

RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
October 6, 2020
7:00pm
Zoom Meeting

Present: Christopher Hardy, Commissioner; Hema Santhanakrishnan, Commissioner; Steve Trimble, Commissioner; Joe Will, Commissioner; Melissa Rier, Recreation Director; Mary Lou Repucci, Recreation Office Manager
Absent: David Martin, Board of Selectman Liaison

Opening: Steve Trimble opened the meeting at 7:01pm and recited the Opening Script.

I. Regular Business

1. Review of Meeting Minutes from June and August 2020: Joe Will moved, and Hema Santhanakrishnan seconded, to accept with pending amendments. Roll call: Hardy, yes; Santhanakrishnan, yes; Trimble, yes; Will, yes. The motion was approved, 4-0.
2. Citizen Concerns: Melissa Rier received a telephone call today from a resident concerned about the intersection of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (“BFRT”) with the NARA Walking Trail. She and another family were nearly hit by a cyclist entering NARA at high speed; she feels the situation is an accident waiting to happen. She asked for separation of the two trails by fencing or other means. There was general discussion among the Commissioners regarding safety at intersections including the need for additional signage, motion sensors and liability for injury. Melissa suggested inviting Paul Malchodi, Acton’s representative for the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, to attend the next Recreation Commission meeting to review this issue. The Commissioners also discussed sending a memo written by Melissa to the Board of Selectman asking for a comprehensive safety review of all intersections involving the BFRT, but without prescribing a specific solution.
There was no public comment.
3. Reports:
 - a) Fields and Facilities: Rentals have been slow to start but are increasing. Cricket is very busy. Sports currently allowed were reviewed. Melissa is promoting pickleball at the Elm Street tennis courts with free instructional clinics. The tennis courts have been lined with tape to accommodate pickleball. Pickleball is now available for reservation at Elm Street. A \$500 donation was received to fund pickleball equipment. There was no public comment.

- b) Rail Trails: See I.2., Citizen's Concerns, above.
There was no public comment.
- c) Events: Concerts through the end of the calendar year have been cancelled. Melissa is planning a carved pumpkin display at NARA for Friday, October 23. Members of the public will drop off their carved pumpkins to be placed at intervals along the Walking Trail. The event will not involve a gathering. There was no public comment.
- d) Community Preservation Committee:

CPA Project Updates:

- *T.J. O'Grady Skate Park:* Cement has been poured and American Ramp will install new features by next week. Placement of benches and shade trees will give the finishing touch. Signage and landscaping will be added, after which surplus funds will be returned to the Community Preservation Committee. A grand opening is anticipated for next summer. Joe shared a photo of respectful graffiti carrying a positive message. Acton Police have painted over any inappropriate graffiti. There was no public comment.
- *NARA Picnic Pavilion Restroom:* The project requires an additional \$80,000 to commence. The architect has been paid \$10,000 from the CPA grant. There was no public comment.
- *NARA Sports Pavilion:* Toilets have been installed. The North Building is near completion with a ribbon cutting planned. The North Building provides an essential accessible restroom facility and will open to the public next spring. There was no public comment.
- *Jones Playground Renovation:* Joe shared footage of the new equipment while Melissa described its accessible features. Appreciation for the contribution made by SMILE Mass was installed in the rubber surfacing. The playground surfacing is a split between rubber surfacing and engineered wood fibers. The wood fibers must be 12 inches deep. Volunteers are helping to spread it, giving the project a community-build aspect. Jones will be finished soon with fencing and paving for the parking area and two entrances. Steve recommended posting CPA signage here and at the Skate Park. There was no public comment.
- *Gardner Playground Renovation:* A master plan feasibility study is under way. There was no public comment.

II. New/Special Business:

4. **COVID-19 Update:** Recreation is in the process of opening a remote learning center to support hybrid education. Inspections have been passed, a physician is on call, and staff is being hired and trained. The center combines supervised study with recreational activities and will be open 8:30am-3:30pm for grades 1-6, ages 6-12. There was no public comment.
5. **Budget and Capital Projects Discussion:** The FY21 budget and capital requests for next year are due next week. Recreation will request funding for the following capital projects: NARA Sports Pavilion South Building interior finishing; NARA Picnic Pavilion Restroom construction; Elm Street tennis/pickleball court renovation; and, NARA Boardwalk replacement. The Town Manager has also asked for a ten-year plan. Repairs to baseball fields were discussed. Melissa explained that the FY21 budget will include janitorial services for NARA facilities. She will be entering a zero amount for July 4th 2021, with approval from Finance Director, Stephen Barrett. There was no public comment.
6. Hema Santhanakrishnan and Chris Hardy were recognized for completing their first year of service with the Recreation Commission. Thank you, Hema and Chris! There was no public comment.
7. Recreation mourns the loss of long-time Recreation Commissioner and friend, Edward L. Holcomb, who passed on September 23, 2020. The Commissioners discussed donating a picnic table at the North Acton Community Garden in Ed's memory. There was no public comment.

III. Consent Items:

None. There was no public comment.

Adjournment: At 8:13pm Joe moved, and Hema seconded, to adjourn the meeting. Roll Call: Hardy, yes; Santhanakrishnan, yes; Trimble, yes; Will, yes. The motion was approved, 4-0.