

Town of Lunenburg Park Commission

Karin Menard, Chair
Chris Sullivan, Vice Chair
Susanna Jewell, Secretary
Dave Passios, Member
Ana Lockwood, Member



978.582.4160
520 Chase Road
Lunenburg, MA 01462

 approved 12/20/21

PARKS COMMISSION

Wednesday June 30, 2021

Via Zoom

MINUTES

1. Open meeting K Menard opened the meeting at 6:30 pm. In attendance Dave Passios, Susanna Jewell, Chris Sullivan, Ana Lockwood, Karin Menard, DPW Director Rob Oliver and Town Manager Heather Lemieux.

2. Public and Board Comments K Menard asked that any Public comments be kept to around 3 minutes or less adding up to 30 minutes for the Public comment section. She had a board comment that the 5 members of the Commission are volunteers elected to the commission, they share one common goal which is to better things in the town for our residents. The commission shares the frustration, disappointment and disgust that many of our residents recently expressed and will work to ensure that these kind of things not happen again. Every member of the commission is reachable individually or collectively. Emails are available on the Town Website. I encourage you to work with us and make things better for our residents. R Oliver talked about being out at Marshall Park and saw the netting on the batting cage was damaged and some of the metal fence supports we also damaged. He contacted the fence company who did some of the previous repairs and they were able to repair the supports but someone else had repaired the netting so he thanked them for that. He acknowledge the many issues with the parks and summer programs. He saw concerns raised and the frustrations from Social Media and emails regarding the programs. Trying to put on a successful program. Some of the cancelling of classes are due to lack of interest and sign up. The Parks department program director is part time.

A Lockwood recognized the many items to be addressed at the meeting and made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2 ½ hrs reconvene in a couple weeks. S. Jewell seconded. D Passios wanted to put a time frame on the adjournment date, July 14th. 6:30pm via zoom.

Roll Call Vote:

Chris Sullivan - yes

Ana Lockwood - yes

Dave Passios - yes

Susanna Jewell - yes

Karin Menard - yes

Public comments. Lynn Major a part time employee at the town beach commented that they had an out pouring of swimming lessons. There has been a limit of students and would like to go back to allowing 12 students at a time. K Menard suggested she go through the Rec Director or R Oliver to work on opening spots for this year. Laura Brzozovski a resident in town has questions about programs and camps being cancelled and asked why camps weren't procured before opening registration, why wasn't a temporary replacement while

director was on maternity leave, why were so many programs scheduled during her leave and who was responsible for finding locations with running water and access to bathrooms, who was supposed to get the permits and are the programs permitted now. Mentioned the inconvenience to families who depended on the programs. R Oliver explained that they didn't hire a temp replacement because the rec director thought she could handle the programs herself. Vendors were hired for the programs and don't commit until the programs are filled which they weren't always. Locations weren't secured before open registration. Trying to make sure the current and upcoming programs are moving forward. K Menard the Board of Health will permit some of the future programs to move forward. Some camps in MA are exempt from licensing and there was miscommunication. Also there was an agreement between the recreation department and the schools for mutual use of the fields at the school for soccer and Marshall Park for their softball and baseball programs and because the soccer program was run by a for-profit organization they would have to \$50 an hour to rent that field. Best Soccer, the vendor, couldn't absorb the cost of that.

3. Minutes none

4. DPW Director/Recreation Director Updates R. Oliver has no updates

5. Marshall Park Master Planning-next steps to hire consultant R. Oliver gave overview, a search for a consultant is needed with experience to guide you through the master plan. It should probably go out to bid or have a vetting process. R Oliver will look into that and recommends bringing more than just one for consultation. D Passios suggested bringing in H Lemieux for basic information on consulting bids.

6. Recommendation of Lifeguards for summer 2021 season K Menard said we are looking to bring in 2 lifeguards for the season. Ian Laundry and Mason bowser met all the requirements. C Sullivan made the motion to hire them for the positions, D Passios seconded. Vote was unanimous.

7. Dog Policy discussion and potential vote. Currently no dogs are allowed in parks. The Town Attorney saw no problem with changing the laws to allow dogs in parks but must be leashed. D Passios is collecting info from the other towns on their dog laws. Will present findings in July.

9. Fall and future Programming discussion and website feedback K Menard mentioned R Oliver would like to scale back on programs to meet the needs of the town. Less offerings would ensure that the programs wouldn't be cancelled due to low enrollment. Commissions would like to assist the Rec Director in suggestions for programming. S Jewell thought that rolling programs into one would be beneficial. Work to getting programs on free events and getting them on the website. C Sullivan mentioned movie in the parks, concerts, and ice cream socials as fun programs. A Lockwood asked R Oliver if there were tasks that the commissioners could assist with to help with the rec programs. R Oliver will check in with the Rec Director. K Menard wants to get the details of why we're having issues trying to get space, especially at TC Passios, and get a response in a timely manner. She thought there was an agreement that the Rec Director had with the schools that didn't seem to be honored and that needs to be discussed in order to make recommendations that make sense. Mentioned that documents were missing from the Website. Questioned whether the Director will be out longer than the expected time.

8. Prioritization of Parks Projects including Marshall Park Track D Passios stated that 3 items were discussed to move on as priorities. One was a pocket park that morphed into just getting a couple of picnic tables and appropriate grading net to the town pound. Though the area got cleaned up and money became available for the tables, he believes it's not moved forward on. Second was the basketball courts which did get cleaned up and a short term goal to move on that and until it's rolled into the Master plan. And last is the track discussion He'd like to see it cleaned up exposing the existing cinder. A Lockwood would like a list of projects to be done marking them as working on, on hold, or done. She'll make a document of projects and asked R Oliver to add to. K Menard stressed that the Master Plan might be accepted in Capital Planning so is hesitant in putting

money in the track in case it needs to be relocated. D Passios would like to vote on doing a resurfacing of the track. Remarks that it would be short money and possible to get volunteers to work on it. A Lockwood suggested that we good to have vote but be careful how it's worded. R Oliver is not opposed to a list of projects, but availability of help from the DPW is always a concern. The cost is unknown depending on several factors and what would be the longevity of it before the Master Plan. D Passios would like it cleaned up so a group walk could be in the future, it could bring more people in.

C Sullivan made a motion to put forward a request to the DPW director for the consideration to finish the pocket park and resurface the existing track and a timeline when it could be done. Seconded by A Lockwood. Vote was unanimous.

D Passios talked with a Scout Troop leader regarding a troop project of improving the plank trail and working on an access point at Powell field. C Sullivan had concerns that the work could change when the Master Plan comes into play. D Passios disagreed and thought it not beneficial to not move forward even if it's not a long term return. Discussion on the work from the Scouts. Decision not a vote item.

10. Little League- Spring 2021 fees, portable bathroom and dumpster discussion and potential vote. K

Menard reported that last November the commission voted to increase fees but that information never made it to the little league program until March 2021. They opened this year's program registration with last year's fees. She asked the commission for input on how to handle this. Discussion of what has transpired, the website was not updated with new fees, the League will honor the new rates moving forward. C. Sullivan made motion to accept the Little League's payment in full, A Lockwood seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Little League provides the portable bathrooms at Fitzgerald, Marshall and McNally parks. They also have a dumpster at Marshal and a storage unit at Fitzgerald and McNally. The bathrooms were not kept clean. K Menard asked if the commission should supply and maintain the porta pottys. She inquired with the BOH to see if they had requirements that needed to be followed and found there are no requirements within a certain time limit. Discussion followed on who is responsible for supplying and if multiple vendors have multiple porta pottys. R Oliva mentioned other towns have their own porta pottys. D Passios wants to get quotes on 5 porta pottys, K Menard will do that. C Sullivan mentioned that the commission is responsible for the security of the pottys. The dumpster is being used for dump off by area residents, things like TVs, couches, etc. and it's believed that the Little League organization is maintaining the emptying. A Lockwood felt that a dumpster is not needed in any parks since there's a carry in carry out policy in place. D Passios believes an underlying issue is that the Little League has been allowed to do things at these facilities without the commission's knowledge. He feels that they should stop the activity and let the town take care of the properties and pay for that. The Little League, in an email sent to the Commission Chair read that they want consideration for the porta pottys and they have spent \$70,000 into the facilities in the last 8 years including drainage and dugouts at McNally, paid to finish fences, the 70 foot wall, and drainage at Marshall Park to improve erosion about \$30,000, resolving safety issues at Fitzgerald which was \$10,000. K Menard questioned whether this is a benefit for all the residents of town or just the Little League. A Lockwood suggested the benefits would be for all because the children of Little League are part of our community. K Menard wants a policy in place for this issue, why a dumpster is necessary and prices of porta pottys, and to address the fertilizer on ball fields. Discussion on the actions of the Little League on the fields in the parks without permission of the Commission. K Menard will contact Steve Chow from the Little League about the concerns.

K Menard alerted the commission that they are at the 2 1/2 hr mark in the meeting and she'd like to keep that time limit in place for the future. Next meeting is July 14th and the last Wednesday in July. Will add the Invasive plant item and Open Space updates

No Public comments/board comments

Next meeting is July 14th.

C Sullivan motioned to adjourn at 9:03, D Passios seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Chris Sullivan - yes

Ana Lockwood - yes

Dave Passios - yes

Susanna Jewell - yes

Karin Menard - yes

Respectfully submitted

Dawn Pavone