

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 23, 2014

3:00pm

Unity Park Field House

56 1st Street

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Dennis Grader, Chairperson, Linda Ackerman, Vice Chairperson (3:13 p.m.), Barbara Kuklweicz, Secretary, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation, and Jennifer Peterson, Clerk/Bookkeeper.

Guest: Rich Becker, River Station; Barry Scott, Playground Skate Store, David Detmold (3:06 p.m.); Skate Park Committee Member

Meeting Being Taped

Agenda:

1. **Meeting Called to Order:** 3:03 p.m.
2. **Approval of June 16, 2014 Minutes:** Barbara Kuklweicz makes the motion of accepting minutes; seconded by Dennis Grader.
Vote: 2-0
3. **Temporary Skate Park**

Jon introduces Rick Becker and Barry Scott to the commission. Frank Abbondanzio and Jon had a conference call with Rich to discuss the general framework of the temporary Skate Park, and where the town of Montague and the Parks and Recreation all fall into place in regards to what the temporary Skate Park members envisioned. It is the same agreement that we had with Chick Ahearn a few years ago. When Chick sold the property to Tim Christopher the agreement rolled over. The same type of concept would once again be used where Jon would open the park when he arrives to work in the morning, Monday – Friday and the closing of the park would be the responsibility of Rich or the Skate Park Committee. The agreement would last approximately 2 years, depending on the development of the permanent Skate Park. Once the permanent Skate Park opens, this particular agreement with Rich/River Station will be null and void. Rich will have to put signs up on the property. Also, this temporary skate part will be insured under the town's blanket liability coverage. The park will not be supervised. David Detmold, member of the Skate Park Committee, added that the committee is in complete support of the temporary park. He went on to say they look forward to working with the kids currently skating around town, and to build team work and ownership amongst them all. There was further discussion on having these skaters take on pride and responsibility in keeping this temporary park clean and safe. Jon feels positive that this temporary skate park committee has more leadership than it had in the past, and if there were issues or concerns he could make a phone call and the concerns would be addressed. The temporary Skate Park committee talked about some of their ideas for a name for the park, and how they want to artistically decorate ramps and the asphalt too. Jon has some concerns over a small pot hole in the park, but once that and the signs were in place then the temporary Skate Park could be open. Jon asked the Skate Park committee members to let him know when all of this is completed so a date could be set to open the park.

Motion: Linda Ackerman makes a motion to proceed with the temporary Skate Park. Barbara Kuklweicz seconded the motion.
Vote: 3-0
4. **Unity Park Improvement Project Update**

Phase 2.0 and 2.2 is complete. The fields are open, and are currently being used by squirt soccer. The volleyball court has been open all summer. The two improvement projects left are the Skate Park and the Sway Fun glider. We need to stay on top of the weed growth on the ball fields but otherwise Jon is happy with the results. Next Monday night, before the Board of Selectmen, Jon and Lesley Cogswell will be making the official announcement of the Sway Fun glider as the product that will be purchased for Unity Park.

Once this has been announced we can purchase the glider. We would like to do this before the end of the year just in case prices go up in 2015. The glider will be stored here at the fieldhouse and hopefully installed in the spring. A concrete ramp will have to be installed because the doors on the glider are not flush to the surface. Linda questioned, now that the fields were ready, has anything been done/purchased for the Hispanic adult soccer players? Jon said the nets have not yet been purchased. It has not been decided on how to secure these goals. There was discussion about using a lock and chain, and the adults taking responsibility for securing the equipment. Jon will try to contact the ESL person at the school to help coordinate this project.

5. Water Spray Feature Re-surfacing

Jon told the commission that the painted surface around the water feature never really took hold, and some the asphalt around that area is wearing down as well. The paint needs to be stripped and the asphalt needs to be cut out in the areas where there is damage and then replaced with concrete. Jon recommends not repainting the surface. He continued by saying that it could be a capital improvement project. He received an estimate from one concrete contractor for \$2,500. This would be done in the spring and it would most likely be a special town meeting article. Linda spoke up wanting to know what the designer of this feature has to say about the failing materials and wondered if a letter from the commission to the designer should be written. It is now beyond warranty. The commission wanted to know who has the responsibility (designer or subcontractor) of making sure their product/work lasts. Jon feels as far as the asphalt goes, it didn't fail, its more about where there was asphalt, concrete should have been used. Jon recommends having someone from Berkshire Design Company and Franklin County Housing and Rehabilitation Authority come back and look at the problem areas. Tom Bergeron, from the DPW has already looked at the area. Jon will contact these two groups to let them know what is going on in the water spray area, and have them return to see the damage.

6. Fieldhouse Restroom Update

Yesterday a contractor came by to look at both restroom and are looking at a late fall early winter start. The ladies room will be a single stall, like the men's room. They will then become "family" restrooms and not labeled ladies or men's rooms. There will be baby changing areas in both. New tempered windows will also be installed.

7. Sway Fun/Accessible Swing Project Update

At the Board of Selectmen meeting this coming Monday, Jon and Lesley will be making an announcement that we will not be purchasing the Liberty Swing but the Sway Fun glider instead. The time line to install will be this coming spring.

8. Memorial Bench Update

This bench will be in memory of Dick Shepherd. Jon met with Betty McCabe-Shepherd, Dick's widow, this past spring and agreed on a spot for the bench out beyond the basketball court, next to the rain garden. Jon is a little concerned about putting the bench there because over the summer this area had been very active in terms of inappropriate behavior. Fred Cassidy has had to contact the police a number of times in regard to this area being an after hours hangout for some "unsavory" individuals. Jon is requesting some additional time to think about where the best spot is for this bench. Jon has spoken with Betty about his concerns, and she understands.

9. Rutter's Park Project Update

Over the summer the Franklin County Housing Authority put out an income survey to the residents of Lake Pleasant and the area is deemed eligible for funding. The next step in the process is to conduct a survey relative to park improvements. We hope to see that go out in the next few weeks. The application round for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) will be sometime in December or January.

10. Town Transition Plan

Betty Tegel stopped by the office, and she brought the town's Transition Plan that was voted on in 2001. She has already presented a letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding this past transition plan. She requested that the Town of Montague get back to work on the plans and promises that were made in 2001. Many of the items in regard to Unity Park have already been addressed, but there are other parks that have not been addressed yet. The Board of Selectman has put their stamp of approval on this Transition Plan. Dennis questioned if the laws had changed in recent years because he thought that if we had one park in ADA compliance then we would be

compliant. Jon thought that the state had made changes, but would look further into this point. Jon recommends going through a master plan process relative to Highland Park as well as Montague Center Park. Highland Park plan should include a new shed/bathroom facility. This type of process needs to be in place especially if we look at funding for these projects. Highland Park does qualify for Block Grant funding, but Montague Center Park will not qualify because of its resident income level. All parks, except for Unity Park, need to be brought up to code. The Conway School of Design or UMASS could be approached to do a master plan for the Montague Center School at a much reduced cost. Any park that's awarded a grant has to go out to public bid, so what Jon would like the commission/department to do is to reinvest itself in the plan with the intent of going through a master plan process for both Highland Park, and Montague Center Park. If we were to apply for grants, like KABOOM or Playful City, master plans need to be completed as part of the application process. As we create these plans, the issues noted in the Transition Plan will most likely be addresses.

Motion: Linda Ackerman makes the motion to begin the process of creating a master plan for Highland Park and Montague Center Park. Barbara Kuklweicz seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0

11. Spring Programs – Profit/Loss Statements

Jon mentioned our numbers were down for Tee Ball this spring, and not sure why. We usually have 50-60 participants, but this spring we only had 39 children. Our other programs all had strong numbers; Rookie ball had 20, Rookie softball 12, and the Senior Girl's softball had solid numbers as well. Jon informed the commission that the Senior Girl's softball team Profit/Loss statement may have an adjustment, as we are waiting on an invoice from the Greenfield Girls Softball league.

Motion: Barbara Kuklweicz makes the motion to accept the spring program profit/loss statement. Linda Ackerman seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0

12. 2014 Master Plan

The plan is in draft form at present. This plan is an inventory of department programs, resources, and services.

13. Fall Programs

The Franklin County House of Corrections produced the fall brochure and did a nice job. Numbers for our soccer programs are strong; Squirt Soccer has more kids than ever at 30-32, and our Junior Travel Team has two team competing this year. We do not have a Senior Travel team, our numbers have suffered partly due to the Great Falls Middle School including 6th graders to their program.

14. Other Business

- This past spring River Culture put out a bid for the cross walk out by our playground to be painted by a local artist, Anya Schultz. It is Jon's understand that in the next few weeks she will begin the work.

- The geese in the area continue to be a nuisance to the grounds and Jon is looking into a company called Geese Problem Solved. They use flashing red lights, this scares the geese into thinking a predator is near. They cost \$300 a piece.

15. Adjournment : 4:23 p.m.

