

May 5, 2009

Cathy, Karen, Kim & Cheryl

Citizens Concerns

T.J. O'Grady Skate Park – Parking issues remain a concern. Officer Bob Cowan requested three signs to be created and installed at the park. The signs are currently being created. The police department will begin to tow illegally parked cars. Recreation received a call regarding a damaged picnic table at the Gardner Playground. Ms. Maya Spies sent a thank you to Ms. Fochtman for commenting on her draft letter to the Board of Selectmen proposing the formation of a “Friends of Dogs” Advisory Committee.

NARA Staffing

Recreation has placed an advertisement for waterfront director and onsite director. There are currently two candidates. An offer to a new groundskeeper will be drawn from the Natural Resources fund instead of Recreation.

NARA Registration

The numbers are increasing. Recreation has placed additional ads in the Beacon and Acton Unlimited for the next few weeks in hopes of connecting with potential registrants from surrounding towns. There is a need to maintain a certain ratio of program participants per counselor.

Senior Class Work Day

Most of the mulch was spread throughout all the playgrounds, with a small amount remaining at Goward.

TJ O'Grady

The graffiti at the skate park will be painted over.

New Business

- West Acton Redevelopment
- Acton Farmers Market on Pearl Street.
- Extension to the current sewer system into the West Acton
- New Buildings and playground parking

April Vacation Program

Ms. Haberman ran a spring vacation program at NARA Park. Various theme days included Fairies, Gnomes & Leprechauns. The program was well received.

Lions Club

Ms. Fochtman met with the Lions Club members. The agenda was addressed; remaining questions will soon be answered. The process is moving forward. A meeting with Mr. John Flynn from the Fiesta Carnival Co. is upcoming. The event will be conducted Tuesday, June 10th through Sunday, June 14th. Concerts will be held beginning on Friday night with a Pink Floyd tribute band, Gilmour's Breakfast. Saturday, all day Danny's Juice will perform a music festival. There is discussion of a tournament run by

AASL during the event. The school district might provide some parking with a shuttle back and forth from the school main campus to NARA.

Bruce Freedman & Assabet Rail Trail – A plea by Roland Bartlett requested letters to authorize these rail trails as high priority transportation projects. A letter was signed and sent on behalf of the Recreation Commission for both trails.

Dog Day Jubilee – Vendors who provide dog services will be at the event. Recreation has teamed up with Especially For Pets. The Second Story Band will perform from 6:00 -8:00pm.

Reports

Elm Street

Improvements to the diamond have been performed. AASL had requested Recreation fix the drainage, utilizing AASL funds. Lincoln Landscaping gutted the areas under the fence and placed crushed stone. The bleachers/benches and bulkhead were dug out and replaced with crushed stone as well.

Morrison Farm

Ms. Jarsky provided a report on the American Indian terminology.

CPC

Nothing new to report.

Playground Update

Recreation will have a new liaison. A copy of the playground reports will be provided to update the liaison. Ms. Jarsky asked about the possibility of donating some shade structures.

Open Space – nothing new

NARA Park Improvements

The changing room will soon be complete. New trees around the amphitheater have been donated. Three trees were planted along the parking lot area next to the amphitheater and along the changing room.

The painter is still contracted to complete painting of the amphitheater.

Goals and Objectives

The Recreation Commission made the following recommendations. They were in agreement that the three goals, 1) Preserve the remaining elements of Acton's rural character, 2) Environmental protection, 3) Improve recreational opportunities remain as stated. They recommended that the following objectives (new items are bold) be revised under goal 3:

- a) **Playground facilities are made up-to-date, safe and accessible.**
- b) **Enhance the quality of Acton's athletic fields through improved maintenance techniques.**
- c) Provide additional athletic fields to meet the needs of the town's growing population.
- d) Ensure handicapped accessibility is available for recreational activities (e.g. trails, picnicking, water-based recreation and camping) at both recreational and conservation areas.
- e) Enhance possibilities for hiking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding, boating and fishing on conservation lands. Expand public outreach to better inform the public of our available passive recreation opportunities.
- f) Promote the development of the two regional bike trails planned to run through Acton.
- g) Encourage regional planning with abutting towns in order to create more expansive human (see 3b above) and wildlife (see 2b above) corridors.

American Indian Terminology (From Amy Fann, Ph.D., University of North Texas)

American Indian is the official US gov designation and includes American Indians from tribes in the lower 48 and Alaska (there are both American Indians or Alaska Indians and Alaska Natives in Alaska- just to make it good and complex). Native American is a broader term that may also include Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Indigenous people of Puerto Rico, etc. (also- can be taken as anyone born in the U.S.- I did not realize how early- just caught Scorsese's "Gangs of NY" on cable, way too violent, but interesting perspective of the "natives" (mostly English descent) v. hoards of Irish and other "non-native" immigrants- and hey Leonardo DiCaprio...)

I use the term American Indian specifically because of my focus on US federally recognized tribes, and the role of higher education in supportive tribal sovereignty/nation building. However, to break up redundancy in writing I also use the word "Native" and "Indigenous" and whenever possible, specific tribal name, Yurok, Karuk, Luiseno...

There is no absolute right way, there are programs of both American Indian and Native American studies depending on when they were formed. Although the new Museum in DC - National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) is indicative of current trends. I just called my friend Susan Faircloth (Coharie, NC) at Penn State and asked her opinion, she said that her parents refer to themselves as Native Americans but she refers to herself as an American Indian - although I should note that tribal affiliation comes first - she is first Coharie (or Navajo, or Wampanoag, etc.)

So -after discussing the origins of the three sisters- originally from Mexico and S. and Central America but moving North prior to Colonization - still Indigenous to N.A. etc. etc., Susan suggested calling this garden **some variation of "The Three Sisters Garden of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas" -as an accurate reflection of three sisters' origins and a name that should not offend anyone.** In regards to education about three sisters (i.e. in a newsletter) you could include legend stories about corn, (or squash- might be harder to find bean legend) from North American tribes.

I also found the following website while searching around in answer to your question:
<http://www.tahtonka.com/food.html> and thought it had interesting info about three sisters and used the term "American Native Food."

Finally - more along the lines of education related to the garden- there are a couple of cookbooks I would recommend:

Foods of the Americas: Native Recipes and Traditions (this is a NMAI special book and won an award- and would include information and recipes about the three sisters) I have given this a gift to Native folks I have worked with.

<http://www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=shop&second=favorites>

also: Spirit of the Harvest: North American Indian Cooking

Finally - in regards to educational and promotional components - if this is a part of the gardens, what about contacting the tribe (if possible) who were the traditional owners or custodians of the lands where the garden is situated and ask if they would be interested in contributing recipes, history, any stories related to the crops, there may also be access to photograph cultivation tools, baskets, etc.??? Perhaps a representative could participate in some sort of opening ceremony and may even have suggestions for other Indigenous vegetables to add??? Just a thought.

<http://www.massarchaeology.org/Robbins%20Museum%20Educ%20Pgms.html>