

MEETING MINUTES
PARKS COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING (VIA ZOOM)
MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2022
6:00 PM.

PRESENT: Karen Smith
Paul Gibbons
Terrance Chamberland
Julie Anidjar
Ilana Siegal (left early)
Sridevi Reddy
Stephen Bannon

Not Present: William Meier
Thomas Norton

Also Present: Mark Pruhenski, Town Manager
Joseph Aberdale – DPW Superintendent

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

1. **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

A. ROLL CALL VOTE

MOTION: Terry Chamberland to open the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

SECOND: Paul Gibbons

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Paul Gibbons	Yes
Stephen Bannon	Yes
Julie Anidjar	Yes
Terrance Chamberland	Yes
Karen Smith	Yes
Sirdevi Reddy	Yes
Ilana Siegal	Yes
Thomas Norton	(Absent)
William Meier	(Absent)

MOTION PASSED **7-0**

2. **REORGANIZE**

MOTION: Terry Chamberland to nominate Karen Smith as Chair.

SECOND: Stephen Bannon

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Paul Gibbons	Yes
Stephen Bannon	Yes
Julie Anidjar	Yes
Terrance Chamberland	Yes
Karen Smith	Yes
Sirdevi Reddy	Yes
Ilana Siegal	Yes

MOTION PASSED: **7-0**

Karen Smith accepted the nomination.

MOTION: Terry Chamberland to nominate Paul Gibbons as Vice Chair.

SECOND: Stephen Bannon
ROLL CALL VOTE: Paul Gibbons Yes
Stephen Bannon Yes
Julie Anidjar Yes
Terrance Chamberland Yes
Karen Smith Yes
Sirdevi Reddy Yes
Ilana Siegal Yes
MOTION PASSED: 7-0

Paul accepted the nomination.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A. Minutes of September 13, 2022 (**DISCUSSION/ROLL CALL VOTE**)

MOTION: Terry Chamberland to approve as written.

SECOND: Paul Gibbons

ROLL CALL VOTE: Paul Gibbons Yes
Stephen Bannon Yes
Julie Anidjar Yes
Terrance Chamberland Yes
Karen Smith Yes
Sirdevi Reddy Yes
Ilana Siegal Yes

MOTION PASSED 7-0

4. **PARKS USAGE REQUEST:**

A. Request to use the Housatonic Community Center weekday mornings (except for Thursday, November 10th when the health dept. is there) for Open Play Pickle ball

(DISCUSSION/ ROLL CALL VOTE

Dorene Beller and Jill Cancellier were present to explain their request. They explained that they were playing at the high school but it is outside and they would like to play inside. It is proposed to have the Town sponsor the pickle ball open play. The town will oversee the taping of the courts. They would like the town to purchase cages to store the equipment and purchase the nets. People will bring their own rackets and balls. It was noted that it is mandatory that no one wear street shoes in the gym. It will be 2 mornings a week (Monday and Thursday) from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Paul noted that it won't be available the 7th or 8th because of elections. It is proposed to have this for Great Barrington residents only who would sign up through Signup Genius. Karen noted that the rolling nets are about \$325.00 each. It all should cost under \$1,000.

MOTION: Stephen Bannon to support the Pickle Ball at the Housatonic Community Center and expend up to \$1,000.00 for all that needs to be done.

SECOND: Ilana Siegal

ROLL CALL VOTE: Paul Gibbons Yes
Stephen Bannon Yes
Julie Anidjar Yes
Terrance Chamberland Yes
Karen Smith Yes
Ilana Siegal Yes
Sirdevi Reddy Yes

MOTION PASSED 7-0

Karen requested that Joe Aberdale order the nets. Berkshire South would like a net too. Karen said she would figure out how they would pay us.
Terry said he would check to see when the floor is redone at the center.

5. **PARKS CARE AND MAINTENANCE:**

A. **Memorial Field Update** – Karen said her understanding is that the RFP is going out by the first of the year to have it ready for spring. Joe said he met with Foresight today. They have questions and Joe said he would share those when he receives them. He said they are concerned about the height of the fence along Bridge Street for foul balls.

B. **Tighe and Bond – design of Grove Street Park and Dewey Park** – Karen noted we need to decide how much we want to spend on Grove Street Park and what we want to do with Dewey. We need to do a neighborhood meeting. We need to decide what age group we want the parks to service. The new equipment at Lake Mansfield will be put in by the end of October beginning of November. The neighbors were clear that they would prefer open space at Dewey. A donation of \$1,426.76 was received for equipment at Grove Street Park.

C. **Parking on Grove Street** – That is in. It fits 4 cars.

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **Housatonic Community Center Request for capital funding for building improvement** – Mark presented an Executive Summary of the Housatonic Community Center Weatherization Project. (A copy is attached to these minutes). Mark asked the committee to use unspent borrowing capacity to fund the majority of the Town match to insulate the roof and the front portion of the community center. That amounts to \$62,315.00 out of \$64,397. It will leave \$169,423.00 for other projects. From FY17 – \$7,867, FY20 - \$14,448 and FY22 \$40,000. All three years have been approved by bond counsel. The anticipated payback is 5.5 years. In total we are looking for a savings of \$11,323 a year based on the current electric rates. Mark noted it will only take a couple of days to do the insulation. We have a grant from MA DOER for \$84,980.

MOTION: Stephen Bannon to approve as outlined in the Executive Summary.

SECOND: Paul Gibbons

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Paul Gibbons	Yes
Stephen Bannon	Yes
Julie Anidjar	Yes
Terrance Chamberland	Yes
Karen Smith	Yes
Sirdevi Reddy	Yes

MOTION PASSED: **6-0**

B. **PR and Research on hiking and walking trails** – Karen said that someone needs to contact Christine Ward in regard to identifying the trails in town. Karen suggested Julie and Sirdevi do this and maybe get the school involved.

C. **Update on Olympian Meadows repurpose** – Karen said she received two calls in regard to repurposing the fields. She said she didn't think they need a minor league field. They need to present plans that are solid and come to the parks commission. The fields are a mess.

7. **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. Berkshire South - 2022 Summer Management Report – No one from Berkshire South was at the meeting. The report noted that the attendance at the Housatonic Park was very low. A decision will have to be made on staffing the park in the future.

B. Railroad Street Youth Project 2022 skate park Management Report – A report was presented by Sam Riva. (Attached to these minutes). It was noted that there were about 1300 through the park through the season. 71% were between the ages of 14 and 25. The average number of visits during staff hours was around 12. There were two staff on duty during peak hours. The hours of operation were 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Sunday. The challenges were parking and the water fountain was broken and later fixed but the pressure was low. Joe said he would contact the Fire District. Trash was also a problem. Karen said she would talk to Paul Storti regarding the parking situation. Railroad has been talking to local businesses in regard to staff parking. Maybe the Chamber of Commerce could be contacted in regard to parking.

C. Charging for use of town spaces Terry's Thoughts on Pay to use:

It is my belief that all for profit and nonprofits that are financially benefitting for the use of our parks should pay an amount for this use.

It is my belief that the Youth groups that are benefitting our youths should not be charged as we make them provide Liability Insurance that cost them usually between \$1000-1500.

As I look at the charts from 2016, all towns around Berkshire County are all over the chart as to charging amounts for usage. There is no mention that I see in any of the towns to have to provide an insurance policy for said use. I would be interested to find out what other towns do.

Paul G:

Are you sure about the cost of liability insurance? That seems awfully high for youth sports! Paul doesn't recall having to pay anything close to that. Berkshire Crafts Fair for 3 days was around \$600.00.

I would like to know who maintains the fields in surrounding towns. Perhaps we can call around.

Paul does think there should be a minimal charge of perhaps \$25 for the first 100 participants and maybe another charge of \$10 for every 100 after original 100 which would be a charge per aggregate not an individual charge.

He doesn't believe that Memorial Field should be a site for non-public meetings such as membership meetings held by the Co-op. There are other venues that would be available such as Monument Mountain auditorium, Mahaiwe Theater, Fairgrounds or VFW.

If we are to continue to allow their use of the field, then there should be a minimum fee of \$200-250 for its use and a proviso that any tent, etc. installed must be removed the following morning no matter the cost to them or simply use the field other than a weekend.

Any request to use any of our spaces by for-profit group should incur a fee of \$250 per day with an upward scale depending on the number of vendors. If it is for a party of some type, such as the Fairview Gala, there should be a minimum fee of \$250 and the space cannot be closed off entirely.

Paul believes our spaces are recreational and should not be thought of as space for meetings, large scale parties and the like.

Julie's response:

It seems we concluded that we wouldn't differentiate between the use group categories (for example youth groups vs. Mahaiwe) and would try to come up with a reasonable use charge if only as a gesture to respect the fact that the parks have value to the community and require maintenance.

Also keeping in mind that the use of open green spaces and building structures such as the Housy Dome might require separate approaches as the Housy Dome requires considerably more expense to maintain.

- D. Lake Mansfield Task Force – Bill Meier was not present.
- E. Michael Peretti/Tom Norton – planting trees at the Alice Bubriski Playground – Housatonic Village Commons – The trees have been ordered.
- F. Lake Mansfield Beach Area –Metal climber/new equipment - The metal climber will be taken out and the area leveled

8. **CITIZEN SPEAK** James Garzone from 84 North Plain Road – He said the hiking trail information is great. McAllister Park is great for a swimming hole.

Regina from RRSYP – she is thinking that parks could create a soccer field. Karen said we are thinking of creating a soccer field down at Olympian Meadows. The skate park – people in the community are frustrated that the skate park hasn't been upgraded. Karen said to return with a plan and to speak to Joe Aberdale.

9. **COMMISSIONER SPEAK**

Julie said the play structures at Giggle Park need to be replaced. Some are dangerous. We need to set up a capital plan for this per Karen.

Stephen said we need to increase what we have in the parks. We also need to fix what is at Giggle Park and put a couple of things in at Grove Street. Julie and Sridevi will walk Giggle Park with Joe Aberdale to see what needs to be done. Stephen also said maybe leaving Dewey Park as open space would be the best idea.

Terry noted that November when Berkshire Grown is at the Community Center. After discussion, it was decided that the committee doesn't need to monitor it this year because of the great job they did last year.

A suggestion was made by Paul Gibbons to name the ball field at Memorial Field once it is done after Charlie Plungis. He also said we need to make a list of what needs to be done at the parks and put a dollar figure on it.

10. **ADJOURNMENT** – ROLL CALL VOTE

Motion made by Stephen Bannon and seconded by Paul Gibbons to adjourn.

<u>ROLL CALL VOTE:</u>	Paul Gibbons	Yes
	Stephen Bannon	Yes
	Julie Anidjar	Yes
	Terrance Chamberland	Yes
	Karen Smith	Yes
	Terry Chamberland	Yes

MOTION PASSED **6-0**

11. **NEXT MEETING**
November 14, 2022 @ 5:15 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Carolyn Wichmann

Recording Clerk