

MEETING MINUTES
PARKS COMMISSIONERS (VIA ZOOM)
GREAT BARRINGTON, MA 01230
MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2021
5: 00 PM.

******ALL VOTES ARE ROLL CALL******

PRESENT: KAREN SMITH, CHAIR
STEPHEN BANNON – LEFT AT 5:45
THOMAS NORTON
ILANA SIEGAL
WILLIAM MEIER
SRIDEVI REDDY – LEFT AT 5:45
PAUL GIBBONS
CHARLIE BOUTEILLER – ABSENT

1. **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**
2. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Minutes of December 14, 2020

MOTION: Tom made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

SECOND: Stephen Bannon

<u>ROLL CALL VOTE:</u>	Stephen	yes
	Tom	yes
	Ilana	yes
	Bill	yes
	Karen	yes

MOTION CARRIED **5-0**

3. **PARKS USAGE REQUESTS:**

A. Continuation of Railroad Street Youth Project to flood the skate bowl at Memorial Field to use as an ice skating rink. Regina East and Robert Redpath were present to give an update. It was noted that they have been reaching out to the community and they have 75% of the shifts covered for volunteers. So far there are 20 people who have offered to volunteer. We are looking for 25. There will be a training session for the volunteers. The volunteers will be CORI checked. Signs and roping will be put up when the rink is closed. The lights will be shut off as well. There will be hay bales to show the entrance and exit. Ice hockey would not be allowed. (Karen asked Regina to supply the board with a spread sheet of the report). The ramps will be moved to the basketball court and we will mark where the ramps are presently located. There is a chain with two metal poles on the right side of the building. The chain would have to be unlocked so the machine can get back there. Sean said he would see if his staff can move the ramps. The liner has been ordered and once we get the liner down we will start filling up the rink an inch at a time to be sure it is properly frozen. Hay bales will be put up for safety and mats will be put at the entrance and exit for safety as well. The water dept. is letting them use the water spigot with the railroad street hose.

MOTION: Tom to allow Railroad Street Youth Project to continue and ask that they return to each meeting with updates. Operational issues need to be put in a document and forwarded to the committee. It was also noted that Railroad Street should keep Sean VanDeusen updated once a week.

SECOND: Stephen Bannon

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Stephen	yes
Ilana	yes
Tom	yes
Paul	yes
William	yes
Sridevi	yes
Karen	yes

MOTION CARRIED

7-0

4. **PARKS CARE AND MAINTENANCE:**

A. Updates from Sean VanDeusen, DPW Superintendent Sean said that at the last meeting there was discussion involving the availability of existing funds for capital so we can figure out the long term needs as well as budget for next year. Parks and Recreation has about \$100,000 to spend on equipment in all the parks and \$20,000 to spend on the two softball fields. The committee needs to decide what to ask for capital which would likely have to go to Memorial Field if we are not going to get money from the current people at Benchmark. Sean said a large upgrade is necessary for the infield at Memorial Field, and because of the value of the project engineering plans will have to be drawn up. So we should move forward now. Stephen said we should use some of the \$100,000 for the dugouts, backstop and clay and then that money will be spent or earmarked in this fiscal year. We can then ask for our usual \$35,000 to \$40,000 in capital for next year. Sean said he is going to check on the language from town meeting because we may only be able to use the \$100,000 for parks and not the baseball fields. Sean said the repairs at Grove Street Park would probably be in excess of \$50,000 to bring that park up to code. Tom said that he thought in discussing the Memorial Field upgrade that accessibility was part of it. Sean said that was part of the parking lot by Bench Mark.

Ilana said that Gaga Ball is located at South Street Park and there were kids playing there.

5. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Great Barrington Land Conservancy Lake Mansfield Alliance for permission to install and dedicate two memorial benches in the spring of 2021.
(Discussion/Vote) Christine Ward was present to explain the request. We have a number of people who would like to honor Ruth Meier with a bench at Lake Mansfield. We have collected to date, a little over \$1,700.00 for the bench. Christine said she would like permission to go forward with the project and to gain input about the type of bench or location. Karen noted that the town is trying to keep the benches in town consistent for ease of repair, etc. Karen suggested doing a walkthrough in the spring. Christine said they would like to do an installation and dedication in the spring of 2021. Sean said they have been putting

benches on concrete pads for ease of mowing. Christine noted they have the funding for one bench and another memorial bench is also being considered.

MOTION: Stephen Bannon to approve the benches at Lake Mansfield subject to a walkthrough and to work with Sean on the location and style.

SECOND: Ilana Siegal

<u>ROLL CALL VOTE:</u>	Stephen	yes
	Ilana	yes
	Tom	yes
	Paul	yes
	William	yes
	Sridevi	yes
	Karen	yes

MOTION CARRIED **7-0**

B. New Commission member discussion – James Bailly and Terrance Chamberland were present to explain their interest in becoming a member of Parks and Recreation. James noted he has a 15 year old son who is very active in sports. He doesn't think Housatonic is recognized. He has lived in the area for almost 51 years and works locally. We need to keep kids active. He would like representation from a younger individual. He is willing to work with everyone and he feels Housatonic has been shunned and pushed back for a long time.

Terrance Chamberland said he has been a resident of the town for 60 years and has been involved in youth sports in town for 25 years. He retired in July after 44 years on the Fire Dept. He saw there was an opening and applied.

Karen said it is not a choice that we make but a recommendation to the Town Manager.

MOTION: Bill Meier to recommend Terrance Chamberland to become the next member of Parks and Recreation.

SECOND: Paul Gibbons

<u>ROLL CALL VOTE:</u>	Paul	Yes
	William	Yes
	Tom	Yes
	Ilana	Yes
	Karen	Yes

MOTION CARRIED **5-0**

C. Intro of Tighe & Bond park assessment – Mr. Gordon Leedy of Tighe and Bond was present to review the Recreation Asset Management and Assessment of the Town parks. He noted he did two major maps of the town that cover the most heavily used parks – Alice Brubriski Memorial Playground, Olympian Meadows, Town Hall Park and Lake Mansfield. Most of the play equipment in the parks is dated with the exception of the Alice Brubriski Memorial Playground and Town Hall Park. The new river walk provides a good opportunity for walking throughout the town. Grove Street Park would probably get heavier use if there was more equipment. Olympian Meadows is in reasonably good shape but the lighting is an issue. The equipment there doesn't meet current standards for fall protection. The play equipment at Lake Mansfield is quite hazardous. Accessibility at the parks is also an issue. He made the suggestion to have the play equipment standardized and compatible at least by the same manufacturer so if replacements or repairs are needed it would be from the same company.

Signs are needed at the parks and it needs to be noted that they are town parks along with information on what facilities are in the parks. Karen requested that Gordon return with a priority and cost list. Bill said he would like to see a list of what parks get used the most and how much it would cost to limit the town's exposure. It was noted that community input is needed. Tom said he would like a dog park brought into this venue. Karen noted that there have been 3 proposals in the past for dog parks and the park and recreation commission is not in the neighborhood of creating dog parks. Tom said he would like an assessment of Old Maids. Old Maids is undeveloped per Mr. Leedy. He said his recommendation is to begin with the short comings of the current properties. Tom said there is a significant amount of property at East Mountain and Grove Street. Ilana said there are children seeking mountain biking trails. Paul said we need to focus on what we have now. Karen suggested that Ilana talk to Jarren Pearson in regard to the mountain biking idea.

6. **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. Berkshire South – returning in March 2021

C. Railroad Street Youth Project – just the ice rink update

D. Ball field update all 4 – Paul and Sean – Ball field updates – no updates now –

Sean said that concrete barriers have been put up to stop people from doing donuts in the outfield of the football field. The gate is now open. The barriers are blocking the driveways on each side of the field.

7. **CITIZENS SPEAK:**

Chair will recognize individuals at this time who wish to speak – Jim Bailly said that kids need a positive release. He was shocked that the basketball hoops had been removed from the Housatonic Park. Karen said that all the equipment had to be removed per the Governor's office, MIAA and Board of Health. It was noted that basketball is a contact sport. Railroad Street gave Mr. Bailly some information on youth programs. Jim also asked about the bathrooms at the little league field. Sean said the former DPW Superintendent came up with a number as to how much the bathrooms were going to cost and what we have is probably ½ of what is needed. He said he has been looking for bathrooms that would fit with the amount of money we have. Karen said there were bathrooms down there but they were not maintained or kept clean. There is sewer hookup down there. It will be part of the Tighe and Bond assessment. Jim said he would like to be on the agenda for next month to address the Housatonic Park. Karen asked him to discuss this with Mr. Norton and have him submit something in writing.

8. **COMMISSIONERS SPEAK:**

Tom said that the Housatonic Village Park is not listed on the website.

Ilana said she is unable to continue serving on the Lake Mansfield Task Force. The next meeting is January 20 @ 4:00 p.m. Karen said we would revisit this.

9. **NEXT PARKS MEETING**

Monday, February 8, 2021

10. **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION: Paul Gibbons to adjourn

SECOND: Bill Meier

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Paul-	Yes
Bill	Yes
Tom	Yes
Ilana	Yes
Karen	Yes

MOTION CARRIED **5-0**

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Carolyn Wichmann
Recording Secretary