



RECREATION COMMISSION

Minutes
January 5, 2016

Room 126

7:00 PM

Acton Town Hall, Acton, MA

Attendees: Commissioners Ms. Bridget McKeever-Matz (Chair), Mr. Joe Will, Ms. Carol Gerolamo, Ms. Nancy Gerhardt, Ms. Katie Green (Selectman), Ms. Cathy Fochtman (Recreation Director), Ms. Maura Haberman (Event & Program Coordinator).

Guest: Mr. Matthew Jarvis, Student Observer.

Absent: Ms. Melissa Rier (Recreation Coordinator), Ms. Mary Lou Repucci (Recreation Secretary).

Meeting called to order: 7:00 p.m.

1) Citizen Concerns

- a. Ms. Fochtman reported she received a phone call by a citizen (Adam) who expressed concern about fasteners for a playground piece (geo web) that appeared to be unscrewed/ loose at the Goward Playground. The Natural Resources crew tightened them back and will continue to monitor. Ms. Fochtman has contacted the company and will check into using "lock tight."

2) Consent Agenda

Motion to Accept Minutes December 1, 2015 as Amended.

Motion: Mr. Will Seconded: Ms. McKeever-Matz

Passed Unanimously.

3) Action Item Review from Dec. 1, 2015 - Minutes

No action items to review.

4) Community Preservation Act Project Presentation

Ms. Fochtman reported the money requested is greater than available funding. Ms. Fochtman will be submitting three projects and has withdrawn the Jones Field Playground and the Rail Trail Comfort Station applications until further investigation.

a. Miracle Field Comfort Station:

Ms. Green reported that the Selectmen have held off approving acceptance of three modular homes to be donated by J. Redmond until the CPC has had an opportunity to review the project. She noted that the Miracle Field Comfort Station has a more identified need in addition to supportive funding sources to make this project more feasible. She recommended revisiting the Rail Trail Comfort Station once the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is under operation to allow ample time for the Town to get a better grasp on such needs. Ms. Green reported that the Selectmen want to see how the Recreation Department plans to rank the projects by priority so they can get a sense of where the CPA is going. The Selectmen are meeting on Saturday (1/ 9/ 16) and can vote to accept the modular homes at that time, if needed. Ms. Fochtman reported that the CPA already funded \$25,000 towards the Miracle Field Comfort Station conceptual design. She is happy to report that there is a good amount of matching funds and in-kind labor (Mark Starr) being offered to offset the final cost of the Comfort Station. Ms. Green questioned the prevailing wage rate from labor donation. Ms. Fochtman noted that most of the utility work can be funded by volunteer labor. At this time, two of the J. Redmond homes are vacant, and one is

still occupied. The Office of Michael Rosenfeld is working on a cost estimate that will phase the construction. Mr. Will noted that the CPC will not vote to fully fund the project and it would be best to present all fiscal donations/ pledges during the presentation to the CPC on Thursday. Ms. Fochtman reported that there is currently a \$65,000 donation of which \$35,000 is from the Miracle League and \$30,000 from a private donor. If the Miracle League conducts further fundraising, the private donor will match the total funds raised.

b. NARA Parking Control

The application for the NARA Parking Control can potentially be reduced to \$30,000 to conduct a study only at this point.

c. Skate Park Expansion-Phase 2 Plaza

The application for the Skate Park Expansion-Phase 2 Skate Plaza will be submitted and has gained a CPA donation of \$40,000 from the Town of Boxborough, pending Boxborough Town Meeting approval in May, 2016.

Mr. Will moved to rank CPA Applications in priority order as:

1. Miracle Field Comfort Station
2. Skate Park
3. NARA Parking Control

Motioned: Mr. Will Second: Ms. Gerolamo

Passed Unanimously.

5) NARA Master Plan

Ms. Fochtman reported a lot of progress has been made on the Master Plan. The plan is nearing completion and staff is currently identifying the goals and action items for the next ten years. Some of the summarization of the plan will be given during the CPA presentation on Thursday, 1/ 7/ 16, however, the plan won't be released publically in its entirety until the Board of Selectmen has reviewed and approved the plan.

6) Operations Update

Ms. Rier and Ms. Repucci are out on medical leave until mid-February. In the interim, Ms. Fochtman and Ms. Haberman are working on hiring a temp to fill-in as receptionist. Ms. Haberman is currently working on the Spring/ Summer Program with a goal mailing date of Feb. 21. In addition, she will be sending out sponsorship proposals for 2016 NARA Events over the next two weeks to various businesses who are avid supporters and those that may be interested. Events for 2016 were briefly discussed, including three ticketed concerts, free concerts, cultural events, theater, as well as Acton's July 4th Celebration and Winter Carnival. Ms. Fochtman and Ms. Rier are in the process of rehiring seasonal staff and most interviews with returning staff have been completed. Applications are now being accepted for Camp Director, Waterfront Director, counselors, snack bar staff and lifeguards. Ms. Rier completed a lot of the curriculum for NARA camp prior to her maternity leave. The Recreation Staff is working diligently on the NARA Master Plan.

7) Reports:

a) Rail Trails

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail: Ms. Fochtman had a 45-minute question and answer opportunity at Chelmsford's Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) meeting last month. The (BPAC) reports to Board of Selectmen. Chelmsford doesn't have a Parks and Recreation Department and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) is overseen by the Chelmsford Department of Public Works. The BFRT has been in operation since 2008 in Chelmsford and this is the first year in which they

have actually budgeted money towards maintenance (\$10,000). Ms. Fochtman noted there is a lot of long-term planning that is needed and that the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) usage is approximately 1,000 bikers from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Chelmsford) on a weekend day. Ms. Green noted that town lines determine where each town's responsibility falls under for maintenance of the trail and that Acton's portion of the BFRT is now under construction and scheduled to open in 2017. She also reported that Westford had offered to pay for a portion of the Acton trail near the border of Westford to add a parking area so that Westford could then direct people where to park. Westford did not include parking in their plan for BFRT and was sending users of the trail to Chelmsford for parking. Chelmsford requested that Westford discontinue this practice. The Acton Board of Selectmen did not agree to Westford's proposal to pay for parking in Acton. Recreation has talked about hiring a park ranger to monitor the trail and have a crew person assigned to mowing the trail, monitoring trash, etc. Ms. Fochtman reported that Recreation is working to address heavy usage of NARA's parking lot and park facilities when the BFRT opens.

Action Item: Ms. Fochtman will send her notes to Recreation Commission from the BPA C meeting she attended.

b) NARA Comfort Station (Miracle Field)

Ms. Fochtman will describe the functions of Comfort Station in her CPA presentation on Thursday, 1/ 7/ 16. Mr. Andy Richardt will attend CPA presentation on behalf of the Miracle League. Mr. Will also will be in attendance. Ms. Fochtman reported that at this time \$300,000 has been pledged. She will be seeking an additional \$400,000 from CPA funding.

c) Community Gardens

All the plots for the 2016 season are now filled at Morrison Farm. A wait list has now begun. There are approximately 6 plots open at the North Acton Community Garden.

d) T.J. O'Grady Skate Park

There was a large article recently published in the Beacon about the Skate Park. Ms. Fochtman spoke with Molly (reporter from the Beacon) about the designer of the new TJ O'Grady Skate Park expansion, Kanten Russell from Stantec. The same designer recently completed Lynch Family Skate Park (also known as the Charles River Skate Park) in Cambridge. There has been a lot of positive feedback received.

e) Playgrounds

The Jones Field CPA Application has been withdrawn until further study has been completed. The playground at Elm Street now has signage up to request that dogs be kept out of the playground. Since these signs were posted there have not been any further complaints received.

Action Item: Ms. Fochtman will follow-up on adding a bucket swing at Elm Street.

f) Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Will reported that Peter Ashton noted that the CPA Act is not an end-all for recreation funding and that the town needs to help contribute. Ms. Fochtman reported that this is the direction that Recreation has been steered for funding. The reason general funds were awarded to help replace the Goward Playground equipment in 2012 was mostly due to public demand. Ms. McKeever-Matz wanted to know if that is the case for other CPA funds like open space, housing, historic preservation projects? Ms. Fochtman plans to show the history of funding over the years what has and hasn't been funded in her presentation.

Ms. McKeever-Matz attended a CPA Study Committee meeting presented by Stuart Sagior (CPA State Authority). She reported that Acton is one of the highest paying towns in the state due to Acton's tax rate with an average base of \$123

yearly. A higher percentage of state matched funds is given to less affluent towns. Littleton is one of the only towns in the state that has Blended CPA funding (and this approach is not recommended). She noted that a big driver for CPA funding is Open Space.

8) New Business/Discussion

Winter Carnival is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 6, 2016 from 4-7 p.m., snow or no snow. The Recreation Commissioners were asked if they could help out with activity supervision and to email Ms. Fochtman or Ms. Haberman if they are available to help with activities.

Meeting adjourned: 8:27 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Ms. Maura Haberman.

Upcoming Recreation Commission Meetings
Please confirm attendance

Date	Time	Comments/Agenda Items:
February 2, 2016	7:00 PM	Room 126
March 3, 2016	7:00 PM	Room 126
April 12, 2016	7:00 PM	Room 126 (After Town Meeting)