

Bridgewater Parks and Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2024

Members Present: Mark Thomas, Jim Small, Dan Buron, Gina Guasconi, Tom Arrighi

Other attendees: John Hart

Mark Thomas called the meeting to order at 7:16 pm.

Mark asked for a motion to accept the January meeting minutes. Gina made the motion and Dan seconded it. Motion to accept was approved.

Gina asked for a status on the past zoom meeting minutes that were never published last year. Mark stated that Allyson was going to compile the minutes from the videos in one document.

John Hart, Park Steward gave the following update:

- Stiles and Hart: Bids are out, and 23 companies pulled paperwork for the bids. The deadline is this Friday. Approximately 8-10 contractors participated in a walk-through last Thursday. John was not able to attend the walk-through as he was not given enough notice to attend. There are two parking lots being considered, one at the main entrance and the other behind Imperial Garden. At the lot behind Imperial Garden, there will also be a walkway. There are prints available if people want to review the plans. John will keep the Commission informed of progress.
- New State Farm Trail: John attended a meeting at Bridgewater State University (BSU). There were lots of attendees in person and via zoom. They are looking for additional funding. The builder who is building homes on Curve St has made a donation. CPC has provided \$40,000.00 to this project. Per Gina, the State has turned this property over to Bridgewater. John stated that it is a long trail that runs from Summer St to the Middleboro Town line. He stated that Kitty is the lead on the project and is doing an amazing job. John also stated that this will be really nice trail once it is complete.
- Wyman's: There is lots of mud there and John hopes to get some gravel and materials placed there to address the mud situation. He stated that Jim and

Paul (Highway Dept) have been helpful in the past in providing materials as needed.

- Miscellaneous: John is working on some small items for the other parks. He is having picnic tables made for Titticut. He will be trimming the trees and doing general clean-ups for all the parks. Gina mentioned that in the past she had seen a couch at Titticut. John stated he had not seen that but will check it out. John advised that he has a few key people that he works with in each park, and they are very good at keeping him informed of any issues/concerns. Overall, John has not really seen any trash or damage issues at the parks.

Old Business:

- Pickleball – We have submitted our formal recommendation to Jim and Jim submitted a letter to the Town Manager advising him of our acceptance of the Bridgewater Pickleball Association. Jim advised that we did submit a slight change in hours with the Pickleball Association having use of the courts from 7A-12 noon Monday through Friday. No afternoon sessions right now but this is open for discussion and review by the Commission. Lots of discussion over the hours and Gina stated that she did not want the Pickleball Association monopolizing the courts. Mark stated that the Town Manager has accepted the Association and the Commission working with Jim can adjust the hours as needed. There was also some discussion about a \$5 fee that Pickleball might charge for guests using the courts during their reserved timeslot. Mark advised that this was a new organization and that right now it is in a trial-and-error phase and that we can meet with Jeff to re-evaluate these types of issues as needed. Mark advised that Jeff will be our point of contact. He will ask Jeff to attend all future meetings. Jim will have Allyson send Jeff a note about the Association being accepted by the Town. Mark advised that Jeff is working on the by-laws. Mark also advised that the Pickleball Association Board of Directors is all Bridgewater residents. Currently, there are not any tournaments scheduled and if the Pickleball Association wants to schedule any they will need to apply for them through the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Scoreboards: Mark advised that Little League has been able to secure funds to purchase 3 scoreboards. They were approximately \$10,000 each. They are in the process of planning installation as the company we bought them from

wanted to charge \$13,000 for installation. We will be moving the Hayes Scoreboard over to Right Field. It will not block the access road.

- Dugouts – Jim and his team will be doing the slabs at Upper Stonedust. Jim hopes to have them poured by the end of the week, weather permitting. It was discussed that we should plan for new dugouts and fencing for Lower Stonedust in our Capital requests.
- Mark inquired about the National Fitness project. Jim explained that on further investigation we were told that we would need to fund most of the project ourselves. He stated that between the costs to build the area, annual maintenance etc. it didn't seem feasible. He also stated that it would pose a liability to the town as well.

New Business:

- Field Updates – Jim stated that he and his team had raked, cleaned and edged the fields. It did take a while due to all the rain we have had recently. Jim stated that he was also checking the fields for any safety issues too. Jim is working with SODCO as needed. Mark advised that the BLL will be discussing the field conditions at their next meeting. Mark also stated that BLL will come up with a plan for moving forward. Jim advised that he was looking at irrigation for some of the fields. Jim was given a rough estimate of about \$5000.00 for one field and was told it could be completed in about 4 hours. Jim will also check into whether there are any pump system maintenance needs. Jim also stated that he would like to keep the football practice off of 7A and 7B as the fields do get damaged by the football practices. Mark stated that he didn't want to address this situation right now as the football organization has been supportive of the BLL. Mark will move some practices to the Scotland field, but he also thinks that if we have some irrigation added to the fields, plus fertilizer and seed in the fall, that this might help keep the fields in better condition for next spring. Jim stated that 7A and 7B already have an irrigation system. Dan stated that he had noticed a lot of water in the Right Center field of Senior Field and flowing into the Football field. Jim stated that the field is low and that he would try to address it this year. Jim thinks that if he uses a bulldozer and does some grading that it should help address the issue. Tom thinks that it could also be associated with the fact that the field was built on a cinder track.

- Golf Course: Gina asked Mark if he could request a report from the Town Manager concerning the Golf Course. Gina would like to see a 5-year report. Gina also stated that some of the league prices had increased and was not sure why. It was discussed that it could be a result of added tee times/additional days for the leagues. Mark will also ask that the Management company attend 3 meetings each year to provide the Commission with updates.
- Playground: Jim advised that we received the new equipment (swings, whale etc.) and were expecting a part for one of the swings at Cottage Street. He also advised that a welding repair had been done to one of the structures at Marathon. Mark asked about woodchips at Cottage St. Jim advised that the woodchips had been added last fall, but he will check to see if maybe the chips need to be raked to better cover some areas. Tom inquired as to whether we had any funds remaining from the Oliari fund. Jim explained that there had been about \$10,000.00 a couple years ago but between buying playground equipment etc. that it had been depleted. There was discussion that going forward we should allocate budget funds each year for equipment maintenance and purchase etc.

Additional Items:

- Mark asked if there were opening dates for Pickleball. Jim stated that he was using April 1-October 31 as the official dates. Jim stated that the winter nets need to be removed and the regular nets put back up. Dan made a motion to establish the Pickleball season as April 1st through October 31. Tom seconded the motion. Gina opposed the motion.
- Mark stated that Field Usage fees had been shared with the Town Manager and the various associations. Mark stated that he had advised Glen Tufts as this was a new charge and knew it would be more than he had typically paid in past years. Glen told Mark he would pay as he had in the past. Mark advised that Allyson would be tracking usage and would let the groups know when additional fees were due. Mark stated that Allyson could send invoices as needed. Tom stated that it was important to post the fees so that everyone understood the new fees. He stated that the fees should be on the website. Mark stated that the new fees should contribute to revenue for the Parks and Recreation department which can be used to improve the fields. Mark stated that there were other structures (snack stand etc.) that also needed

improvements. Gina inquired as to whether or not there were different rates for non-profits and Mark stated that non-profits would have reduced rates. The commission will approve those rates when needed.

- Gina discussed her concern that the Town was not able to offer swimming lessons. In the past BSU pool had been used in the past. Gina stated that the BSU pool will be closed this summer for renovations. It was also discussed that other towns use lakes and ponds for swimming lessons.
- Gina asked that the minutes include names of attendees even if on zoom. Mark stated that he was trying to do a better job of providing Allyson with start and stop times as well as attendees.

Dan made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Tom seconded the motion. Motion was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24pm.

Submitted by:

Allyson Johnson

Office Coordinator