

Parks and Recreation
Meeting Minutes
July 19, 2021

Call to Order: 7:35pm

Members Present: Bob O'Shea, Keith Bilafer, Michelle Lauria, Mark Morin, Marisa Steele

Audience: Dan Daly, Bruce & Ellen Leicher, Kara Minar, Roger Cameron, Todd Currie, Abigail Besse

Minutes from June 21, 2021 meeting NOT approved as they were not completed by outgoing scribe Doug Thornton. Keith Bilafer will be scribing that meeting and will present minutes at next meeting for approval.

Public Communications

- Sub-committee Chair(s)
- Liaison Communication

Abigail Besse (School Committee) – nothing to report

Kara Minar (Select Board) – Working on disposition plans for the Bromfield House property

- General Public (07:30)

Bruce Leicher presented some alternate locations for possible pump track after looking at some plots with Mark Sevigny. Preferred lots were close to central town. #1 Area behind HES (separate from Nature Trail), #2 Area behind water treatment facility, #3 Along the stone wall, behind the Bromfield House, #4 Area behind the Hildreth house

Bob questions who has authority over these parcels if they are to be considered

Director of Community Education & Recreation (23:00): New self-funding position has been created to take the place of 2 retiring directors. Kevin Mitrano has been hired with a start date of August 2, 2021. Question arose on how would excess funds be distributed if receipts brought in by Community Education and/or Parks & Rec programs exceeded salaries of the director and assistant. Suggestion was made that a written agreement should be developed to direct the appropriate accounting of excess (if any) funds.

Yankee Land Swap (25:07)

Bob sent out 3 separate ideas to town committees:

#1 Bromfield House property converted to Bromfield Park (pump track, skate board park, pickle ball courts); #2 Trade parcels (plot 9, 10,11,12,13,15 = 7.16 ac) from Bare Hill Pond Forest with Old Mill Road plot (Stone Field = 6 ac). Plot 8 would NOT be included in swap. #3 not presented

No motion was made to make an official proposition for land swap

Program Updates

- Beach Operations (Michelle) (36:00)
 - o Beach Program Plans/Status: nothing new to report other than rainy weather and the new life guard chair. No update on when the season will close down for the season

- Fields (Keith) (37:10)

- o Field Use Admin Fees – Keith explained that admin fees of \$5/ head will be charged once/year to each group (HAA, adult leagues, etc) utilizing town fields based on head count. Money will go to fund the new DirCER and his asst position. School will also be funding this position from Bridges/Community Ed. This Admin fee is separate from Field fees that are now covered by Tax Payers. Equity in process was briefly discussed on how to collect funds from more casual groups (i.e. Sunday softball pickup)

- Keith reminded Bob that contract with Devens for fall field use needs to be signed as Upper Depot is now officially closed through the fall

- o Mowing/Weed whacking quotes (51:50) – Long discussion on DPW's poor management of mowing of sports fields, playground, school fields, Rt 2 trail, beach area, etc. P&R would like to outsource to a private entity all mowing, weed whacking so that P&R is responsible for all of its basic field maintenance. Kara Minar advised that a Google Spreadsheet be started to catalog all the occasions of missed deadlines/ non-mowed fields, etc so that the Board of Selectmen can have concrete data to present to DPW.

- Track, Commons, Other (Mark/all)

- o Pump track Status/Implementation (79:50)

The Pump track committee will continue their planning efforts while the search for alternate properties other than the Bare Hill Pond Forest are considered & evaluated. The applicants are reminded to return to P&R with information pertaining to fundraising, implementation, maintenance of track, land survey, assessing potential impact on endangered species, etc. Roger Cameron will report back on those issues.

- o Tennis / Pickleball Reservations (92:30): Bob stated that reservation system in place as requested by the school and seems to be working. No fees are being charged for court time currently.

- o Plan to use up Depot/Lancaster County Trail Grant (94:17) – P&R would like to close out remaining funds from grant (\$585- \$800?) to upgrade the poorly maintained trail. Mark Morin had preliminary discussions with Powell Gravel about materials Marisa will take over the task. Todd Currie stated that the snowmobile club might be able to assist with bridge repairs. Others mentioned this being a possible Eagle Scout project. Bruce Leicher mentioned that Chris Ryan (Transportation Advisory Committee) is looking into a new grant through MRPC to help upgrade/improve trail system as well with possible connections to Devens and Red Tail Golf Course

- o Apron crack status – no further progress on this. \$2000 is set aside for this project in P&R Budget this year. If the project will be >\$2k, then additional funding will need to be found. Mark will forward any quotes that he has obtained to date to Marisa. Options are limited due to many companies not able to drive onto track with their large equipment

Event Requests and New Business –

No event requests.

Dan Daly (OSC) (1:49:30). OSC in the past has been charged to look for a suitable property for additional playing fields. It is proposed that OSC also looks for additional land that may be suitable for possible pump track / skate board park. Michelle expressed concern that if the town/P&R can't maintain what properties they currently possess, how will they be able to handle the increased workload with more properties. No motion was made. Marisa asked about whether additional land at Charlie Waite could be utilized for another playing field, perhaps at current parking lot area.

Realignment of Liaison duties for P&R commissioners:

Chairman: Bob O'Shea

Fields: Keith Bilafer

Beach: Michelle Lauria

Track, Common, Other: Marisa

Treasurer: Mark Morin

Scribe: Keith/Marisa to rotate duties until assistant to DirCER to take over

Adjourn (2:21:30)

Tentative Next Meeting: Aug 2nd