



Town of Acton

Recreation Commission

Minutes

ROOM 126, ACTON TOWN HALL

DATE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2015

ATTENDEES	Present were Ms. Bridget McKeever-Matz, Recreation Commission Chair, Ms. Carol Gerolamo, Commissioner, Mr. Joe Will, Commissioner, Ms. Katie Green, Selectman, Ms. Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director, Ms. Melissa Rier, Recreation Coordinator and Ms. Mary Lou Repucci, Recreation Secretary. Also present were Mr. John Eppling and Mr. Dick Williamson, representing Charles River Radio Controllers. Absent was Ms. Nancy Gerhardt, Commissioner.
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Meeting called to order: 7:05pm.

TOPIC: CITIZEN CONCERNS

DISCUSSION	<p>Ms. Fochtman read to the group an anonymous handwritten letter from a citizen responding to the NARA Park Master Plan Survey. The letter expressed the following concerns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) NARA Pond closing during the summer season. The Pond is perceived as stagnant. The writer's grandchildren pay to use the Pond only to find it closed due to the water being unsafe. Suggested solution: A fountain to get the water moving. 2) NARA Park is becoming overcrowded, especially in the evening, with non-paying visitors. Suggested solution: More Park staff to clean up and to monitor the premises -- custodians, gardeners and supervisors. Make sure everyone pays to use NARA Beach. <p>Ms. Fochtman said that fountains require electricity and are not practical for use in water dedicated to swimming and boating. An aeration system is under study that would require electricity on the Beach area to power the pumps. (Priority was to provide electricity to the Picnic Pavilion, then to the Beach.) The proposed aeration system would involve Health Department funding. Ms. Rier said that while the Pond water does flow on its own, more flow would be better. Ms. Fochtman said that NARA Pond water flushes out four times a year whereas most Boston-area ponds turn over only once a year. The Beach was closed only three days this summer due to bacteria levels, much less than is typical for this type of water. Public misperceptions exist regarding natural ponds. Mr. Eppling suggested placing a poster in the Park illustrating the natural process of the Pond.</p> <p>Ms. Matz asked whether these issues came up on the NARA Master Plan Survey responses and Ms. Fochtman replied that they did. Recreation Department staff members are aware of these problems and concerns and are working on addressing them. More public education is needed. Ms. Rier added that most of the problems at NARA are not caused by groups renting the facilities. Two Park Rangers have been hired to oversee rentals and the picnic areas, a position that is developing. Ms. Gerolamo noted police presence during a recent visit to the Park. Ms. Matz visited the Park on a Sunday evening in August, often a busy time, and found it to be pleasant and well-controlled. Ms. Fochtman said that use of the Park has grown to the point where supervision is needed at all times, whether or not there are rentals, and that the rules in multiple languages need to be handed out. More staff is needed for trash removal. Ms. Gerolamo favored this pro-active approach to growth issues.</p>
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CONSENT AGENDA

DISCUSSION	August 6, 2015 minutes
ACTION ITEM	August 6, 2015 minutes accepted as amended, 3-0.

TOPIC: MODEL AIRPLANE USAGE AT SCHOOL STREET FIELD

DISCUSSION	<p>Mr. Jimi Two Feathers and Mr. John Eppling, of Charles River Radio Controllers ("the club"), met recently with Ms. Fochtman at the Recreation Department office requesting a permit and regular time slot to fly electric and glider model airplanes at the School Street Field. A review of community standards, federal rules and Academy of Model Aeronautics ("AMA") regulations was provided. The club has additional site-specific rules.</p> <p>Mr. Eppling and Mr. Dick Williamson, Town of Sudbury Recreation Commissioner, presented an illustration of how model airplane flying is organized at the Davis Field in Sudbury. They emphasized the importance of strict regulations and clear signage to prevent a nuisance or safety hazard to others on the field and to the surrounding neighborhood. Club supervision helps discourage and even prevent disruptive or dangerous activity by non-members. License plate numbers of non-members who violate rules are reported to police. The club discourages nitro planes with noisy gasoline engines. It does allow electric drones.</p> <p>The interface between model airplane flying and dog walking was discussed. According to Mr. Williamson these two activities coordinate well. Conflict arises when model airplanes fly on a field where sports are in play; these activities are best kept separate. Scheduling of model airplane flying at the School Street Field was discussed along with posting of rules and regulations and what type of signage would be allowed. Insurance requirements were clarified. Mr. Will asked whether Minuteman Airfield fell within five miles of the School Street Field. Mr. Eppling said he would find out.</p> <p>Ms. Fochtman reported a complaint from a neighbor near the School Street Field about model airplane</p>
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	<p>flying. Mr. Eppling stressed that model airplanes would not be allowed to fly over neighborhood homes. Mr. Eppling will check with the AMA and the club to see if money is available to pay for signage. The lack of dog waste disposal bags at the School Street Field was also discussed. Mr. Eppling said that club members would assist with cleanup of the Field. The next step is for the Charles River Radio Controllers to provide a draft of proposed rules for the Recreation Commission to review.</p>
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TOPIC: NARA MASTER PLAN AND SURVEY

DISCUSSION	<p>Ms. Fochtman noted a continuing strong response to the NARA Master Plan Survey with over 400 replies received to date. A summary of the responses will be available by the end of September with data organized by category. The completed NARA Master Plan will be given to the Community Preservation Committee.</p>
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REPORTS:

DISCUSSION	<p>a. NARA Comfort Station – A contract was signed with the Office of Michael Rosenfeld for a conceptual plan to join two donated modular units to be relocated to NARA Park from Rex Lane. Feasibility and cost estimates will be presented at the Town Department Head budget meeting in October, and potentially to the Community Preservation Committee.</p> <p>b. Morrison Farm – Ms. Green reported a Request for Proposals to be put out by the Board of Selectman for use of the Morrison Farm house. Capital work needs to be done before the house can be occupied. Mr. Will said that one proposal is for Idylwilde workers to live there.</p> <p>c. T.J. O’Grady – Ms. Fochtman reported bid documents under review by Town counsel. Cleanup of graffiti was completed by Rampage of Bridgewater, CT. A quote is being obtained to repair deteriorating concrete. Ms. Fochtman spoke with Mr. Kevin Lehner, Boxborough Recreation Commissioner, regarding funding in the amount of \$40,000 from the Town of Boxborough Community Preservation Committee.</p> <p>d. Playgrounds – Ms. Rier is working on various projects related to the playgrounds.</p> <p>e. Community Preservation Committee (“CPC”) – Mr. Will reported a public hearing to be held on September 10, 2015 on the Community Preservation Act 2016 Plan. The Recreation section is being reorganized. Mr. Will stated a concern about membership overlap between the CPC and the CPC Study Committee. Ms Green explained that there is no conflict of interest.</p> <p>Ms. Matz volunteered to serve on the CPC Study Committee and the Commissioners voted 3:0 to accept her as their liaison.</p>
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NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION:

Ms. Rier was approached by a private cricket club requesting use of the School Street Field for league play. Many club members are Acton residents. The Field would need to be altered to add a pitch with artificial turf over a concrete pad. The pitch would not interfere with other sports already in place. Jones Field was offered as an alternative but was rejected as too wet and not the right shape.

MEETING ADJOURNED TIME:	Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.
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**Supporting and referenced documentation relating to these minutes are available on the Docushare site; <https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-1985>*