

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

March 15, 2016

3:30 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, Barbara Kuklewicz, Secretary, Jennifer Peterson, Clerk/Bookkeeper

Guests: Ron Kelly, Cynthia Knowles, Anne Jemas, Carlos Nieto, Brian Dolan (3:35pm), Chip Dodge (4pm)

Meeting Being Taped

Agenda:

- 1. Meeting Called to Order: 3:32 p.m.**
- 2. Approval of February 25, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Linda Ackerman makes the motion of accepting the minutes; seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz.
- 3. Skate Park Project Update**

Jon and Carlos Nieto of Berkshire Design, met with Mountain View Landscaping to discuss the remaining work at the park. They will seed and loam the week of March 28. Jon foresees this project coming to an end by the beginning of April, with the exception of the tree planting. Suzanne LeManto, Director of River Culture made a proposal that included additional trees to be planted at the Skate Park. Once this work is complete, Jon anticipates being billed the remainder of the cost of construction and he can then forward this on to the state to receive our reimbursement for the grant. Currently we are slightly under budget on this project. Carlos has some ideas about the type of trees being donated, and what will work best in this location. Maple and Aspen's were mentioned as possible good choices. Anne Jemas asked that the Skate Park Committee see the locations that Carlos has designed, and to talk with him about other possibilities, such as a bleacher at the far end of the park. Brian Dolan did show the commission members pictures of the plaques and possible bench designs. These benches will be skate-able. Jon let the Skate Park Committee know that they can schedule a meeting with him and Carlos to further discuss their ideas and wishes.

Discussion turned to general usage of the park; and how to address the issues around BMX bikes, pegs, and scooters. Brian and Anne agreed that the issue of pegs should be kept simple; no pegs or plastic pegs in the bowl. There are damaged tiles around the coping of the bowl. As discussed at the February commission meeting, it is believed that this may be caused by the trucks of the scooters and skateboards and not entirely from the bikes. Ron Kelly, owner of Eagle Automotive, stated that he witnesses the skateboarders coming out of the bowl and the trucks of their board damaging the coping. He went on to say that if the bikers remove pegs completely this will leave the steel axles hitting the coping directly, which he feels could be very damaging to the coping. Carlos discussed the metal versus tile as a coping material. Tile coping would involve removing the individual tiles and replacing them. Metal coping would be more labor intensive; involving welding the metal to rebar. He went on to say it is not impossible to change to metal coping, just more involved. Carlos contacted Grindline about this issue and they said they have used a polyurethane paint material that can be used as a sealant every six months. Grindline does not recommend using this on undamaged areas of the coping, as it is slick. This sealer can be used on the grout between tiles, which will also preserve the areas. The group discussed purchasing extra tile now for future use. Carlos can get back to us with the cost of this tile. He also said that any concrete professional could do this work; it does not need to be done by a skate park company.

Jon invited Chief of Police, Chip Dodge to the meeting to get an idea of how his department felt things were going at the park. Chip felt things were going well; it is a very heavily used park that seems to attract even out of state individuals. There were some minor issues the officers noticed; one being there was smoking going on in the park, and wondered if there was enough signage. Also, making sure there are enough trash barrels so the area is not littered with trash. Another issue was the light in the parking lot that shines on the skate park, giving the perception that it is open when in fact the park closes at dusk. Jon informed the group that he is working with Tom, DPW Superintendent, to remedy this issue.

In summary, Jon said that we will continue to monitor the coping issue and do the maintenance every six months to a year on the damaged title. We can purchase more no smoking signs. He's hoping that all users; BMX bikes, scooters, and skateboarders can co-exist. The group will have to meet at another time to discuss the ribbon cutting ceremony; as the original date needs to be changed.

4. 2016 Summer Playground Fees

Jon was informed that Municipalities are exempt from paying state minimum wage. We may want to discuss this in the future as the Finance Committee has not yet weighted in on this issue and it would involve the bottom line of our operating budget. Not paying our workers state minimum wage may be a very sensitive issue, something we may want to take our time researching. Currently, a first year counselor is paid \$10 an hour; and returning counselors are given a 25¢ raise. There was discussion as to a \$2.50 or a \$5.00 raise in registration fees. The \$5 increase only covers 2/3 of the total increase in additional payroll expenses. This \$5 increase would bring the Discovery Unity & Sheffield program for residents from \$70 to \$75; nonresidents from \$85 to \$90 per week. The cost of the Sports & Adventure at TFHS would go from \$80 to \$85 for residents and \$95 to \$100 per week for nonresidents. There was further discussion around the \$5 increase to the registration fee; Linda Ackerman worries this increase would be a hardship for our lower income residents. Jon explained to the commission how our scholarship money is used as we follow the National Free School Lunch standards. If a family qualifies for free lunch at school than that child would qualify for a full scholarship and if they qualify for reduced lunch than they would pay half of our registration fee. We portion our scholarship money out, one family will not get the entire summer paid; instead we try to help as many families as possible. That usually means a child may get 3 or 4 weeks of the summer program paid.

Motion: Dennis Grader makes the motion to increase our summer playground fees \$5, and to look further into avoiding the minimum wage increase in the future, seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz.

Vote: 2-1, Linda Ackerman voted no for the increase

5. Lake Pleasant Park Project Update

There was a site visit last Thursday morning and a couple of landscape architect firms were at the visit. Approximately 15 agencies took out RFP's on this project. There were no questions on the park project update.

6. Director's Report

There were no questions.

7. Other Business

- Glider opening and dedication will take place on Saturday, May 14. Jon will be meeting with Lesley Cogswell, Marie Putalla, and Kathy Webber this week to discuss the proposal by Carriage House Designs for the dedication stone. This purchase will close out the account.

- The Skatepark opening will be moved back from the original date of May 21. There is a Native American ceremony taking place on that date so we felt it was important not to interfere with their ceremony.

- Jon will not be in the office tomorrow; he is attending an Active Shooter Seminar.

- March 21-23 is the state conference Jon will be attending.

8. Adjournment: 4:30 p.m.