

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 16, 2015

3:00 p.m.

Unity Park Field House

56 1st Street

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Dennis Grader, Chairperson, Linda Ackerman, Vice Chairperson, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation

Missing: Barbara Kuklewicz, Secretary

Guests: David Detmold, and Bryan Dolan from Skate Park Committee

Meeting Being Taped

Agenda:

1. Meeting Called to Order 3:10 p.m.

2. Approval of June 17, 2015 Meeting Minutes: Linda Ackerman makes the motion of accepting minutes; Dennis Grader seconded the motion.

3. Skate Park Project Update

Jon wanted to begin with the three items of concern from the June meeting, as they were not completely resolved. First item is the ground breaking/grand opening ceremonies; an email was sent out that Groundline will begin mobilizing next Tuesday, September 22 with actual ground breaking beginning towards the end of the week. Jon questioned the Skate Park Committee if they had any plans in the way of an opening ceremony for this fall; and they decided that they would rather do this in the spring. He informed the committee that the Tony Hawk Foundation donated items such as t-shirts, sweatshirts, and two nice skateboards which can be used for prizes or additional fundraising items.

The BMX Bike Policy was the second item on the agenda. This summer Jon sent out a question through on-line park and recreation resources asking other skate parks if they have had similar issues with the bikes and how they addressed the issue. He received several and found that of the 21 responses, 12 had said they allowed the bikes in the skate park while 9 of the responses did not. The parks that did not allow the BMX bikes find it very difficult to enforce this policy. The most telling comment for Jon, came from Peter Whitley from the Tony Hawk Foundation, endorsing the use of the bikes. He feels strongly that both communities; bikers and skateboarders could and do exist together quite well if there was mutual respect. Linda Ackerman did want to note that these other parks did try to dissuade the use of pegs or use protection on the bikes. Bryan Dolan spoke for the Skate Park Committee on this subject and they are also split on the use of the bikes too, but foresee very heavy bike traffic if allowed. They do understand and appreciate how difficult enforcing a no BMX bike policy could potentially be. He went on to say that if the bikes were allowed then in welcoming and respecting them, we will stand a better chance that the policy around the use of pegs would be followed. Perhaps subsidizing the cost of the peg sleeves or getting local bike shops involved would be beneficial. Bryan believes the cost of one set is around \$6, but purchasing in bulk may bring the cost down. Pegs can be removed from the bike if a rider did not have peg covers. After much discussion it seemed that people were leaning toward allowing the bikes, but there would be rules to following regarding the pegs and sleeves but nothing was decided at this point.

Graffiti Concern tabled until the next Commission meeting.

4. Water Spray Unit Surfacing

The surface of the water feature itself, not the outlying asphalt, will be repainted as general scheduled maintenance that should be done every couple of years. The cutting out of the asphalt and replacing this area with concrete that had been discussed previously seems like it should be revisited next summer. The

asphalt is still in acceptable condition. The painting will be done in-house because none of the contractors want to apply acrylic paint onto concrete; it's not something that they do. The ground keeping crew can repaint this coming spring.

5. Norma's/Rutter's Park Project Update

Jon informed the commission that this project was funded for master planning through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and meetings will begin in the next few weeks.

6. Spring Programs P/L Statements

Tee Ball had a strong year and numbers were back up. Dennis questioned the large balance of the Tee Ball and was informed that the fundraising this spring was profitable. Linda asked about why the Rookie Ball program did not run and it was explained how the Newt Guilbault League expanded their age group which was in direct competition with our program. The EGGstravaganza experienced a loss this past spring. Jon followed up with the Elks as they have generally sponsored the program but did not this year. They said they will get back to us on this matter. Sirum Equipment was another past sponsor that was contacted. The American Red Cross Babysitting course was cancelled due to low registration.

7. Summer Programs - Initial Evaluation

At the October meeting Jon will have all the information from the program. He felt it went well, and participation was strong. However, the Pre-School playgroup was cancelled due to low registration. The 5-9 year old group was at 90-100% and the 9-12 year olds at Turners Falls High School was close to 100% - first time in years for that group. The 9-12 year old Sheffield site was slower, usually around 50% full. Jon may propose this winter that we look at these trends and no longer offer pre-school and move the 9-12 year old Sheffield group down here to Unity Park. The Gill-Montague School district started school later this year and so the usual week and a half or so gap between summer playground and the start of school was instead a 2 full weeks this summer. It's difficult for us to extend our program further into the summer because we employ so many college students that have to return back to school. In the past when we have had 8 week summer playground it's been because of low number of snow days so we were able to start our program early. But beyond this, it was a good summer. Snack Shack revenue was weak this summer, but Jon feels that although it is not profitable, it does allow us to staff the field house in the evenings keeping the restrooms open and available to the public.

8. Fall Programs

Dillion Chevrolet very generously sponsored our soccer program this fall.

9. Directors Report

There were no questions.

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Adjournment: 4:10 p.m.