

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 26, 2019

3:30 pm

Unity Park Fieldhouse

56 First Street

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Dennis Grader Chairperson, Barbara Kuklewicz, Vice Chairperson, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation

Missing: Albert Cummings and Jennifer Peterson

Meeting Being Taped

1. 3:30pm Meeting Called to Order

2. 3:37pm Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 20, 2019

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes a motion to accept the minutes; seconded by Dennis Grader.

Approved: 2-0

3. 3:35pm Rutter's Park Improvement Project Update

There had been numerous weather delays at the start of this process that put this project about a month behind. Also, grading issues were addressed and now the equipment installation has begun. The planting should be finished today. Bruce Hunter has been at this project daily, and his help and knowledge has been invaluable. The grand opening will be next spring.

4. 3:50pm Montague Center Park Improvement Project Update

Master Plan concluded in late June and the students from the Conway School of Landscape Design submitted finalized plan; included in the plan was a history of Montague Center and the current state of this park, and some concept they designed. We do plan to hold a public unveiling in Montague Center in October. This information is on the town's website for public viewing. As we move forward towards a formal design, any type of improvement is not eligible for grant funding. When it comes to financing this project we will have to be very creative. The students recommend that the Blacksmith Shop be leveled and turned into a parking lot. Finding a new home for the bonfire area will be challenging as it seems some people see this pile as an opportunity to dump items; plastic items have been found in the pile. Unfortunately, this area is adjacent to the watershed area, and it is ecologically critical. Also, the water table is high in the outskirts of the park, creating an almost bowl-like effect in the area of the ball field. The Commission was very impressed with the master plan that the Conway School of Landscape Design presented.

5. 3:57pm Unity Park Enhancements – Landscaping, Fieldhouse Roof and Lighting Upgrades

Lighting Upgrades: The town received a green community's grant for LED lighting and the fieldhouse will receive about \$3500 in lighting upgrades.

Fieldhouse Roof: The fieldhouse roof will be on the warrant for Special Town meeting next week. Unfortunately the roof is only 10 years old but in desperate need of replacing. The manufacture of the roof tiles made a poor quality tile that failed and we are not able to get any kind of refund. We are asking \$100,000 for that project.

Landscaping: The problem areas at Unity Park are the grass area between the two ballfields, main parking lot, the hill at the skatepark, the grass area between First Street and the main parking lot, the area along First Street and the Community Garden, and the small area between the rain garden fence and the walk way barriers near the playground. Jon did speak with the tree warden about planting two trees in the area near the fieldhouse and the ballfields and they will be planting them soon. A tree in the traffic island in the main parking lot needs to be replaced. In the area that is right next to the

wooden guard rail at the entrance of the park, will be cleared and native grass planted.. Jon is considering some kind of fencing for the area along First Street and the Community Garden.

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes a motion to accept Jon's landscape recommendations; seconded by Dennis Grader

Approved: 2-0

6. 4:15pm Summer 2019 Programs – General Evaluation

Jon was happy with the summer programs. Enrollment in the summer camp was down, which we expected as a large group of active children aged out of the program. Our new camp director, Amber Richardson, had numerous ideas and our young counseling staff worked hard. We always have challenging campers that require more time than others but they finished the summer strong. We had Movies in The Park at Peskeomskut Park. In June, the first movie was E.T. and approximately 200-250 people attended. The attendance went down for the other two movies, Finding Dory and Cars 3, but there were still about 100 people. We partnered with River Culture and The Friends of Sheffield to provide this free community activity. River Culture organized bands to perform before the showing of the movies. The 3V3 Basketball Tournament returned this year in August. The Night Skates all went well; the September date was cancelled due to bad weather but otherwise good events.

7. 4:255pm Spring Programs – Profit/Loss Statements

Warrior Dash: The attendance was down, almost half of last year's event; it was disappointing and we are not sure if it will be held next year. Julie Nolet is the Hillcrest parent that helps organize this event and puts in a huge amount of time. She even put together raffles for the event. Logistically, this is a large project and very time consuming. The committee has not met to discuss the future of the dash.

Tee Ball: Numbers were down somewhat from previous years.

Eggstravaganza: Was held again, but is never a money maker for the department.

Nippers Softball: There was a small team this year, but not a program that makes money.

Rookie Baseball: There was a team this year after a few years' hiatus.

8. 4:30pm Bullying Policy

As a result of challenging behaviors in our youth basketball program last winter, Jon felt in necessary to put together a formal bullying policy. He contacted other parks and recreation departments for information. Barbara Kuklewicz suggested adding "pinching" to the policy.

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes a motion to accept the policy with the addition of "pinching." seconded by Dennis Grader.

Accepted: 2-0

9. 4:36pm Transfer Director's Vacation Time

Jon is requesting his 37.5 hours be carried over on his anniversary date of October 1.

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes a motion to carry over Jon's vacation hours; seconded by Dennis Grader.

Approved: 2-0

10. 4:40pm Parks & Recreation Director Business

●Fall 2019 Programs

Jon went through the programs planned for the fall.

●FY21 Budget – Capital Request Schedule

The schedule has been moved up to the end of October so that the capital improvement committee has more time to plan. Jon's proposal will be utilizing the town hall garage space so that we can use the fieldhouse for more programming space.

●**Unity Park & Highland Park Centennials**

In Jon’s search to confirm that Unity Park 100th birthday, he discovered that 2023 will be the centennial. He did learn that Highland Park will turn 100 in 2020. So he is in the process of planning something to recognize Highland Park’s centennial.

●**Establishing Facility Use Fees for Unity Park**

Jon is working on developing a nominal fee for park usage; possibly \$10 an event. This would help with picnic table maintenance. He is also thinking about a fee for the ballfields as well; and possible using the ballfields more for tournaments.

●**Soapbox Derby**

Two individuals have expressed interest in running the derby; and Steve Ellis, Jon and Suzanne Lomanto from River Culture will all take part in a planning committee.

9. 4:46pm Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting requirement

On October 13, Dennis Grader requested the fieldhouse be open for an event held by Our Lady of Czestochowa. Dennis has a key to the building and will be in attendance during the time the building will be open.

10. 4:48pm Adjournment

Motion: Made by Barbara Kuklewicz; seconded by Dennis Grader

Approved: 2-0

X _____
Albert Cummings, Secretary

Date

Or

Signature

Name & Title: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____