

**PRESENT:** Karen Smith, Paul Gibbons, Ilana Siegal, Julie Andijar, Sridevi Reddy, William Meier, Tom Norton, Stephen Bannon, Terrance Chamberland was not present.

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**PARKS COMMISSIONERS (HYBRID AND VIA ZOOM)**  
**SELECTBOARD'S MEETING ROOM**  
**334 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA**  
**MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2023**  
**5:15 PM.**

1. **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A. Minutes of September 19, 2023 (Discussion/Roll Call Vote) – Not voted

3. **PARKS USAGE REQUEST:**

A. Karen noted that there is a plan of running an ice hockey tournament at Benedict Pond on February 14th. It was noted that DCR owns it and they want to be sure there is insurance. Stephen noted Parks has no jurisdiction over Benefit Pond since it isn't a town park. DCR should have insurance.

4. **PARKS CARE AND MAINTENANCE:**

A. Joe Aberdale – Olympian Meadows – Girls Softball field: Joe said the bid came in at \$102,000. The bid wasn't accepted. The Buildings and grounds department will be doing the work. The buildings and grounds department has already cut in the infield and spread the clay that we had. We have two loads of clay coming this week. We are going to hire Chip Paul to build the dugouts. We should be able to do the work that we want to do for a fraction of the cost. Included in the budget is to replace the mower. We are waiting for the power rake. It was noted that Little League has completed their cleanup. We will clean up after the season. Bill asked about the Soccer field. Joe said there has been no further input on the soccer field. Joe said there is money in the budget for a soccer field. The soccer field needs to be on the **November** agenda. The commissioners individually will go down and look at the field and do a list of what needs to be done then a plan will be done. Tom said he laid out the field in the original space and donated some corner flags. It would be good to get the corners marked and established. The field is the length of an official field. The only problem is the width. To be a soccer field, it would have to be 14 yards wider. Part of the river walk would have to be pushed as well. Joe said there could be conservation permits if the river walk is changed.

The equipment for the Grove Street Park has been ordered and should come in March. The parking will be put in before winter which will be blacktop. The specs include a handicapped accessible walkway. The walkway would go by the basketball court. \$100,000 is for the park equipment. We got a 20% discount. The walkway went to the right on the downhill side of the basketball court and then went along the tree line and stopped. A handicapped swing will be put in at Grove Street Park.

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon that we put in as much of an accessible walkway that we can.

**SECOND:** Ilana

**VOTE:** 8-0

Ms. Flynn said she is glad that the commission is abiding by the ADA to access the area.

Joe said they have been at Stanley Park trimming the trees and making it look better. There are 4 memorials there and we are going to try to establish them in one garden area. Joe said that National Grid

is in the process of installing a pole at the Housatonic Playground and Lake Mansfield. As soon as they are in we will hire an electrical contractor. Joe said he received the agreement from Berkshire Grown. Sridevi said she was told by friends that the floor at the community center was slippery last year. Karen said she noticed that when it is first coated it is slippery but as time goes on it becomes less slippery. It was noted that dust or water makes it very slippery.

Joe said they will be removing the ropes at the lake.

Stephen said we started the conversation of working on the skate park. Include it on the **November** agenda.

Julie asked about the missing swing at Dewey Park. Joe noted that they installed a new one and a handicapped swing at Grove Street Park.

## 5 **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. **Berkshire South Regional Community Center** – Mark DelSignore said an end of season report will be submitted by the end of the week to be discussed at the **November** meeting.

He noted that the attendance was taken hourly for the 5 hours a day they were open in Housatonic. He said the age groups were between 1 and 7 and 7 and 14. For the total duration of the days they were open, which is 36, 3 of which we had rain days that were moved into the Housy Dome, We had 271 total between the ages of 1 and 7 and 320 between the ages of 7 and 14. The total was 591 recorded. Last year's average was around 1.8 per hour of openness Next year we will have to do better marketing earlier. The lake was kept open the entire season and the attendance was strong. The Aquatics director maintained a high level of lifeguards.

B. **Railroad Street Youth** – Devon Wagner said that October 31, 2023 is the last day of staffing at the skate park. He will have the end of year report at the **November** meeting.

## 6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **Memorial Field** – Joe noted that the bids are back. We have \$500,000 from CPA. The main part of Memorial field came up at \$567,000. We have more than enough money to get started. We should add it to the **November** agenda to vote on the \$67,000. Karen said instead of ordering prefab dugouts Chip Paul will make them which will save some of the money. There is going to be an overage but we don't need it right now. Joe noted the bid has so many units of excavation, sod, and fencing. The units are always estimated a little bit high. There are some things that can be taken out to bring the cost down. Joe said he doesn't want to pick apart the contract as, the contractor who bid on all these, it opens up his right to renegotiate the items. Joe noted if we want to remove certain items, we need to stop the contract and push it on to next year. Our Contracts meet Mass DOT standards. Originally the warning track went 2/3 of the way around the field and now we are running a sidewalk down to the youth center. We completed the walking trail down to home plate. Ilana said she would like a brief summary of what the project looks like, what was originally asked for and where we are now to have an understanding what we are paying for. Joe said he would come up with a summary. Tom mentioned he thought that some of the stuff will be done in house, like the dugouts. The dugouts are not going to be done in house, per Joe. Taking down the dugouts and backstop and so on, we are working with the contractor to see what he carries for a value because there isn't a line item for taking them down. That was buried in the cost of the new ones.

B. **Lake Mansfield Weeds** – Bill Meier said the weeds at the lake are bad and we need to be more aggressive about getting the weeds out. There are mats out there and one person got caught in the mats. He suggested getting a weed harvester. Bill said he has spoken to people on the Conservation Commission but was told to obtain a recommendation from Parks as to what we would like the Conservation Commission to do. He said because of the weeds, the lake is slowly turning into a swamp. He noted he would like to present to the Conservation Commission an idea that we have one area designated as recreation and other areas designated as conservation areas and not be touched by a weed

harvester. Karen said that Doug Blume used to own a weed harvester. We would designate an area where we will let the weeds grow and the other area recreation. We do not want to use chemicals.

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon that Bill Meier approach the conservation commission representing the Parks and Recreation Commissioners in support of the idea of better weed control at Lake Mansfield and we would like to know the plan for controlling the weeds.

**SECOND:** Bill Meier

**VOTE:** 8-0

Bill will draft a letter to the Conservation Commission to be put on Parks letterhead.

7. **CITIZENS SPEAK:**

8. **COMMISSIONER SPEAK:**

There was a discussion on changing the meeting night from Monday to Tuesday because of holidays and select boards meetings on Mondays. Karen will send an updated schedule to be reviewed. Sridevi and Ilana stated that February and April are difficult because of school vacations.

Julie and Sridevi said they would bring up the Dewey School Playground in December or January

Karen thanked Joe Aberdale and the DPW for the large amount of work they have done at the Parks.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

***Carolyn Wichmann***

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Recording Clerk

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE NOVEMBER 13, 2023 AT 5:15 P.M.**