. Laurie clarified that a decision on field locations does not need to be made before design articles go to Town Meeting. Granger inquired about the expectations for design projects and Mara and Bobby explained that design work typically includes initial conversations and planning before construction can begin.

Commission discussed the timing and prioritization of design funds for two recreation field projects, Davis and Broadacres. The Commission expressed concerns about requesting funds for both projects simultaneously given incomplete planning processes and potential competing priorities. The Commission discussed moving forward with Davis sooner due to the competing interests.

Dennis presented the CPC funding request for Davis Field, seeking \$122,000 for engineering consulting services to transform the unutilized, poorly draining site into functional multi-use space. The project aims to create two new natural grass multipurpose fields with an estimated future cost of \$1.5 million. Dennis outlined the project phases, timeline, and management approach, emphasizing the need for clear oversight and design integrity. The Commission discussed the historical context of Davis Field, noting its original purchase for recreational use in 1974 and stated this information should be included in the upcoming CPC presentation.

The Commission discussed plans for recreational fields, focusing on the sizes and layouts of soccer and baseball fields. Dennis explained that the recreation fields would be equivalent to 11v11 fields, which could be used for multiple sports like lacrosse and soccer. Mara emphasized the importance of setting a rotation schedule for the field use to allow for rest periods and discussed the possible design of composting toilets and need for portable restrooms at the field. Dennis presented a plan for Broadacres, which included a 90-foot baseball diamond, additional parking, and a synthetic multipurpose field. The estimated cost for designing the Broadacres project is \$214,000. The Commission considered how the proposed field changes would impact the various sports teams and discussed the need for more information on long term field usage plans. After a lengthy discussion on design and usage at both Davis and Broadacres Mara asked if the Commission was ready to take a vote on Davis or Broadacre. Granger made a motion to support the Davis Field design CPC application. Laurie seconded the motion. Vote: Granger-yes, Laurie-yes, Bobby-yes, Mara-yes. Vote passed in favor 4-0.

Laurie made a motion for the Park and Recreation Commission to support the Broadacres design CPC application. Bobby seconded the motion. Laurie questioned if taking a position by Park and Recreation Commission might be premature. She thought the Commission might want to revisit the plan when Ben is present. Mara stated concern that they might be rushing the Broadacre design plan because there are so many other components where Davis is more straightforward. She thought the Open Space and Recreation Plan would give some guidance for the space. Mara stated Davis, if approved, would be design ATM26 and construction ATM27. Broadacre, if approved, would be design ATM26 and construction ATM28. Dennis will adjust his presentation before sending both applications to CPC. After discussion Commission took a vote. Vote: Laurie-yes, Bobby-yes, Granger-yes, Mara-yes. Vote passed in favor 4-0.

CPC Project Submissions Discussions- Dennis reported there was a kickoff meeting with Gale regarding Feeley Phase 2. Gale is in the process of gathering information on wetlands and so forth. The plan is they are going to fix the drainage, irrigation etc. and then Dennis will oversee the construction when it starts. The Haskell playground project is being driven by Victor. The Haskell bathroom renovation is being overseen by Victor and Sandra Duran. This will be discussed further at the next meeting. The Haskell Outdoor Space is being led by Sandra Duran.

Leash Law sign approval for Town Recreation fields- moved to next meeting.

Noise Policy at courts in Town- moved to next meeting.

Assign Liaisons to COD- moved to next meeting.

Review and approve minutes- no minutes to approve at this time.

Future meetings- Mara will send out a straw poll to secure a date for the capital planning meeting. December meeting agenda will review the playground options. Victor has requested a 6:00pm start to the meeting that night. Mara will also send out a straw poll for the January and February meeting dates.

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