

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Meeting
January 11, 2021**

PRESENT: Cynthia J. Chaston, Christopher J. Gerstel, Michelle S. Geddes, Matthew M. Toolan,
Bruce R. Williams

STAFF: Stacey Mulroy, Kristen Wright

GUESTS: Kim Parsons

Ms. Chaston called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM remotely using Zoom. Ms. Chaston read a statement regarding public meeting process due to COVID-19. Ms. Chaston expressed remarks about the current state of the country.

1. Open Forum – Public Comment

None presented.

2. Director's Report

Ms. Mulroy presented the Director's Report. The Commission discussed the use of the RRC Multipurpose Room and Mr. Gerstel discussed the CPC projects that the Commission has interest in. Ms. Wright stated that the Public Hearing for CPC is currently scheduled for Wednesday, March 3rd. Ms. Mulroy stated that we will be receiving a quote to patch some areas of the track.

Ms. Geddes asked about the next steps for the playground renovations. Ms. Mulroy stated that there will be a full report soon. Ms. Mulroy stated that moving forward with updating Perry Park as it could coincide with a large DPW project in that area.

Ms. Chaston asked about the Assistant Director position. Ms. Mulroy stated that the Personnel Board is discussing this at their meeting on January 19th.

3A. Projects

CPC Applications

Ms. Chaston stated that at a meeting with the Walker Pond Working Group the roles were discussed, and Town Engineer Anthony DelGazio will be presenting the project.

3B. Programs

Discussed earlier in the meeting. Ms. Mulroy reviewed the feedback received from the Blue Hills ski and snowboard program that began Friday. Ms. Mulroy discussed a request from Girls On the Run to begin their program prior to April 1. Ms. Chaston stated that the Commission has previously held pretty firm on the April 1 date. Ms. Mulroy stated that in a normal year she would agree with that, however with the change in MIAA sports schedule it will be different. Mr. Toolan stated that Fall 2 will not impact the grass areas, only turf fields could be used and the main concern about using the track early would be the use of the grass field (Conroy) and adjacent grassy area surrounding the Pavilion. Mr. Williams asked why they preferred March 26th. Ms.

Mulroy stated their program usually runs on a Sunday, and March 26th is the Sunday prior to April 1. Mr. Williams stated that beginning the Sunday after April 1st should not be too disruptive to their schedule. Ms. Geddes stated that the Commission has consistently kept the track closed when the grass fields were closed and believes that while there may need to be further conversations about flexibility, being consistent with our April 1st date is best. Mr. Toolan suggested that this be a future conversation.

3C. Facilities

Safety Lights at DeFazio

Ms. Wright stated that she had been in contact with the company and we are finding a date to schedule the work.

Field Summit

Ms. Chaston stated that the summit is typically held in January where the upcoming seasons are discussed, there is an update from Superintendent Olsen, and in the past concussion trainings for volunteer run programs. Ms. Chaston stated that having the field summit in the next few weeks may be the best way to proceed.

Ms. Mulroy stated that COVID protocols from the state will continue to change and that a review of the field booklet would be in the best interest. Ms. Mulroy stated that Ms. Geddes request to streamline the protocols across all sports is valid and there will be conversation with the Director of Health and Human Services in the coming weeks. Ms. Mulroy stated that we are not currently accepting permits, but the requests are being made. Ms. Mulroy stated that we could start accepting requests, but not make any discussions until after the summit or closer to the spring.

Mr. Toolan agreed with the proposed timing for the field summit. Mr. Toolan further stated that if we start accepting field requests, that guidance should be sent to the user groups regarding timing for the spring and summer permits. Mr. Toolan stated that he would also like to begin the planning for how we will proceed if the state restrictions are lifted at some point and how we will handle the increase of requests we will probably receive. Mr. Toolan stated that we should start communicating the different thoughts and considerations for the field permitting and set their expectations. Ms. Mulroy stated she intended to send out an email to the user groups once the field summit date was selected but can start the process earlier. Ms. Chaston stated that while they typically provide advanced notice for the field summit, this year is different where the summit will be attended virtually.

Ms. Geddes agrees that starting the permitting processes sooner rather than later would be best. Ms. Mulroy stated that there are concerns that about groups staying off the fields but getting the permitting started would be preferred by the staff as well. Ms. Geddes stated that as long as the communication remains consistent. Ms. Mulroy stated that is the effort that is being made to update the booklet to streamline the entire process as well. Mr. Toolan stated that we should also make sure that it is clearly represented on the website.

The Commission will discuss the date of the field summit at the next meeting.

Fall 2 Sports

Ms. Mulroy stated that Athletic Director Dan Lee stated that the plan currently is to only run Football and Cheer. Ms. Mulroy stated that she has not heard from youth user groups. Mr. Toolan stated that we should expect requests from those groups as well and the Commission should have a further conversation about the level of use that can be allowed during the Fall 2 season.

3D. Miscellaneous

Liaisons to COA & Youth and Family Services

Mr. Gerstel stated that he has reached out to the Directors to determine who the liaisons are and invite them to a future meeting.

Other

Ms. Chaston asked about the opening process for the Pools. Ms. Mulroy stated that the conversations have begun. Ms. Mulroy stated that there is an outstanding project to address the autofill. Ms. Chaston asked about a report regarding the 2020 season.

4A. Special Event Approvals

Parent Talk – Yeti Hunt

The request was not submitted, and it will be address at the next meeting.

4B. Program Pricing Approvals

Non-Resident registration dates

The Commission discussed allowing non-residents to register for programming.

Mr. Toolan moved to temporarily adapt non-resident registration to allow non-residents to register parallel to residents for virtual programming, noting that it may be adjusted if residents are being locked out of registration. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and it passed 5 – 0.

4C. Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2020

Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 13, 2020. Mr. Toolan seconded the motion and it passed 4-0-1.

October 26, 2020

Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 26, 2020. Mr. Toolan seconded the motion and it passed 4-0-1.

November 9, 2020

Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 9, 2020. Ms. Geddes seconded the motion and it passed 5-0.

November 23, 2020

Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 23, 2020. Ms. Geddes seconded the motion and it passed 3-0-2.

December 15, 2020

Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from December 15, 2020. Mr. Toolan seconded the motion and it passed 5-0.

4D. Commission Goals and Roles

Moved discussion to future meeting.

5. Topics for Future Meetings

Ms. Mulroy stated that the bid for the Park Restrooms is being worked on and should go out in March. Ms. Mulroy also noted that the DPW is looking at a project near Perry Park including addition of parking.

Mr. Gerstel stated that he has pulled his papers and asked the Commission to reach out to anyone they think would be a good fit for Mr. Toolan's opening.

6. Issues Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair within 48 Hours

None presented.

7. Next Meetings

The Commission reviewed the next meeting dates.

8. Adjournment of Business Meeting

Mr. Toolan moved to adjourn the January 11, 2021 Park and Recreation Commission meeting at 8:20pm. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Wright
Administrative Specialist