



Town of Acton

Recreation Commission

Minutes

ROOM 121, ACTON TOWN HALL

DATE: MAY 5, 2015

ATTENDEES	Recreation Commission members present were Ms. Betsy Mercier, Vice-Chair, Ms. Nancy Gerhardt, Commissioner, Ms. Carol Gerolamo, Commissioner, Mr. Joe Will, Commissioner, Ms. Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director, Ms. Melissa Rier, Recreation Coordinator, Ms. Mary Lou Repucci, Recreation Secretary.
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TOPIC: CITIZENS CONCERNS

DISCUSSION	Ms. Fochtman reported a concern regarding the presence of trash, and two benches removed from the Douglas School, in a secluded wooded area across from the Elm Street softball center field. The benches apparently were being used as a youth gathering point although they had not been reported as stolen. An Elm Street resident witnessed people smoking and running in the area. Police, School Principals and other authorities were notified. Police photographed the area and recommended cutting back brush to open the area and installing better lighting. Ms. Fochtman noted the difficulty during this busy time of year for the Grounds Crew to take on the added responsibility of removing the brush, but will attempt to address the issue. A similar problem has occurred in the Acton Arboretum.
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CONSENT AGENDA

DISCUSSION	April 4, 2015 minutes
ACTION ITEM	April 4, 2015 minutes accepted as amended, 4-0

TOPIC: Action Item Review: Ms. Rier reported that the Facebook page for the Jones Field Playground is established and is in progress.

TOPIC: JONES PLAYGROUND DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION	Ms. Rier presented a draft of the Jones Field Playground Survey for editing and discussion of how the information will be used. Various means of distributing the Survey were discussed including online and paper copies. Problems with distributing and collecting paper copies were considered. Mailing would be a major expense. Ms. Gerhardt emphasized that not everyone has access to email. A link to the Survey will be added to the Facebook page. The Commissioners unanimously approved the final version.
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TOPIC: RECREATION VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

DISCUSSION	Ms. Fochtman recommended Barbara Willson as Recreation Volunteer of the Year, to be honored with a plaque at the July 4 th event. All agreed. A letter will be sent to Ms. Willson.
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TOPIC: NARA MASTER PLAN

DISCUSSION	Ms. Fochtman and Natural Resources staff are working on a survey to be discussed at the next meeting.
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REPORTS:

DISCUSSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) NARA Picnic Pavilion – A large grill is to be installed. An electrician is being sought to add additional outlets for lighting designed by Mr. Jon Kerr. Plants are being purchased as part of an Eagle Scout project to landscape the Rain Garden. Additional plants will be donated. b) NARA Comfort Station – A Community Preservation Act grant funded a third shade structure on the beach and another in the playground. Ms. Fochtman will meet with Mr. Jay Redmond about putting in the new shade structures and to discuss ideas to move the comfort station ahead. c) Morrison Farm – Plot owners have expressed concern over using the donated cow manure. Signs have been posted warning of the fresh condition of the manure and indicating alternative sources. There is interest in bringing livestock (specifically goats) to Morrison Farm and a caretaker to live at the house. An inquiry about
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scrap metal next to the beehive was addressed. Ms. Fochtman explained that the scrap metal is a former skate board ramp she has been trying to donate to other towns.

d) T.J. O'Grady – Nothing to report.

e) Playgrounds – Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Seniors added new mulch to the Goward Playground during the annual spring Volunteer Day. Much work remains to be done. A volunteer will put in twenty-five hours to work on it. Mr. Will showed a video of grading work in progress by Forte Landscaping at the Elm Street Playground on 5/5/15.

f) Community Preservation Committee – Mr. Will was asked to obtain feedback from the Commissioners about doubling the tax surcharge to 3%. There was some support for this proposal. Ms. Mercier commented that open space is one of Acton's distinguishing features. Ms. Gerhardt did not favor the idea.

g) Acton 2020 – Nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION:

Ms. Rier reported on Selfie Fest, an all-day family-oriented event with bands, games and food (no alcohol) that might occur at NARA Park this fall. The terms are being worked out including charging for parking. Mr. Will suggested talking to other venues that have hosted this event. Abutting land owners would be notified one month in advance.

MEETING ADJOURNED TIME:

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

**Supporting and referenced documentation relating to these minutes are available on the DocuShare site; <https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-1985>*