

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 21, 2019

3:30 pm

Unity Park Fieldhouse

56 First Street

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Dennis Grader Chairperson, Albert Cummings, Secretary, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation, Jennifer Peterson, Clerk/Bookkeeper

Missing: Barbara Kuklewicz

Guests: Anabel Levine, Rachel LaBrie, Elyssa Serrilli, members of the Great Falls Apple Corps

Meeting Being Taped

1. 3:35pm Meeting Called to Order

2. 3:36pm Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 24, 2019

Motion: Albert Cummings makes a motion to accept the minutes as written; seconded by Dennis Grader.

Approved: 2-0

3. 3:37pm Great Falls Apple Corps

•Revision of Memorandum of Understanding with Great Falls Apple Corps regarding Unity Park Community Garden

It was noted that two items need to be corrected on the memorandum before the commission votes; the date, and the statement “as care takers of the garden”; Jon would like to change “we” to Great Falls Apple Corps. Also, Item 5 needs to remove the statement “research a large capacity water tank that Montague Parks & Rec will purchase” as this item has already been purchased. Jon will research the feasibility of installing a well at the garden area. There was discussion of the possibility of having a hand pump installed.

There was disagreement among the Great Falls Apple Corps members in regard to the running of the group. It was suggested that they work out these issues as we are not responsible for the structure, framework, or membership of the Great Falls Apple Corps but instead the space the garden occupies. Jon recommends moving forward on the memorandum to the Commission’s vote.

Motion: Made by Albert Cummings to not accept the memorandum until the Apple Corps can work on their differences. This can be revisited at another meeting.

No Vote

4. 4:14pm Rutter’s Park Improvement Project Update

The site briefing for contractors was held February 6, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. at the Montague Town Hall. A bid opening was held on February 20, and eight firms submitted bids with five firms at or below the financial threshold. Aqua Turf Irrigation LLC of Orange, CT came in with the lowest bid of \$203,781. Bruce Hunter, Steve Ellis, Brian McHugh, and Jon met with the owner of Aqua Turf last week. This past Monday the Board of Selectmen requested a vote to sign a notice of award to Aqua Turf for the stated amount. Aqua Turf will be signing the contract and begin obtaining sub-contractors for the project. Ground breaking is scheduled to begin in May, and they have 180 days to complete the project.

- 5. 4:16pm Montague Center Park Improvement Project Update**
 The Conway School of Design has given Jon a project schedule for the master plan. The project committee has a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 16 to meet with the students assigned to this project. The first public hearing will most likely occur late April with the final draft available mid June.
- 6. 4:20pm Sustainable Land Care Practices**
 Jon attended a seminar at Smith College in late January relative to sustainable land care practices and pollinator habitats. He and Town Planner, Walter Ramsey, were very interested in stepping up Montague’s efforts in developing pollinator habitats. We could do something as simple as less mowing in certain areas of the park. Jon is meeting with the DPW to discuss how we can develop pollinator habitats and still keep areas looking manicured. Possible habitats at Unity Park could be the small rain garden, behind the parking lot on First Street, or the area between the softball fence and First & Third Streets. These areas would be contained as we need to have the fields clear and playable. Jon would like our other parks, where possible, used as pollinator habitats as well. Environmentally and ecologically speaking this has become important issue, especially with the dying out of so many bee species.
Motion: Albert Cummings makes a motion for Jon to pursue sustainable land care practices, seconded by Dennis Grader.
Vote: Approved 2-0
- 7. 4:25pm 2019 Summer Camp – Establish Fees**
 Jon recommends the Summer Camp fees be increased \$5. Fees were not increased last summer, but with minimum wage increased to \$12 an hour, Jon feels it is necessary. The commission asked how our fees were in comparison to area towns, and Jon let then knows that Greenfield’s fees are much higher and Erving’s fees are generally similar to ours.
Motion: Albert Cummings makes a motion to accept Jon’s recommendation of increasing the fees \$5; seconded by Dennis Grader.
Approved 2-0
- 8. 4:26pm Hillcrest Before School Program**
 Michael Sullivan, Superintendent of Gill-Montague School District, and Sarah Burstein, Principal of Hillcrest Elementary School contacted Jon in regard to facilitating a before school morning program at Hillcrest; which would include pre-school, kindergarten, and first grade during the school year. They have a need for a before school program (7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.) to accommodate those families that need that early care. Jon has questions in regards to staffing, medical care, administration, and funding. A few examples of his concerns are how the Before School Program would expand our department’s work day, and organizing staff sick days. The group is still in the fact finding stage, and Jon is still not sure how this could work for our department as it stand today.
Motion: Dennis Grader makes a motion for Jon to pursue the idea of a Hillcrest Before School Program; seconded by Albert Cummings.
Approved: 2-0
- 9. 4:30pm Spring Projects Plan**
 Jon foresees a very busy spring . Rutter’s Park Phase I, as well as the Montague Center’s Master Plan process will all be beginning soon. A concrete pad will be installed at the Skate Park t which will accommodate individuals with mobility issues. We are currently involved in collecting quotes for this and hoping to finish the project this spring. Planting are planned to beautify this area. The Unity 2 infield will be replenished with red dirt; which is more expensive but a thicker, heavier dirt. This fall, Jon is considering skinning the infield and remove the grass so that it’s all one uniform playing surface. The Adult Softball league, the primary user of these fields prefers to play on that type of surface as it is safer.

Jon estimates this expense will be \$3500. Other items Jon is currently working on is security cameras, sustainable land care items, playground walk ways need work, complete fieldhouse mural, and transition plan items.

10. 4:35pm Parks & Recreation Director Business

- Summer Camp Director Search - We are currently searching for a new director.
- 2019 Spring Programs Brochure is out
- Massachusetts Recreation & Parks Annual Conference is March 25-27, and Jon will be attending.
- Potential Lighting Upgrades in Unity Park Fieldhouse- through Green Communities Grant.
- Develop a Bullying Policy as we had an issue this past winter on one of our basketball teams.

11. 4:59pm Adjournment

Motion: Made by Albert Cummings, seconded by Dennis Grader.

Approved: 2-0

X _____
Albert Cummings, Secretary Date

Or

Signature

Name & Title: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____