

**Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes  
March 28, 2022**

Commission members in attendance: Paul Cowing (Vice Chair), Anthony Ferrante, David Kane, David Lind, Steve Colello, Cortney Eldridge (Chair). Theresa O'Connor and Melissa Hart joined after approval of the meeting minutes.

Recreation Department: Brandon Fitts, Eric Abruzzi

Other attendees:

Brian Bisceglia-Kane from Champion Soccer School.  
Olivia Messenger and John Charwick from Activitas.  
Elizabeth Dionne, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: April 12, 2022  
TIME: 9:26 AM

Meeting called to order at 5:33 pm.

Paul moved approval of the minutes from March 7, 2022. David Kane seconded.

- Approved: Steve Colello abstained

Brian Bisceglia-Kane presented a recap of last summer's Champion Soccer School and plans for this summer's program.

- Last year went well
- No positive COVID-19 cases in Belmont
- Trying to run same setup
- 10 weeks starting first full week of summer (June 27<sup>th</sup>)
- They need indoor space in order to run before and after camp programs. In the past they rented from the VFW. Could not get that space last year. If they can't get the VFW space, they won't be able to offer after care again. Request: conditional approval of field permit running from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm rather than 9:00 am – 3:00 pm if VFW not available so they can run before and after camp on the fields?
- Enrollment decreases 1/3 if they don't offer after camp.
- After-camp discussion with Commission. Champion would take down all but one tent at the end of normal camp hours. They use playground a bit. Most kids are picked up by 5:00 pm and they are often completely done by 5:30 pm. Can limit amount of field space occupied.
- Also put in for a permit at Butler Elementary School. Won't get final word until right before Memorial Day. Will connect with Brandon. Would reduce duration of approval if that moves forward.
- Move to approve: Cortney moved to approve use of field by Champion Soccer School for 10 weeks of camp starting June 27<sup>th</sup> and running through Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> from the hours of 8:00 am – 6:00 pm provided further discussion on hours with the Recreation Director.
- Second: David Kane
- Approved: Unanimously

Activitas: fields inventory and assessment report.

- John Charwick presented Activitas experience in recreational space

Olivia discussed the fields inventory and assessment:

- Initially Town provided list of 11 sites
- Generated comprehensive inventory of amenities at each site. Also looked at zoning and other regulations that could govern use
- Amenities were ranked on a scale from 3 (Best) – 1 scale. 1 means remove or replace.
- Next phase of the inventory project will include final report including cost opinions for items rated 1 and 2. That report will help phase renovation projects.
- Discussed Pequossette (PQ) Park in more detail as an example.

John Charwick discussed field usage data:

- Activitas will provide cost estimates for items ranked 1 and 2 – items ranked 2 will need improvement over next 10 years
- Belmont High School – Harris Field put in 2014. Life cycle 8-12 years.
- A field-wear analysis was performed. Activity ratings range from Level 1 (below 250 hours) through Level 6 (over 451 hours) which require renovation seasonally. Multipliers adjust for seriousness of use.
- PQ Park again used as an example.
- Based on hours of use at PQ Park is severely overused (around four times more hours than Level 6). Similar at rest of facilities.
- How to approach. Three options: reduce use, add maintenance, add capacity.
- Probably can't reduce use – would require reducing programming.
- May not be possible to compensate for current usage with increased maintenance.
- We have Harris Field. Is adding synthetic surface somewhere in town an option to take load off grass. Or is there a possibility to add fields?
- Will complete analysis for all facilities.
- Cost analysis complicated by current environment.

Discussion:

- Courtney asked about DPW involvement. Brandon – next step is to meet with DPW.
- Some of projects not eligible for CPC. Will Activitas include this information? John Charwick: Most renovations should fall under CPC.
- David Lind:
- Do we know yet how fields are cared for today? John Charwick is trying to talk to Frank Sartori. Maybe a couple more fertilizations/seedings. Usage may be too high for any level of maintenance.
- Is there a scenario where just need to take field offline for a year? John Charwick: Yes, but programs need to go somewhere else. Brandon: New turf field at BHS was delayed for a few weeks resulting in massive rescheduling. Needed to reach out to Belmont Hill School and Belmont Day School for fields.
- David Kane: When will finished report be ready? John Charwick: shooting to have presentation for the Town Meeting. Should be in good shape by then. Probably four weeks to complete work. The plan will not prioritize projects.

- David Lind:
- Usage – looking at today? Looking out two years? As the BHS project ends, will the usage be more spread out? Brandon: Right now, bartering with Belmont Hill School and Belmont Day School for space so high school completion will just gain back space for those activities.
- How do we use fields effectively? Are there ways to adjust layout? Some discussion that this is already done in some cases for soccer.
- Cortney
- What is happening with modulars where the police were? Can they be used for Recreation programming? Brandon: the modulars are being used as temp facilities for water department.
- David Lind: Think about how space at the skating rink might be used.
- Brandon: Opportunities to think outside the box. What to do with old municipal light building? Indoor recreational facility? Cortney: is there a plan to look at indoor spaces? Brandon: probably not necessary since we essentially just use schools. Indoor projects would not be CPA eligible.
- David Lind asked about the green space at the Payson Park reservoir. Paul Cowing: the reservoir is owned by Cambridge. There are setback requirements for reservoirs. Can walk path but can't use the top of reservoir.
- Elizabeth Dionne: Confirmed that CPA funds can't be used for recreational buildings. They could be used to purchase land. People want pocket parks. CPC could fund a study. Municipal light building – BPD uses driveway. Any use has to include unfettered use by BPD.

Cortney: all three of the Recreation projects were unanimously approved by Warrant Committee.

#### Budget update:

- Need to do some drastic remodeling of budget prior to Town Meeting. In the Recreation, there are three types of budgets: enterprise fund, revolving fund, general funds. Downside of enterprise fund is that in down years there is no Town support. Revolving fund helps account for unanticipated expenses. General fund is where most of based and where entire budget will be based for next year.
- We have been running a revolving fund since before Jon Marshall. One of the requirements is that revolving funds must be reauthorized every year by Town Meeting. One year it wasn't done. On advisement from Town Council dissolved revolving account and moved to special revenue account intended as a nine-month bridge to enterprise fund. That conversion didn't happen. The fund accumulated quite a bit of money but was supposed to be limited to \$10k of carryover.
- Under advisement, we are dissolving the revolving account effective immediately and turning back to the Town as free cash. For next FY will operate exclusively out of general fund with exception of fields maintenance revolving account. Once an Assistant Town Administrator/Finance Director is hired the plan is to establish an enterprise fund and put to vote at either Fall or Spring Town Meeting.

#### Park Signage:

- Youth sports want signage to remind adults that youth players are children. Youth soccer has been looking into sandwich boards. Goal is to encourage better behavior.
- Some discussion. Paul – where do we strategically place signs? Sandwich boards might be better.

Cortney:

- Three terms are expiring--Paul, Anne and Melissa. Paul and Melissa plan on continuing.
- Cortney is stepping down as Chair. Cortney moved to step down as Chair and to nominate Paul as Chair. David Kane seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Cortney nominated David Lind as Vice Chair. David Kane seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Paul moved to nominate Cortney as Secretary. Cortney seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Cortney asked Dave Kane if he wanted to continue as CPC liaison. David will continue but is willing to step down if there is interest. Melissa is willing to consider. Tabled till next meeting.

Directors Updates

- Introduce Eric Abruzzi.
- Award from MRPA.

Called meeting to close at 7:13 pm.