

Recreation Commission Meeting

4/14/2021

Zoom Meeting

DATE: May 13, 2021

TIME: 2:37 PM

Commission Attendees:

- Officers: Anthony Ferrante (chair), Marsha Semuels (vice chair), Cortney Eldridge (secretary), David Kane (liaison to Community Preservation Committee (CPC))
- Members: Paul Cowing, Anne Helgen, Melissa Hart

Town Attendees: Jon Marshall (Assistant Town Administrator), Brandon Fitts (Assistant Recreation Director), Heidi Barberio

Guests: Tommasina (Tomi) Olson, Anita Mecklenburg

5:31pm call to order

Review and approve minutes from 3/24/2021

Approved unanimously: Cortney, Paul, David, Marsha, Anne, Anthony

Summer Concert Series: Tomi Olson

- Would like to start June 16th, 2021 and go through September 1st
- July starts at 6:45pm and goes till the sun goes down; usually cleared out by 8:30pm
- August, start at 6:30pm, done by 8pm
- Kiddie concerts did not happen last year; they need a rain location; not sure about Kiddie Concerts for 2021 (TBD)
- Kiddie Concert dates would be Fridays in July after 4th of July; 10:30am
- Brandon: Certificate of Liability insurance (\$1m) is required for any permitted user group
- Tomi: has never had insurance in the past
- Jon: will connect with Town Council
- Anthony: in light of Town's fiscal issues, we need to ensure this does not cost any money (e.g., DPW funds/no overtime, Police duty, etc.)
- Tomi: it should be taken into account/consideration that there is no charge to attendees
- Anthony requested Tomi connect with Chief McIsaac and DPW to confirm needs/there will not be costs
- Jon: if we are running this in partnership with Recreation Department, then Town can provide insurance; if this is a private group, we will likely need the group who permits the area to secure their own insurance
- Anne: how would it work if Payson Park Music Festival was paying musician (not Town)? (TBD)
- Tomi to submit the permit application; Brandon and Jon to investigate "Town-related" items (from above)

Joey's Park Signage: Brandon/Anita Mecklenburg

- Guest: Anita Mecklenburg (principal of Winn Brook)
- Would like to close Joey's park to the public from 9:30am-2:30pm for the remainder of the school year for COVID-19 concerns, public safety concerns; it is a common practice among other playgrounds in town on the school properties
- Anita: new principal this year; was surprised to have the public on the playground; Board of Health has asked the students to stay separated (even within grades) during recess, etc.

- For remainder of the school year (46 days), we'd like to have signage up about playground/structure closure
- We can keep the tot lot open (it's not used by the school)
- Anthony: technically Joey's park is not a school property
- At Butler, Wellington, Burbank – playgrounds are part of school and public are not allowed during school hours
- David, Cortney, Melissa, Marsha, Anne in support of Joey's closed during non-recess times of day; signage maybe can include alternative parks (PQ, Town Field, Grove, Underwood); tot lot can remain open
- Paul: hears safety concerns but there have been no incidents; tot lot is in the middle so this is/can be complicated/confusing
- Anne; Melissa: it's true we haven't had a lot of these restrictions in the past but this year has been different
- Brandon: confirming the ask is – 9:30pm to 2:30pm for the remainder of the school year, Joey's park
- Anita: confirmed; five recesses and five lunch/recesses in this window

Motion: Move approval to restrict Joey's Park to students only while school is in session (Mon, Tue, Thurs, Fri 9:30-2:30; Wed 9:30-1:40pm) for the remainder of the school year; tot lot can remain open during this time

Approval: Cortney, David, Melissa, Marsha, Anne

Against: Paul, Anthony

Master Plan Discussion: David

- What is it we need in/do not need to include in Master Plan?
- There is a limit to the amount of administrative funds that can be used from the CPA
- Jon: components that would be really valuable – Town-wide needs assessment; "boots on the ground" assessment – playground inspectors to do lifecycle analysis; soil analysis to help improve root system for grass and help make them better; potential acquisition of new spaces
- Conversation about schools/how the fields and outdoor spaces work with the recreation plan(s)
 - Jon: have worked with/spoken with Superintendent and Athletic Director – plan is to have more youth programming at the HS once it's complete; should be folded in to long term plan
- CPC would use Administrative Funds to pay for this
- Anne: will allow us to take a good/big look at what's needed/coming down the pike; useful life of equipment/fields so know what capital needs are (in short/longer term)
- Anthony: these have been done ad hoc recently (e.g., Town Field, PQ, Payson is coming up); how do we fit totally new uses on new areas; if somebody wants something completely new – what is the process we would follow?
- Anne, Paul: agrees process should be laid out, can be part of master plan
- Jon: In Natick, spent about \$75k roughly five years ago
- First steps: a list of assets (Step 1) and their condition (Step 1A)
- Second step: what process is for (new) things that are introduced by either the Town or the public
- This would be Town-wide (e.g., including school property, other open spaces (e.g., conservation))
- Brandon reflected on ability of new park installation in Dedham by being aware of process

- Melissa: that's how Town Field was done – somebody knew how it was supposed to get done, they knew about Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding; suggest some sort of form residents can access/offer suggestions to
- Anne suggests having public meeting (people can come and ask for things they want in the town)
- Jon and Brandon can go back to the drawing board and present some ideas at the next meeting on what would be good next steps; there should be some determination on what the engagement process with the public is and ability for public to provide input
- Timing: David will check with Elizabeth on timeline; next step is likely Recreation Department requesting administrative funding from CPA

Next meetings

- May 12th 5:30pm
- June 9th 5:30pm

Meeting adjourned 7:12pm.