

Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: 7/11/2018

Recreation Center, 50 Audubon Dr., Acton MA, 7:00pm

Attendees: Edward Holcomb, Commissioner, Stephen Trimble, Commissioner, Joe Will, Commissioner, Barbara Willson, Commissioner, Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director, Mary Lou Repucci, Recreation Office Manager

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Stephen Trimble at 7:10 pm.
2. Citizen's Concerns, Gardner Playground:
 - a. A young mother contacted Cathy Fochtman, expressing concern about ant hills at Gardner and the potential for children being bitten. Cathy met with her to walk the grounds and to address additional concerns about the condition of the play structures. While there have not been any reports of bites, ant hills in timbers marking the play structure area will be treated. A possible fundraising effort to refurbish the playground was discussed.
 - b. A grandmother wrote to the Recreation Department about fall surfaces beneath the playground equipment. The surfaces are comprised of either pea stone or engineered wood fiber. She observed weeds in the surfaces and questioned whether the depth was sufficient. She also asked about inspections, which the Recreation Department does regularly conduct. A twelve-inch compacted depth is considered acceptable, measured by digging into the fall surface. The wood fiber on two climbing structures was replenished last fall; the pea stone also is in good condition. Cathy will reach back out to reassure this resident. The Commissioners discussed kiosks where inspections might be posted along with other types of signage.
 - c. Lisa Tomyl of the Manager's office relayed a request from a grandfather to erect a barrier across the Gardner entrance. His grandson had run from the playground out into the street. The Commissioners discussed a fixed fence with double gates permitting ingress and egress of mowing and other large equipment. Cathy explained that there is no existing budget to overhaul the playground and that a fundraising effort would be required to refurbish the equipment, replace the surfacing (pea stone does not meet accessibility standards), and to improve the turf. The next step will be to obtain a quote for this work from playground vendor O'Brien & Sons.
3. Consent Agenda: June 5, 2018 Minutes. June 5, 2018 Minutes accepted 4:0.
4. Action Item Review from April 10, 2018 Minutes:

Cathy will contact Tac Palmer for his input on how to address citizen concerns over unleashed dogs in NARA Park.
5. Zagster Bike Share:

Cathy shared a photo taken in West Acton in front of the Gardner Playground where a rental bike rack will be installed this October through a contract between the Planning Department and Zagster. The bike program will also be located at the South Acton train station and eventually in Maynard.

6. Bike Safety at NARA:

Cathy has been documenting public feedback about bicycles at NARA Park. She read aloud a recent email from a resident and the response by Board of Selectman liaison, Katie Green.

Two areas of concern are: 1) safety on the section where the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) overlaps the NARA walking trail; and 2) the presence of bicycles throughout the rest of the Park. The Commissioners discussed these issues in depth, concluding that a serious safety concern over bikes at NARA, often traveling at high speed, needs to be addressed.

It was recommended to begin with signage restricting the non-overlapping section of the walking trail to pedestrians by including "No Bikes" signage. At the merge points of BFRT overlap, white slash lines could be painted with a "SLOW DOWN" warning and "5 mph." The Friends of the BFRT should be consulted about signage to ensure consistency with the overall Trail. If signage doesn't help, physical changes to NARA will be needed.

7. Reports:

a) Rail Trails: (See 6., above.)

b) NARA Sports Pavilion: Nothing to report.

c) T.J. O'Grady Skate Park: Nothing to report.

d) Playgrounds: The Elm Street Playground needs a baby swing. (See also 2., above.)

e) Community Preservation Committee: Nothing to report.

f) Community Gardens:

Hebert Farm: Cathy reported a bee house project installed by a local Girl Scout. A path with bench will be added. Perennial flowers have been planted to attract pollinators.

Morrison Farm: Joe Will showed a photo of the shed donated by a local business that will house the new well pump assembly. The shed will also provide storage space for Land Steward tools. The shed is in the farm house parking lot now and will be moved soon to the paddock area of the Morrison Farm property.

8. New Business: Nothing to report.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Minutes submitted by Mary Lou Repucci.