

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES**

Wednesday, September 15, 2021  
Montague Town Hall Annex  
One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376  
3:30pm

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

**Meeting is being recorded**

**1. 3:30pm Meeting Called to Order**

**2. 3:31pm Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 19**

**Motion:** Barbara Kuklewicz makes a motion to approve the minutes from May 19, 2021; seconded by Albert Cunnings.

**Approved:** 3-0

June 23, 2021 minutes will be available next meeting

**3. 3:32pm Fall Programs**

-Youth soccer program began this week. We have a squirt soccer (k-2), junior soccer (2&3 grades) and a senior travel (4-6 grades). All three teams are full.

-Sunday, September 19: the Montague Soap Box Derby will be held at Unity Park. There are 31 racers currently registered; 8 youth racers, 4 teenage racers and 19 adult racers.

-Saturday, September 25: Scarecrow Stuffing Party at Unity.

-Friday, October 15 Monster Movie in the Park at Peskeomskut Park showing Jurassic Park

-Saturday, October 23 we will be participating in the Great Fall Festival with the pumpkin decorating booth again.

-Sunday, October 31: Annual Rag Shag Parade

Also, the Annual Sawmill River Race on New Year's Day is currently being planned; time will tell if there needs to be adjustments to this due to COVID numbers this fall/winter.

**4. 3:35pm Summer Programs – Brief Assessment**

-Summer Camp: Jon was really happy about how the summer went; the numbers were solid. More detailed statistics will be available next meeting. Kelly Trinque, new Camp Director this summer, brought “fun” to the camp which set a great tone for that seemed to motivate the staff. Jon was very happy with this group of counselors. We experienced very few behavioral issues and Jon feels

that it was due to Kelly and the staff's positive influence.

-Movies in The Park: Three movies were shown at Peskeomskut Park.

-Night Skates; two were held on June 31 and August 30. The later was the boat club's Christmas in August.

Jon felt the skate park had a very positive vibe this summer. Nova Motorcycle held some interesting events as well as Santo Taco's food truck establishing a spot across the street from the skate park and the Brewery opened up this year. All of these contributed to the attractiveness of this area of the park. The town also received a grant that enabled benches, tables and landscaping in this area; all positive steps in growing this area and community.

**5. 3:40pm**

**Fall Special Town Meeting Article – Upgrade Sept. Phone System**

We are looking to update our phone system. Jon has contacted Suzor IT, the Town's computer/IT specialist but does not know the details of how much it will cost. We are not looking for anything elaborate but something beyond our current answering machine. This will be brought to Special Town Meeting floor on October 14.

**6. 3:45pm**

**FY23 Budget Discussion**

Jon discussed with Jennifer the initial proposal to increase her hours from 20 to 25 hours with the anticipation that our operating hours might increase but before making a formal request to the Finance Committee Jon would like to take this winter and next summer to further asses this proposal. He discussed the increase in administrative tasks that we had over the summer due to COVID and state's regulations regarding camper's health forms, immunizations and physical exams. He also anticipates this winter seeing similar regulations and he really feels strongly that examining this increase in hours is necessary but would like more time to evaluate the administrative needs of the department.

**Motion:** Albert Cummings makes the motion to withdraw the proposal to increase Jennifer's hours from 20-25; seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz.

**Approved:** 3-0

The only FY23 increase that we are going to request is the part time seasonal park's groundkeeper. This position would be our dedicated parks.

**7. 3:55pm**

**FY21 Current Operating Budget & Revolving Fund Balances**

Provided was a monthly update on our revolving fund balance. Jon did not have the current operating balance but there's an estimated \$1,000 in part time wages - this will help with our winter program wages. Jon attribute the unusual surplus on the well-coordinated staff scheduling done by our camp director. We currently have \$6,667 in revolving. The Gill-Montague School District said they would cover the cost of any child in the district that wanted to attend camp; at a cost of approximately \$5,000 which we are currently arranging payment with them. Jon is very happy about our revolving balance as we move forward into the fall season.

**8. 4:00pm Continue Discussion regarding the possibility of Parks & Recreation assuming jurisdiction of Peskeomskut Park**

There was no news to report of this other than over the summer there were concerns about the homeless people drinking and doing other things in the park; Unity Park is experiencing some of this as well. Concerns were discussed regarding who would be responsible for mowing and snow removal. The DPW would handle those duties. Also discussed was how would the department benefit from assuming the jurisdiction of Peskeomskut Park to which Jon responded with it expands our reach into the community. Although it's more responsibility administratively we already take reservations at our parks now.

The Commission agreed to keep this discussion on the table for future discussion.

**9. 4:10pm FY22 Strategic Plan**

On the docket for FY22 is nothing specific but these are on-going initiatives when it comes to programming:

- partnering with other agencies and bring in additional programs to the community
- research additional grants that enhance programs and services
- improve training for program volunteers
- continued development of special events

Facilities plans are:

- the bid for paint and reseal walkways to be this winter
- paint and reseal basketball court – also a part of the walk way plan
- install a well at the community garden
- continue to look into converting the fieldhouse garage into programming space as we are desperate for storage area
- implement and explore sustainability efforts for the fieldhouse
- complete beautification efforts around skate park, second street entrance enhancements with a walkway to the ball fields, and Unity Park sign at Second Street entrance this all coming under a grant Walter Ramsey, Town Planner, was able to obtain
- Rutter's Park has not had its official opening but Jon plans to discuss this with the Lake Pleasant committee
- Montague Center Park continued to work on an in-house plan for improvements
- Blacksmith Shop at Montague Center Park plans for demolition; mostly likely an in-house/DPW job. Permission has been obtained to demolish the shop
- Montague Center School play structure is currently being stored in the Blacksmith Shop so putting up the structure before the building is demolished should be planned. Jon will meet with this committee in the future to get an idea

what the community would like to do with the park.

**Motion:** Albert Cummings makes the motion to adopt the FY22 Strategic Plan; seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz.

**Approved:** 3-0

**10. 4:20pm Parks & Recreation Director's Report**

• **Montague Soapbox Races** being held Sunday, September 19 at Unity Park from 12noon to 3pm, currently 31 racers registered. We have partnered with Mik Muller, Seth Rutherford of 253 Pharmacy and Nova Motorcycles for this event. MCTV will have a live feed and tape the race.

• **Montague Center Project Update** would like to plan a meeting for next month/6 weeks.

• **Unity Park 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Entrance** plans already spoken about to be completed by October.

**11. 4:25pm Other Topics**

-Jon requested a day off next week to be determined later; granted.

-Prepare the paperwork for annual evaluation and discuss last year's evaluation.

**12. 4:26pm Adjournment**

**Motion:** Albert Cummings makes a motion to adjourn; seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz.

**Approved:** 3-0

X \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:**

Albert Cummings, Secretary Date Or

Signature Name & Title:

**Print:**

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