

Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes

Thursday, December 7, 2023

3:30 p.m.

Montague Town Hall Annex

One Avenue A

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Barbara Kuklewicz, Chairperson, Albert Cummings, Vice Chairperson, Jeff Singleton, Secretary, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation

Meeting is being recorded

1. 3:31 p.m. Meeting Called to Order

2. 3:31 p.m. Montague Center Park Update

The Parkland Acquisition & Rehabilitation for Communities (PARC) Grant was approved for funding of \$500,000. A portion of that (\$45,000) will be designated for design to begin that must be completed by June 1, 2024. The grant will cover \$309,400 for construction and that will have to begin by July 1, 2024, and finish by June 1, 2025. The remainder of the grant (\$145,600) will be covered by the town. Bids will go out soon so that construction can begin this June. The Commission needed to sign the project agreement today, which they did. As for the project's scope, we were initially looking to fund improvements to the playground area and parking lot, but the grant administrators wanted to his grant it includes a rain garden, pollinator garden and tree planting. Jon needs to contact the grants administrators to see if there is a limit to in-kind services we can provide. These services would include donations or funds collected by other means. The Governor's Office will make a public announcement about the grant's approval.

3. 3:45 p.m. TFHS Swimming Pool/Bluefish Swim Team Update

The school has just informed us that the pool will reopen December 15. The pool was shut down in August when the main drain needed to be redesigned. The long shutdown was due to the difficulty in finding a company to facilitate and design the drain. The Athol YMCA and Amherst Middle School were able to help our Bluefish team and allowed us to use their pools for team practices; for which we were incredibly grateful.

4. 3:47 p.m. Installation of Naloxone Cabinet at Unity Park

A member of the Franklin County & North Quabbin/Tapestry Health Opioid Task Force approached Jon, inquiring if a Naloxone cabinet could be installed at Unity Park. Naloxone is a medication approved by the FDA to reverse opioid overdose. The task force states that in our rural region there is a disproportionate amount of opioid use and having naloxone accessible within our community will help prevent deaths and provide quick access to lifesaving medication. According to the task force the cabinet will contain information on how to recognize an overdose, to call 911 immediately, and what to do if the medication is exposed to cold temperatures. The task force will provide support to the facility and the cabinet will be checked on a regular basis. Jon is considering placing the cabinet on the side of the fieldhouse facing the skate park/parking lot.

Motion: Albert Cummings makes a motion to place a Naloxone Cabinet at Unity Park provided by the Opioid Task Force of Franklin County & North Quabbin and or Tapestry Health. Seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz

Approved: 2-1

5. 3:56 p.m. Spring 2023 Programs Profit/Loss Statements

EGGstravaganza: A community egg hunt for children, held at Unity Park. Greenfield Savings Bank and the Montague Elks donate to help offset the cost of eggs. It was well attended.

Tee Ball: This season we experienced an unexpected loss, typically this program makes money for the department. The number of participants was lower than usual at 40 children.

Rookies Ball: This program had 15 children participating.

Unity Fest & Makers Market: This event was co-sponsored by Nova Motorcycles and Pioneer Valley Brewing Company. This was the second year the event occurred and is funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. It was a cold, rainy day at the event and unfortunately not well attended. There are no plans to bring the event back.

Adult Co-Ed Softball: This was the first year back for the league after COVID and there were 5 teams. The season went well, money was made for the department, and we are happy to have the league active again.

6. 4:05 p.m. Summer 2023 Programs & Facilities Mgmt.

Profit/Loss Statements & Summer Camp Participations Statistics:

Summer Soccer: This program is run by Montague resident, Frank Wiles and it was a weekly skills/game program at Highland Park in Millers Falls. Thirty-one children participated June through August.

Movies in the Park: We partner with River Culture and the Turners Falls High School Music Boosters for this free program at Peskeomskut Park. There were three movies that were shown this past summer. They were relatively well attended.

Summer Camp: Our camp ran for 7 weeks and had an 85% participation rate. The program consisted of a 5 & 6 year old group, 7 & 8 year old group and a 9-12 year old group. Kelly Trinque is our Summer Camp Director and does an excellent job. The Gill-Montague School District has been providing scholarships for its district students with COVID money; which ended this summer.

Facility Management: There was a discussion regarding the DPW and summer maintenance responsibilities. Jon put in almost 100 hours of field/facility maintenance throughout the summer and DPW helps when they can, as they are understaffed themselves.

Whale Water Feature: The water use will be re-evaluated as the water use was really high this summer.

7. 4:15 p.m. FY23 Departmental Financial Evaluation

The department performs an annual internal study to evaluate its current practices relative to its financial resources and how they are utilized. Jon feels we do well with what we are funded and what we take in with our programs.

8. 4:25 p.m. Current FY24 Operating Budget & Revolving Fund Balances

Current monthly balances were provided to the Commission.

9. 4:26 p.m. FY25 Departmental Budget Proposal & Capital Improvement Update

Budget narrative was discussed. Jon is proposing the standard increase in personnel costs that is reflected by step increases in full-time administrator and part-time/seasonal personnel.

Motion: Albert Cummings makes the motion to accept the FY25 Department Budget Proposal; seconded by Jeff Singleton.

Approved: 3-0

10. 4:30 p.m. Winter Programs

Youth Basketball; Three levels will run this winter; K-2 grade skills and drills program, 3 & 4th grade travel basketball team, and two 5 & 6 grade travel basketball teams. Approximately 40 children are participating.

Sawmill 10K Race: There are 20 pre-registrants at this point, which is better than last year. An estimated 115-120 runners will need to run for the event to break-even. Proceeds from the event help support our scholarship fund.

Open Swim: The pool will be available for family swim and adult lap swim Tuesdays & Fridays beginning January 5, 2024.

Babysitting Course: A small program for us but usually fills the 12-participant maximum. It is a two-evening program running February 5 & 6, 2024.

11. 4:35 p.m. Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting requirement

Jeff Singleton requested an update of the Montague Center Town Hall (Gym/Library) on the next meeting's agenda. He added that there have been leaks that affect the 2nd floor, which is the space that we are responsible for.

12. 4:37 p.m. Adjournment

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

Approved: 3-0

Approved: _____
Parks & Recreation Commission Secretary Signature

Date: _____

Printed Name _____