



**Acton Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
January 5, 2010  
Room 126, Acton Town Hall**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Kim Bodnar called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**II. ATTENDEES**

Present were: Ms. Karen Jarsky, Chair, Ms. Kim Bodnar, Co-Chair, , Mr. Michael Gowing, Selectman, Ms. Elizabeth Payne, Recreation Commission candidate, Ms. Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director and Ms. Cheryl Getsick, Recreation Department Secretary. Mr. Frank Calore, Commissioner was absent.

**III. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion to approve December 1, 2009 minutes as amended, 2-0.

**IV. CITIZEN CONCERNS**

Ms. Fochtman reported concerns by citizens regarding the lack of hay bales at the base of the NARA Park amphitheater. In the past, Mr. Chalmers of the Concord Prison has donated hay bales but to date they had not been delivered.

**ACTION ITEM**

Ms. Fochtman will continue her attempts to contact Mr. Chalmers for delivery of hay bales to be placed in front of the amphitheater.

**V. FIELD DAMAGE TO NARA**

Ms. Fochtman spoke about additional damage to the NARA Park Fields by vehicle(s). Recently, seeding and aeration had been completed to repair damaged areas and throughout the entire field. During the summer months of 2009, Lincoln Tree and Landscape had laid sod and installed an irrigation system at the NARA Park amphitheater. The recent damage to all parts of the fields, irrigation system, and amphitheater was observed and reported to the Acton Police Department. A detective was able to identify the tread pattern of the imprints on the fields, determine the type of vehicle(s) registered locally which matched the tread pattern. A suspect has been identified. Ms. Fochtman has received concerns from the various leagues about the possibility the NARA fields will not be accessible for use during the spring of 2010. Ms. Jarsky questioned the effects that this damage to the amphitheater area will have on the upcoming concert series and possibly installing signage which informs citizens why there is a need to abstain from field usage within the roped off areas. Ms. Fochtman reported the areas which will be used and granted, via permits, such as the Lions Club, will be roped off.

**ACTION ITEM**

Ms. Fochtman intends to work with the authorities as it pertains to the NARA Park damages and will research signage informing users of the importance of remaining off the fields.

**VI. FEE RECOMMENDATION FOR 2010**

Ms. Fochtman spoke to the Mr. Steve Barrett, Town of Acton, Finance Director about the fee increase proposal. It has been suggested the need for additional information to be acquired and presented to the Board of Selectman during the upcoming meeting on Monday, January 11, 2010.

**ACTION ITEM**

Ms. Fochtman would like to secure the figures in preparation for early registrations.

**VII. RECREATION SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAM**

This program booklet is close to completion and will be prepared for printing. Many of the available programs begin within the April - May timeframe. The program booklet will be distributed during early March.

## **ACTION ITEM**

It is anticipated a draft copy of the program will be available for review by the Commissioners during the February 2010 Recreation Commission meeting.

## **VIII. NARA SUMMER CAMP CERTIFICATION**

Ms. Fochtman presented information regarding changing the NARA Summer Youth Program into NARA Summer Youth Camp. NARA would be certified as a camp by the local Board of Health. There is a need to obtain a health consultant who would serve this role for NARA Camp. Selectman Gowing asked if the Town of Acton's Nursing Department could fill this role. Ms. Fochtman agreed and spoke of certain roles which need to be redefined prior to moving forward but stressed moving in this direction will help bolster enrollment. Ms. Fochtman is looking for a camp accreditation for NARA as well. Ms. Jarsky asked about the accreditation standards which Ms. Fochtman will investigate further.

Ms. Bodnar inquired about the opportunity to raise rates for this upcoming year. Ms. Fochtman replied this is not an option this coming season. Selectman Gowing asked about the benefits and differences between listing as a "program" vs. a "camp". Ms. Fochtman noted there are Red Cross Swim Lessons which will be provided as well as obtaining more value for what registrants pay for as an accredited camp. There are possible scholarships and grants which Recreation may be eligible to apply for if certified as a camp instead of a program. Currently, lots of motivated staff are hoping to return for employment this summer.

## **IX. WINTER CARNIVAL 2010**

This year, Winter Carnival is scheduled for Saturday, February 6, 2010, 4:00 – 7:30 PM. Ms. Jarsky will provide coverage at the registration table located at the amphitheater. Ms. Payne will be the judge at the base of the hill determining which sled crosses the line first. Recreation will be serving hot food and drinks.

## **X. REPORTS**

- a. Elm Street Update: No updates
- b. Morrison Farm Update: There is a group named "Ol' Cow" who worked at Drumlin Farm and ran an education program as well as a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Ms. Fochtman is going to meet with them hear their proposal to create integrated farm and nature education and CSA programs at Morrison Farm. Ms. Fochtman will also contact the Kelleher Architectural firm and discuss presenting a public proposal / hearing to townspeople and to discuss various options and steps for the future development of Morrison Farm.
- c. CPC: Mr. Ron Schlegel has volunteered to continue as the liaison through June 2010.
- d. School Street: Ms. Fochtman will inquire as to the status of the lease which ended on December 31, 2009. The agreement being negotiated between the Town of Acton and the State of Massachusetts requires that the town earmark another local agriculture area such as Weatherbee Farm for a land swap. There are many state agencies which encompass the decision within this area.
- e. Playground Update: Ms. Fochtman must obtain a quote on the playground equipment because there is the need to create a formal request for the Town Manager to approve. There are additional expenses to be covered for playground safety issues and field damage as well as the picnic pavillion.
- f. Open Space and Recreation Plan: Nothing to report
- g. NARA Picnic Pavilion: The design selection committee: Mr. Dean Charter, Mr. Tom Tidman and Ms. Fochtman interviewed (4) four candidates and recommended Kang Associates. The Town Manager's office is negotiating a contract with the firm. The recommended firm has performed municipal work in the surrounding towns.

## **XI. NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION**

Ms. Jarsky is going to contact the Beacon newspaper to possibly submit an article about Recreation with a mention of the need for volunteers for the Recreation Commission.

Selectman Mr. Gowing informed attendees of the Cost Savings Committee and the initiative combining the Town of Acton Recreation Department and Community Education. Combining overlapping responsibilities such as mailing programs may reduce the amount of workload and overhead while providing better services to citizens.

## **XII. MS. JARSKY ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 8:50 PM**

MINUTES: MS. CHERYL GETSICK, SECRETARY