

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 16, 2014
3:15 pm
Unity Park Field House
56 1st Street
Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Dennis Grader, Chairperson, Linda Ackerman, Vice Chairperson (3:50 p.m.), Barbara Kuklweicz., Secretary, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation and Jennifer Peterson, Clerk/Bookkeeper.

Guest: Jared Allis

Meeting Being Taped

Agenda:

1. **Meeting Called to Order:** 3:21 p.m.
2. **Approval of May 23, 2014 Minutes:** Barbara Kuklweicz makes the motion of accepting minutes; seconded by Dennis Grader.
3. **Unity Park Improvement Project Update**

Jon informed the commissions that the new sand volleyball court will be open this coming Wednesday when the posts are installed. The only thing that we are now waiting for is the grass to grow on the ball fields. There are still a lot of weeds growing and that needs to be rectified. We are hoping to have that space available by the end of the summer. Barb questioned when the fencing will be removed around the ball fields? Jon stated that once the fields have been signed over to the town the fencing will be removed. This will occur when Bruce Hunter, Berkshire Design Group, and Jon all find the fields acceptable. There were no further questions.
4. **Introduction of our Summer Intern: Jared Allis**

Jared approached Jon a few months ago about the possibility of a summer internship with the department. Jon has a plan in place in which Jared will be working with the summer playground program primarily on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays in which he will work at all sites. He will also shadow the grounds keeper, and the summer playground director. Jared introduced himself to the commission and stated he was looking forward to the experience and helping out the department in any way that he could. The commission welcomed Jared to the department. Jon hopes to teach him to all aspects of the department and to expose him to as many areas as possible.
5. **Accessible Swing Project**

Members of the Friend 2 Friend Group, Heather Norwood, (mother of the child that is the inspiration of the accessible swing) and Jon are now moving in another direction relative to the type of swing called the "Sway Fun." It is manufactured by Landscape Architects, a company that we have worked with in the past. Jon had come across this swing at the very beginning of this project however the Liberty Swing was the direction the group moved toward at that time. The Liberty Swing is still not U.S. complaint and no one knows when it will be so. The Sway Fun swing has been manufactured for almost twenty years and it encourages everyone to enjoy it, which is the essence of "inclusion." This information was sent to Heather Norwood and she liked the idea and supports the Sway Fun. Another benefit with this swing is that it does not need to be surrounded by a fence; therefore no key will be needed to use it. It will be in the same spot the Liberty Swing was going to be placed. Wood chips could be used and the amount of pour-in-place would be less as well. The unit itself and installation should be less expensive. The group is working with the local sales representative so that we could have an idea of cost. Jon directed the commission to the picture of the Sway Fun and added that this particular swing does not require a ramp; the door flips down and is an accessible ramp. Barbara Kuklweicz asked how much was in the accessible swing account, and Jon stated there was approximately \$17,000. This unit cost just over \$13,000 and the shipping cost are \$1950. There is a four to five week shipping period. The company is working on the cost of

the surfacing and they will get back to us with the figure. The pour-in-place is approximately \$17 per square foot, and \$5 per square foot for the sub-base. Jon hopes they get back to us soon so that we can go to the community, the Board of Selectmen, and the big donators to update them on the plans. Linda questioned if grants would now be available to us because of our “Playful City” status. Jon feels it is a possibility and hopes installation could be completed by the end of the fall.

6. Skatepark Project Update

The PARC grant is due on Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. and Jon will be driving to Boston to hand deliver the grant tomorrow. He acknowledged that many people were involved in this grant and he feels confident about the application. We will find out if we were awarded the grant sometime in October or November.

7. Rutter’s Park Project Update

There was a Lake Pleasant Village Association meeting last Thursday. Jon did not hear about it until last Thursday morning and was unable to attend. Walter Ramsey was able to attend. They were trying to come up with ballpark figures in regard to playground improvements. Our initial goal is for this to be part of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The Lake Pleasant Village Association does have plans for other improvements that they would like separate from the playground plans. Walter would like to get this on the fast tract and get it to the state by December. The design and master plan process will not be as large as the Unity Park project, but Walter feels it would be a nice project for the next round of CDBG funding. A questionnaire and survey will be developed to find out what the people would like to have, as well as population statistics. We would like to get this questionnaire out to the village in the next four weeks. Other items they were interested in improving were the bell tower, the bridge of names, and old fire station leased from the water department to be used a public space.

8. 2015 Strategic Plan

Jon informed the commission the plan was in its final draft stage, and requested their input. Barbara wants it better stated as to what specific equipment Jon has already replaced at Rutter’s Park so that the community knows about the improvements. The swing seats that were put in last fall already need replacing and Jon is not sure why they did not last. New seats were purchased and he will reinstall them soon. Linda Ackerman wondered about the status of Montague Center and when it would be taken over? Jon was not aware of any change as of yet. She was wondering if we should have a plan in place for the playground structure for when the time comes to move it, we will be ready. Jon agreed we should put something together; it would probably require us to put an article in the next special town meeting. He also feels that we should have a landscape architect do a redesign of the structure. Montague Center would not be eligible for any kind of CDBG funding because the average household income of the village is too high. When Jon spoke with the sales representative two years ago, estimated costs to move the structure were around \$10,000. In doing all of this, he feels we would have to get a park design plan which would include accessibility and paved walkways. There are also some flooding issues in that area. Jon will look into Playful City grants with Montague Center in mind. In regard to our other parks - Highland Park we will be installing swings with the help of the Franklin Technical School football team. There were no further questions or comments on the plan.

Motion: Linda Ackerman makes a motion to accept the strategic plan with noted changes. Barbara seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0

9. Other Business

Jon would like to request time off; August 18 – 22 as vacation time.

Jon and Linda finalized days and times for the reading program that meets at Unity during the summer.

At some point in the future, Jon would like to discuss the possibility of splitting up some of our age groups for the summer program

11. Adjournment: 4:03 p.m.