

Bridgewater Parks and Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes of November 11, 2023

Members Present: Mark Thomas, Mike Flaherty, Gina Guasconi, Jim Small, Tom Arrighi

Members not present: Dan Buron

Other attendees: Jim Small, Allyson Johnson, Mike Rocha, John Hart

Mark Thomas called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Mark introduced Allyson Johnson as the new Office Administrator for the Parks and Recreation organization.

Mark advised that there weren't any minutes from the last meeting to approve. He stated that he would work with Allyson to assist her in gathering information from past meetings.

UPDATES -

Scoreboards – Mark introduced Mike Rocha who has a history of fundraising for the Little League. Mike explained how it had been a tough year for the Little League as our scoreboards were not working and it was difficult for umpires/players and guests to keep track of the score. Mike stated that our scoreboards were very old and in disrepair and not worth fixing.

Mike stated that he had received an estimate from Scoreboard Enterprises in Mansfield for replacing the 3 scoreboards at Legion Field. The total cost estimate was \$52,000.00 and this would include removing the existing boards etc. but did not include the electrical work. Mike suggested that he could reach out to 3 local banks to ask about community funds to assist in offsetting the costs. He stated that we would most likely give the banks advertising etc. for about 5 years. This would equate to about \$17,000.00 from each bank. Mark shared pictures of the proposed scoreboards to each board member. Mark explained that the costs were high as we are not able to reuse the footings for the scoreboards. It was stated that we would need to check the engineered plans for the current scoreboards. The current scoreboards are about 20 years old. It

was stated that the steel for the current scoreboards had been donated as well as the cement donated by Graziano. Mike Flaherty commented that the Town Manager did not want the town to do things themselves. Mark commented that the funding is an issue, and he would work with the town to get the new scoreboards completed by Spring 2024.

Parklands

John Hart the Park Steward provided an update. He stated that the parks (passive recreation) were all doing great. He loves his role and was appreciative that the parks were now listed on the website. He would like to see his name and contact number listed too. Allyson stated she would look into having the website updated.

Stiles & Hart – Mark stated that Michael Dutton was in the bidding process for work at this site. John stated it will be beautiful once complete and he will be involved with the park once it is complete.

Iron Works – This will be nice once it is fully open

Wyman Meadows – Off Plymouth St (near wells) A new trail will be added adjacent to the Wyman Meadows. Expect a mid-December completion. No signage right now. Signage will be added after Stiles & Hart is done. Standard signage will be used.

Carvers Pond – The Highway Department has been cleaning leaves. The parking lot needs to be addressed.

Camp Titicut – It's in good shape

Gina asked about Leonard.

Gina asked about the park at the Mobil Station. Jim has met with the Engineer but doesn't expect us to take care of it.

It was decided that John Hart will be on the agenda bi-monthly.

OSL (Old Scotland Links) – Jim advised that the water station is in. Due to the rain throughout the summer, the rounds are probably down but Jim stated the grounds are in great shape.

New hires – Jim advised that in addition to Allyson in the office, a full-time grounds person (Tom Mason) had been hired. Jim stated that both were working out well.

Playground Inspection – Safety inspections were completed at Marathon and the Cottage Street playgrounds. The inspections cost \$4800.00 and were very thorough and we did have some immediate removals of some of the equipment. Marathon was closed for one day, but it was open the next day. Jim and Mark worked with the inspector to address the immediate needs. Jim will reach out to the manufacturers to get some equipment replaced. The primary issues were missing screws, loose screws and some spacing issues. Some slides will be replaced. Jim and Mark are developing action plans. Mark will send out copies of the reports to the Commission.

Mark advised that he checked the Girls Softball Playground. He used the criteria that was used for the other playgrounds and thought that the playground was okay. The funding for the Safety Inspections will come from the Playground Maintenance account. Jim will work with Michael Dutton to get the funding to replace the other materials as needed.

Gina stated that she was glad to know the information about the closing of the playground.

Running Program

Sam Baumgarner sent info to Mark. He had questions about why we couldn't support the Running Programs. Mark suggested that they charge \$75.00 annually. Mark had a similar conversation with Sam last year. Sam also wanted the Town of Bridgewater to insure them, and Mark told him that they had to get their own insurance.

Pickleball

Per Mark, they have done a good job organizing. Mark met with Jeff Gosciminski (President of Pickleball Club). Jeff will attend our meeting next month and give us an update.

OLD BUSINESS

Field Usage

Mark mailed out Usage Fees to Commission members. These were based on information he gathered from surrounding towns' fees. It is noted that Town Sports are excluded from these fees. These fees are more for the "for profit" organizations like AAU etc. Basketball will be \$50 per hour, General Field usage will be \$100 per hour, Baseball \$60 per hour (games and practice) with a \$50 additional flat fee for Lights. The money will be used to maintain and keep our fields looking good.

We do need to determine the fees for Summer/Sports Camps. These fees will be based on the number of participants. Jim stated that in the past \$2000.00 was paid for Youth League.

There was a question as to who paid \$150.00 for summer camp?

Jim explained that we line the fields the first time they are used each year. He stated that for "Big games" at the end of the year, he does paint the lines. He also stated that during the "Play Ball" camp, we repacked once per week.

Gina questioned whether we differentiate between Non-Profit and Profit groups when charging fees. Gina would like it to be identified as a different fee. The commission members agreed that a different fee should be charged for Non-Profit groups. We discussed using a TBD fee for now and that the affected group could meet with the Parks & Recreation Director to determine the fee. Mark stated that this was just a draft list of fees, and he will be updating the list.

It was further stated that all usage must go through Jim Small at the Parks & Recreation office. **A motion was made, seconded, and approved that the list of fees would be posted on the Information page and that the list would also include a statement concerning the Non-Profit fees.**

Jim advised that he met with Cedar Street (near BSU). They were reaching out to us to let us know that they had a facility we could rent. They will be put in a handicap ramp. Stephanie Holmgren is the contact person. Tom Hughes is the owner of the property.

Meeting with Jason Rawlings

Mark will be scheduling a meeting with Jason Rawlings.

Dugouts

Jim got some estimates for the dugouts. They will be the same blueprint as the dugouts we have had in the past. If the funds are not in the budget, Jim will discuss with Michael Duggan.

NEW BUSINESS

Gina advised that the Community Preservation group was in the process of preparing a 5-year plan. They will be using a facilitator to help with the plan. She stated that we should think about what we want to do. She suggested that the Parks & Recreation Commission should be proactive and do something similar.

CPC Funding - Gina asked if it could be used for the playgrounds. She thought that we may have used these funds in the past. She stated she was thinking of it from a safety perspective.

MISC

It was noted that there were no fees associated with the softball program. The number of children enrolling is way down. We want to focus on Quality vs Quantity. The Softball League does charge AAU/Club teams and they use those funds to help support their program. Mark stated that the road to the Girls Softball field needs more stardust. He stated that the Softball League can manage the field engineering but asked if we could help with the stardust.

Mike Flaherty stated that he did not like the virtual meetings and would like to see the Commission move to an in-person format. Gina stated that the Citizens Advisory Committee meets in person. It was suggested that the Commission members should speak to the Town Manager concerning the format of future meetings.

Next meeting will be December 4th at 7PM

Gina also inquired about a fee for Pickleball. Mark will speak with Jeff and stated we would have a fee in place by the spring 2024.

Motion was made, seconded, and approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 pm.

