



## **Acton Recreation Commission**

### **Meeting Minutes**

November 3, 2009

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Karen Jarsky called regular meeting of the Acton Recreation Commission to order at 7:03 PM on November 3, 2009 in Room 126, Acton Town Hall.

#### **II. ATTENDEES**

The following persons were present: Karen Jarsky, Chair, Frank Calore, Kim Bodnar, co-Chair, Selectman Michael Gowing, Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director, Maura Haberman, Recreation Event Coordinator/Admin. Assistant

#### **III. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion to Approve October 6, 2009 Minutes as amended, 3-0.

#### **IV. CITIZEN CONCERNS**

- a) Arboretum Dog Issue Citizen Concern: Ms. Fochtman reported that there was a complaint of a nuisance dog at the Acton Arboretum. The Arboretum is not in Recreation's jurisdiction and is overseen by Conservation; however, she noted that this report stated that the dog officer walks NARA Park daily with his wife and at the same time patrols the area. If necessary, the dog officer will issue a summons to repeat violators. Mr. Calore reported 90% of dogs are on a leash when he is at NARA Park. The Arboretum complaint requested more dog signage.
- b) School Street Soccer Dog Incident: Reported to Ms. Fochtman via email from Nancy Settle-Murphy, two leashed dogs had a fight resulting in a dog injury. It was noted that the aggressor dog was involved in another incident just prior to this one. This incident was reported to the Acton and Boxborough dog officers. The soccer parent who reported this incident would like to see a regulation that dogs not be permitted at any parks during field use. By order of the Dog Officer, the vicious dog in these two attacks must now be muzzled when out. Ms. Fochtman reported that the dog officer is often consulted on these incidents and handled this particular issue.
- c) Goward Playground Concerns: Ms. Fochtman reported on her recent follow-up for Mr. Leo's concerns, a citizen who attended the last Recreation Commission meeting regarding the condition of the Goward Playground. She is seeking a quote for replacement equipment from the playground manufacturer Goric. An alternative high school program known as "MAPS" is interested in work opportunities and Ms. Fochtman would like to see if they would be interested in helping with this project. Ms. Jarsky inquired about community groups working on playgrounds and about equipment safety installation issues. Ms. Fochtman reported that she is CPSI Certified (Certified Playground Safety Inspector). She will update Mr. Leo on these items once she has more feedback.
- d) NARA Park Playground Fence: Ms. Fochtman reported she received an estimate for \$17,000 to replace the existing post and rail NARA playground fence with chain link fencing.
- e) **Other Concerns**  
Mr. Calore reported that a school bus was parked in the Skate Park, possibly for a soccer game, or an outside organization may have come in to use the Skate Park.

**ACTION ITEM:** Ms. Fochtman will follow-up with Town Clerk on distributing Acton Town Bylaws regarding dogs upon dog license issuance/renewal. The Town bylaw states that all dogs must be under owner's control.

**V. COMMISSION ASSIGNMENTS:**

- a. *Recreation Commission:* Ms. Jarsky will Chair and Ms. Bodnar will co-Chair meetings for the next 5-6 months. Currently, there are two full Commission openings. Ms. Jarsky would like to know if there are other ways we can promote interest in open positions on the Commission. Ms. Fochtman reported that she has read about the openings in both the Acton Beacon and Action Unlimited. However, the articles are stating the Recreation Commission is looking for associate member. It was discussed that we promote Recreation Commission openings at events.
- b. *CPC Representative:* Ms. Jarsky, Mr. Calore, and Ms. Bodnar are not available to represent the Commission at this time. They would like to wait until January and revisit who may be able to attend. Mr. Gowing noted that he can report back to the Recreation Commission until a Commissioner has been appointed. Ms. Fochtman reported that current Recreation CPA Projects that were approved but are on hold due to Seidman vs. City of Newton are: Elm Street Playground, Picnic Pavilion, and the School Street Twin Ball Fields. Other CPA projects down the road are Morrison Farm and Goward Playground.

**ACTION ITEM:** Ms. Fochtman will check term expiration dates for all three current members. Ms. Haberman will seek volunteers for Recreation Commission in her next email newsletter.

**VI. BOARD OF SELECTMEN OVERSIGHT MEETING**

Copies of the playground assessment prepared for the BOS by Ms. Jarsky were given to the Commissioners.

Ms. Jarsky reported that she briefed the Selectmen on CPC Projects, NARA Programs, Concerts and Special Events. Ms. Jarsky noted that the Recreation Commission has been very proud of the work the Recreation Department has been doing and also noted that Recreation did a wonderful job and received great support from the community.

She reported that Ms. Friedrich had some comments regarding cultural events and would like to see more of them at NARA Park and Ms. Rosenzweig inquired about adding more classical concerts. Ms. Fochtman reported that we have applied for grants through the Cultural Council to help fund more cultural events, but have been turned down the past two years.

Ms. Jarsky asked about including contact information for citizens to express their likes and dislikes for particular recreation programs. Ms. Haberman reported that she is sending out a survey very shortly that will address this very inquiry. Mr. Calore asked about the Georgina Whitney fund for classical events – a grant available to the Town many years ago. He would like to know if this money is still available and believes it still exists. He recalls only a portion was used which paid for the U.S. Marine Corp Band to perform.

Ms. Jarsky reported that an email that was sent out by Ms. Friedrich noting that the Recreation Commission is playing the 'lead role for the 275<sup>th</sup> Celebration.' Ms. Jarsky would like to know what the role of the Recreation Commission is in planning this special event. Ms. Fochtman and Ms. Haberman reported the Town Manager's office is overseeing all decisions and oversight of the event. The Recreation Department has been asked to assist as needed.

**VII. 2010 EVENT PLANNING**

Both Ms. Fochtman and Ms. Haberman reviewed the items on the draft document handed out for proposed 2010 concerts and events. The Commission is very excited to see this diverse lineup of concerts and events. The Recreation Department is working with the Acton

Chinese Language School on a Chinese Cultural Day next summer in addition to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Sri Lankan Day. Concerts planned for 2010 include classical, children's, jazz, big band, country/bluegrass and more. It was also noted that July 4<sup>th</sup> concert and fireworks will be held on Saturday, July 3 (with Big Band Compaq Band) and that Acton Day will be on Sunday, September 12 (with United States Air Force Band of Liberty Big Band). The Recreation Department will begin its fundraising efforts over the next couple of weeks for 2010 summer concerts. It was reported that the response from businesses donations last summer for the theme "Tribute to the Sixties" summer concert series went very well. Ms. Haberman mentioned the possibility of a 50/50 raffle at each concert to help cover the expenditures of running these events. This was favorably received and will be investigated. The Recreation Commission approved this lineup of events for 2010.

**ACTION ITEM:** Ms. Haberman will inquire about 50/50's and Ms. Fochtman will inquire about the Georgina Whitney grant.

#### **VIII. RECREATION ANNUAL REPORT**

Ms. Jarsky will do the first draft of the Annual Town Report.

#### **IX. T.J. O'GRADY SKATE PARK**

Ms. Fochtman met with both the Chief of Police and the Town Manager regarding the increase in vandalism and action to take for those doing the destruction. Ms. Fochtman reported that the officers felt they didn't have the power to enforce the rules due to previous guidelines that were in place. The Town Manager gave permission for Natural Resources (Ms. Fochtman, Mr. Tom Tidman or Mr. Shawn O'Malley) to approve Trespass Notices if a progressive series of warnings by police officers are not heeded.

#### **X. FEE RECOMMENDATIONS 2010**

Ms. Fochtman will analyze departmental costs and revenue and report to the Commission at the December meeting. The Commission will consider fee restructuring and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.

#### **XI. REPORTS**

- a) *Elm Street Update:* No report
- b) *Morrison Farm Update:* Ms. Fochtman reported that more concrete figures for renovating the property will be received soon from the architect. She has discussed applying for CPC funding for the house with Mr. Tidman, Natural Resources Director. The Recreation Commission would like to see Recreation relocate to the Morrison Property.
- c) *CPC:* Previously discussed in meeting.
- d) *School Street:* Ms. Fochtman reported that the Manager informed her that negotiations for a multi-year lease are progressing.
- e) *Playground Update:* Previously discussed
- f) *Open Space and Recreation Plan:* No report

**ACTION ITEM:** Ms. Fochtman will check with the Town Manager on School Street status.

#### **XII. NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION**

*NARA Park Field Damage:* Ms. Fochtman reported major field damage at NARA was created by USA Rugby when field conditions were too wet. Mr. Stan Tasker, permit holder, agreed to the rules and regulations including the weather policy as a condition of permit and will be asked for the funding to fix widely damaged areas. Ms. Fochtman is getting quotes for rehab and ABYS wants to know which approach Recreation will take for this major repair. Ms. Fochtman will be seeking the funds from Rugby to pay for these repairs. Natural Resources Crew Chief, Mr. Shawn O'Malley, had informed Ms. Fochtman that he would not like to see Rugby return in the future. ABYS has cancelled games and practices at NARA for the remainder of the season.

*Canoe Locks:* Mr. Calore reported that he noticed that the canoes were all stacked but not locked up at NARA. He would like to see them locked up with a cable.

*Picnic Pavilion:* Ms. Fochtman reported that an RFQ has been distributed to seek a qualified architect to design the new picnic pavilion at NARA Park. Mr. Calore asked about the modular structure and Ms. Fochtman reported it did go out to bid and there was a lot of interest, however, no bids were submitted. It was most likely due to a DCAM Certification requirement. This same certification may still be a requirement for the new construction bid that will go out.

*December Meeting:* Mr. Calore will not be able to make the meeting in December.

**XIII. MS. JARSKY ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 8:36 PM**

Minutes by: Maura Haberman, Event Coordinator/Administrative Assistant