

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, May 22 2017

3:30pm

Unity Park Fieldhouse

56 First Street

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Dennis Grader, Chairperson, Barbara Kuklewicz (4:17), Vice Chairperson, Albert Cummings, Secretary, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation, Jennifer Peterson, Clerk/Bookkeeper

Guests: Walter Ramsey, Town Planner

Meeting Being Taped

1. 3:30pm Meeting Called to Order

2. 3:31pm Approval of April 25, 2017: Albert Cummings makes the motion of approving minutes, seconded by Dennis Grader.

3. 3:32pm Montague's Open Space & Recreation Plan

Walter Ramsey, Town Planner, presented to the Commission the draft of the Montague's Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) which is updated every seven years. The town has been working with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments on this updated plan. The plan states OSRP goals are:

- Promote and protect our rivers and waterways for improved habitat and recreations opportunities.
- Provide access to high quality parks in each village.
- Develop a comprehensive trail network for walking and cycling that connects the villages to open space.
- Preserve farming as a way of life in Montague.
- Preserve our pristine drinking water resources, habitat corridors, and special places.
- Green our villages
- Get organized for Open Space and Recreation.

Very early on in this review a survey was conducted, 206 residents responded. Questions were related to which outdoor recreation areas families' use, to prioritizing the town's recreational/open spaces, to which specific parcels of land that should be protected from development. Walter continued going through the draft, with specific attention to those items that pertained to the department. Rutter's Park (Lake Pleasant), and Highland Park (Millers Falls) are among the parks looking to be rehabilitated. Also, maintaining Unity Park and the Skatepark are also among the goals of OSRP. Walter concluded with that in the next few weeks a letter of support from the Commission would be placed into the plan when he takes this to the Select board.

4. 4:00pm FY18 Strategic Plan Draft

Jon provided a draft of the Strategic Plan to the commission. Done annually, this addresses many of the goals of the Open Space & Recreation Plan. The Strategic Plan is more specific in how we will complete the goals. If the Commission had any issues that they would like to address, Jon urged them to inform him. This plan will be voted on at our June meeting. Jon advised the Commission if they had any ideas for the department to let him know so that it could be added to the draft. Those items on the FY17 Plan that were not completed will be moved to FY18.

- 5. 4:05pm** **FY18 Budget Update**
 Our FY18 budget was approved at Annual Town Meeting. The article for the playground walkways was approved and our request to have the Highland Park fence voted down was done so this summer Jon would like to host a Highland Park public hearing to discuss what that community would like to see happen at the facility. We are currently operating at a deficit in our Revolving account. Our Summer Playground transportation costs were higher than anticipated and we had to unexpectedly pay shipping cost for our cookie dough fundraiser when their shipping company went out of business. Jon is hoping that we will not have to go to the Finance Committee to make a request to bring us back to a zero balance.
- 6. 4:07pm** **Montague Center Park Improvement Project**
 Jon is trying to secure a site for a public hearing, but has been unsuccessful at this point. He's anticipating the meeting will happen in July.
- 7. 4:10pm** **Unity Skate Park Update**
 A Friend's meeting was held last Tuesday; the group discussed program/event ideas as well as long term dreams for the park. The most immediate discussion was the Night Skates/BBQ concept, with a possible date of Wednesday, June 21; as this is National Get Out and Skate day. Their hope is to have more Night Skates through the summer; July 29, which is the Boat Club's Christmas in July fireworks, and hopefully one at the end of the summer. The front bank of the park is still in need of work; Jon is planning to meet with the Franklin County Technical School for help with this issue. The group also talked about having some kind of shade system in the future as well as possible expanding the skatepark in the area near the Community Garden. They would like this area to be a flat surface to skate on, as there are very few areas to do that. There are times when the skaters use the parking lot to skate and we would like to avoid this as much as possible for safety reasons.
- 8. 4:12pm** **Winter Programs Profit/Loss Statement**
- **Youth Basketball** experienced a small profit this season (\$21.59). Our Kindergarten-2 grade had 17 participants. There was a co-ed 3 & 4 grade team, two girls 5 & 6 grade teams and one boys 5 & 6 grade team this season.
 - **Blue Fish** Profit/Loss statement will need to be amended; payroll for lifeguards came in lower than expected. The financial loss for Blue Fish was around \$1400. As a result of the high cost of the program, we are considering restructuring the season into two parts. The first part would be the Pioneer Valley Swim League season, which runs from October through the end of January, followed by an Independent Meet season that run February to March. Swimmers would register for one or both of these seasons.
 - **Sawmill Run** made a profit of \$1100 this year. Jon feels expenses will increase; we are experiencing a slow decrease in profit margin annually. This money goes into our Scholarship Program.
 - **Open Swim** suffered a considerable loss; we consider this more of a service than a program. The season started two weeks late as we were initially short lifeguard staff.
 - **American Red Cross Babysitting Course** made a profit of \$110.
- 9. 4:17pm** **Summer Programs**
 The Summer Fun Times was included in the Commission packet. The Summer Camp program will start July 3, and run through August 18. It will be a seven week program. Other programs this summer will be Tennis Lessons, Skateboarding Lessons, Tuesdays In the Park family activities, River Valley Ice Cream Run, and Adult Lap Swim.
- 10. 4:20pm** **2017 Playful City USA Designation**
 Jon informed the Commission know that we have been awarded 2017 Playful City USA designation city; our fourth year in a row. Jon believes there are 258 cities across the country with this designation. In-

cluded in the application were the Lake Pleasant Park improvement, as well as activities and events that were sponsored and implemented by Montague Catholic Social Ministries and Turners Falls River Culture. He went on to say that this is the entire community's award and not just our department. Many groups and organizations work hard to provide quality programs/events for the town.

11. 4:21pm Directors Report

There were no questions.

12. 4:21pm Other Business

We are partnering with Hillcrest Elementary School to have a Tough Lil Mudder Adventure Course next school year.

Adjournment: 4:22pm

Vote: 3-0

X _____

Albert Cummings, Secretary Date

or

Signature

Name & Title: _____
Print

Date: _____