

Parks & Rec Meeting

October 4, 2021

Virtual Meeting called to order 7:30pm by Bob O'Shea

Members present: Bob O'Shea, Keith Bilafer, Mark Morin, Michele Lauria, Marisa Steele, Dan Daly, Kara Minar, Amanda LaRiviere, Rebecca Kelley

Minutes of September 13, 2021 Regular Session: No further changes. Motion-Lauria; Approved: 5-0

Minutes of September 13, 2021 Executive Session: No comments. Motion – Morin; 2nd- Steele.
Approved: 5-0

Minutes of September 20, 2021: No comments. Motion – Lauria; 2nd – Morin; Approved: 5-0

Public Communications:

Dan Daly:

1) wants to put something on agenda for a future meeting – will need someone from P&R to oversee project of athletic fields complex

2) "turf day" – turf management outdoor training session to be held in Natick on 10/23/21. Cost \$69pp for 4-5hrs of training. Suggest one of the commissioners or DPW employee or Kevin Mitrano attend to gain more knowledge on appropriate care of playing fields

Liaison Communications:

1. Kara Minar (Select Board): Suggested P&R going to FinCom for Reserve Fund Transfer for the Slide Repair at the Playground. Fastest way to get Funds for emergency repairs would be to go through FinCom. Morin asks if there is a limit for Reserve Funds (Kara does not know what the limit is). O'Shea stated that Reserve Fund is best held for emergencies such as excess Snow Removal or special needs student entering school district mid year and explained that Unforeseen expenses get funded by Reserve Fund Transfer.

O'Shea: update on the Unforeseen funds recently approved include \$10k for 3 Seasons Landscaping getting field work done prior to school start. \$24k for supplemental mowing and weed whacking expected between now and next summer is approved but encumbered. Money is put aside but not transferred to P&R until our budget is exhausted.

Daly asked MInar about an update on Recreational Land Use Processes – haven't heard back from SB. Minar will check on that.

2. Dan Daly (OSC): CPIC application for athletic field complex approved by OSC, P&R, School Comm – delivered on 10/1/21. Bilafer/Daly drafted a formal letter to OSC for Mapping/Listing 6 acres

parcel of land suitable for athletic field complex and scrutinize all Municipal land. O'Shea clarified that P&R still has the right under State Law to do land acquisition. Daly reviewed timeline for CPIC application: 5 year capital request for fiscal year 2023-2027.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Paul Green – requests P&R to reconsider the commission's support of warrant article #18. Informed us that P&R were the only board to vote against the proposed article. 15 minute presentation/discussion ensued. P&R supports the goal of reducing climate emissions but is concerned that the process proposed is too vague and relies on the already over-burdened SB to oversee and manage this daunting task.

Dan Daly – commented on P&R ideas provided to SB and SC pursuant to so-called Bromfield Park idea. Concerned about collision of projects & priorities at P&R commission. Suggested review of Bromfield House Commission report of April 2021. SC already voted that Bromfield House as surplus property therefore SB has responsibility for its disposition. Concerned that a statement was made to SC that CPC funds could be approved at fall town meeting to design the park. Reminded that no CPC funds would be voted on at fall town meeting. Daly suggested priority should be placed on developing New Programs and continue working on maintenance/ operational issues.

FALL CPC Applications due 10/21/21:

Bilafer wonders if there needs to be an additional CPC request in regards to the proposed Athletic Field Complex if it is approved in the CPIC process. O'Shea would prefer to not short-cut other priorities from getting CPC funding. Vote on CPC funding will be delayed until next meeting on Oct 18, 2021

Beach Operations: Lauria

1. Wooden Raft (2nd dock) is missing. Not on Beach; Fire Dept went out onto pond and didn't find anything. O'Shea mentioned that he would list it missing on NextDoor Harvard
2. Swimming Restriction has been lifted.
3. 15' Cape Cod Mercury Sailboat (circa 1961) has been donated to P&R. O'Shea has done some repairs on it. Question whether to buy \$500 cover for it (since the boat has no drain) vs sell the sailboat. Lauria expressed concern that the boat might not be appropriate for the proposed future sailing program. She was unable to get it up & running during beach season. Discussion on pros/cons of keeping/selling boat. More information to be presented at next meeting for vote. O'Shea will put a tarp on boat & bring to DPW for storage until vote
4. Lauria will check on update of proposed sailing program

Fields Report: Bilafer

1. DPW was asked to aerate & slice seed Upper Depot 2 wks ago (mid Sept). DPW claimed that aeration and seeding was done yet no physical evidence of aeration (no plugs seen) was seen by Bilafer, O'Shea, Boisvert or Mitrano upon walking/inspecting Upper Depot. Bilafer informed Kara Minar about this. Minar has emailed Stu Sklar. Kilhart on vacation. Bilafer was not allowed

to interact with DPW employee directly per Tim Bragan's denial. Bragan would not authorize rental of slice seeder while Kilhart was on vacation.

2. Lower Depot not painted for game on Tuesday. Make up game on next day, Wednesday – field still was not Painted. Boisvert ended up painting Lower Depot on Thursday. Email thread from DPW said that field painting was done by DPW on Wed. If it was done on Wed, then why would Boisvert need to paint it the next day on Thursday???? Email documentation of these discrepancies has been passed along to SB via Minar.
3. P&R is not in charge of field operations however DPW assigned field duties are not being done and P&R continues to receive the public's wrath for poor field conditions, etc. Despite several interactions with the town admin, the admin is not holding DPW responsible for its assigned duties in maintaining the fields. In addition, the SB is not holding town admin responsible for managing the DPW. Brisk discussion on how to publicize these issues, hoping that an educated public would demand action. Also discussed whether complete outsourcing of all field maintenance is indicated based on the continued difficulty of getting DPW to do their assigned field duties.
4. O'Shea asks the Board take some of the 24k received from Finance Committee for the 4 projects that DPW states that they are unable to complete (see attached RFQ for supplemental landscaping work) and use it immediately to solicit outside landscaping help to complete the aeration/slice seeding project on Upper Depot that DPW has NOT done (despite them saying that it was done). This Upper Depot work is listed in the RFQ as Project 0. Concerned that time was running out in the season to complete this task in a timely fashion and waiting for the bidding process to end on Oct 15th would jeopardize missing the ideal time window for seeding work.
 - a. 3 Seasons Landscaping states that they can complete UD aeration/seeding work this upcoming week for 7k. Discussion: concerning the cost, why should P&R pay to do the work when DPW should be doing the work but won't, etc. Bilafer agrees to work with 3 Seasons to lower the cost- take away dethatching process (can be done in spring)/ decrease amount of loam needed, etc. Bilafer will mark sprinkler heads in advance of aeration.
 - b. Motion made by Bilafer (seconded by Lauria) for Project 0 to be pulled out of the RFQ and use funds from the 24k immediately. Passed unanimously.
 - c. Motion by Bilafer; Second by Steele for Projects 1-3 in RFQ will go out for competitive bidding process ends on Oct 15, 2021. Project 1 = tackling invasives around playing fields; Project 2 = dethatching fields; Project 3 = weedwhacking/spot mowing. Passed unanimously.

Track/Trails Report: Steele

1. Track crack sealant work was postponed due to rain. Rescheduling date TBD
2. Rt 2 Trail connecting Depot Extended to Lancaster County Rd has been fully raked/graded by Mark Adams of Harvard Snowmobile Club. Next project is the bridge repair (bridge closest to Depot Extended entrance). Bilafer suggested that this could be an Eagle Scout project. Steele to speak with Gary Madison to see if there is an eagle scout willing to take on project under the supervision of Mark Adams. Will use left over \$ from grant for materials.
3. Tree work behind Harvard Park still pending availability of tree warden, JC Ferguson

4. Playground safety issues: reviewed Risk Management Grant possibility for purchase of new slide. If no grant, will apply for unforeseen expense for slide then CPC funding request for remainder of the playground issues (mulch, suspension cables, swings, etc)
5. New drainage culvert on trail behind Harvard Park completed by Bromfield Cross Country team volunteers and supervised by Jim Lee was completed about 1 month ago and is working well.

New Business:

1. Rebecca Kelley presents a request to have 4 new benches placed on Town Common (currently there are only 2 benches). O'Shea mentioned that fall town meeting warrant article is proposed to transfer jurisdiction of Town Common to the SB so Ms Kelley's request may need to be sent to the SB for consideration.
2. O'Shea discussed SC recently came up with a new concept of Bromfield Park IF the town decided to keep the Bromfield House Land. This would include a combination of outdoor education pavilions with some mixed un-named recreation facilities (some possible examples of recreation options could include skateboard park, pickle board, pump track, etc). P&R believes that the town needs to vote on the disposition the land/house BEFORE making a statement of support for this concept.
3. O'Shea questions whether a new vote be taken on the Climate Change Warrant article. Multiple commissioners reiterates that they support the goal of the Climate Change Warrant Article but are not supportive of the proposed process. No additional vote is deemed necessary.

Meeting adjourned 9:43pm Motion- Lauria; Second Morin. Approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marisa Steele

Commissioner, Parks & Rec