

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

3:20 p.m.

Unity Park Field House

56 1st Street

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Dennis Grader, Chairperson, Linda Ackerman, (3:30pm) Vice Chairperson, Barbara Kuklweicz, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation, Jennifer Peterson, Clerk/Bookkeeper.

Guests: Lesley Cogswell, Marie Putala, and Kathy Webber from Friend 2 Friend

Meeting Being Taped

Agenda:

1. Meeting Called to Order: 3:20 p.m.

2. Approval of November 21, 2013 Minutes: Barbara Kuklweicz makes the motion of accepting minutes.

Vote: 2-0

3. Lake Pleasant Parks Improvement Update

Jon and Barbara attended a public hearing at the Spiritualist Hall in Lake Pleasant for Rutter's Park. Approximately twelve residents were in attendance. Jon felt the meeting went well; the residents did express disappointment and anger over many municipal issues. Rutter's Park being one of those issues. Funding opportunities were discussed as well as a Community Development Block Grant, playground equipment grant and town funding through capital improvement. Jon felt the group really wanted the town to step up and provide some funding. One issue the association would like to see addressed is the playground surfacing. The basketball court was another area they would like to see improvements. A survey which would include population, ages, demographics and villagers wishes will be conducted to potentially address improvements to Rutter's Park. Jon let the group know that he would be meeting with the commission and Walter Ramsey, the town Planner, for the next step for possible park improvement.

4. Skatepark Update: Tabled

Vote: 3-0

5. Wheelchair Swing - Establishment of a Gift Account

Jon introduces the Friend 2 Friend group. Lesley Cogswell stated that the group has reached their goal of \$15,000 for the cost of the swing and for shipping. They are now moving on to the next phase, that being the cost of installation for the swing. At this point the group does not have an estimate for this but are thinking around \$15000. Their hope is to get the bulk of installation in donated time. They are looking to apply for more grants and would like to "partner" with the department. As part of this partnership they would like to propose moving their money into the departments account as a Gift Account.

This way the group could use the Park and Recreation tax exempt number on the grant applications. They have been experiencing some difficulties with the grants because they do not have a tax exempt number yet. Jon explained that this account would be given its own name, "wheelchair swing gift account" and the BOS would have to go to a vote. When money is donated it would have to be on the agenda and officially voted in. When applying for future grants Friend 2 Friend could utilize the department administratively. Lesley was able to hand Jon a letter stating that Friend 2 Friend Inc. is in agreement to move the money from their account into the Parks & Recreation wheelchair swing gift account. Jon said he would get this proposal on the December 9 BOS meeting.

Motion: Linda Ackerman makes a motion to go through the proper channels to get this proposal in front of the BOS to have this money gifted to us from Friend 2 Friend.

Vote: 3-0

6. Skatepark Update

Jon is meeting with the skate park committee today to discuss fundraising and grants. They are also on the BOS meeting this coming Monday.

7. Summer Playground Program 2013

This is a review of the previously submitted Profit/Loss statement. The commission had some questions on income and the balance. Jen went through the accounts and there were some minor adjustments. The income was \$27,328; expenses were \$13,625 leaving a balance of \$13,703. After looking at the specifics Jon believes the lower scholarship money awarded and the laying off a staff member temporarily for three weeks could account for the higher ending balance with the summer playground. He reminded the commission that the first 5 - 5 ½ weeks the payroll went through our operating budget. There was discussion about the balance and if there were any programs that needed equipment. Jon stated that most program fees take care of equipment needs, and would not recommend purchasing equipment with the revolving fund monies at this point.

We sent out 55 on-line parent surveys and 15 people replied. This is a response rate of 27%. The majority of the evaluations were good to excellent. Linda noticed the category that reported the lowest scored which was "staff preparedness" which supported what she observed when she was at the park for the reading program. The commission discussed the difficulty of having enough programming space when the weather is the issue. They talked about the Fieldhouse garage being used for such a space, but right now there is excess trash, and various departmental equipment currently stored there. Jon went on to say areas that would have to be address to make that programming space would be flooring, lighting, and building a wall to separate our mower from the main space. We would need to find a grant to fund this project.

8. Water Spray Feature - Summer 2013 Usage

The feature was operating for 72 days; average daily usage was 7,539 gallons. The cost per day was \$17.94, a decrease in the daily usage last year which was slightly over \$24 per day. Total cost for the summer was \$1306.80. Jon has thought about adjusting the time the feature runs from 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. to 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. He feels this would better accommodate the younger pre-school groups that visit the park.

9. Applebee's Dining To Donate Fundraiser

The fundraiser was held Thursday, November 7, 2013. We have not yet heard how much was raised. Jon was concerned because when he was there as well as Jen, there were very few patrons. He did hear that later around 8 p.m. there were many more people using the fliers. He will let the commission know how much was raised when it becomes available.

10. Groundskeeper Position Update

Jon let the commission know that Dan Poirier was hired for the position. He will be starting January 6, 2014.

11. Winter Programs 2014

Youth basketball will be starting in two weeks. We are still looking for coaches for the 3 & 4 grade boys and 5 & 6 grade boys travel teams. We have a 3 & 4 grade girls' team and a 5 & 6 grade girls team both with coaches. The Sawmill River is planned for January 1 2014. We are still looking for a swim lesson instructor. Jon did put an ad in The Recorder this past weekend.

12. Director's Report

Jon included the Facility/Park Work Log for 2013.

13. Other Business

Jon reminded the commission that he will be on vacation next week. He met with Tom Bergeron in regards to the field house restroom improvements. It is time to have these restrooms redone. This would be a capital improvement project.

Jon also wanted to speak about the minimum wage increase of three dollars over the next three years. The department can request an increase in our operating budget to offset this but at some point the revolving budget will be used.

14. Adjournment: 4:35 p.m.