

Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: 12/4/2018

Recreation Center, 50 Audubon Dr., Acton MA, 7:00pm

Attendees: Stephen Trimble, Commissioner; Joe Will, Commissioner; Barbara Willson, Commissioner; Katie Green, Board of Selectmen Chair and Recreation Liaison; Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director; Melissa Rier, Recreation Coordinator; Mary Lou Repucci, Recreation Office Manager.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Stephen Trimble at 7:05 pm.
2. Citizen's Concerns: A neighbor whose property abuts the Gardner Playground contacted Cathy Fochtman about tree branches overhanging the playground fence. Cathy is following up.
3. Consent Agenda: November 6, 2018 Minutes accepted, 3:0.
4. Action Item Review from November 6, 2018 Minutes: Nothing to report.
5. Open Meeting Law Reminders: A forum reviewing updates to Open Meeting Law is scheduled to take place in Town Hall Room 204 on December 18. Two time slots are available. Commissioners are encouraged to attend. Town Manager, John Mangiaratti, has emphasized that email communications among the Commissioners should be restricted to scheduling and arrangements and should not include comments on substantive issues.
6. Camp and Field Discussion:
 - a. Melissa Rier presented her idea of revising NARA Summer Camp administration to incorporate the cost of field trips within the weekly registration fee. This would avoid having parents pay extra for field trips and simplify procedures for staff. She shared a handout outlining the rationale for registration fee increases to cover field trips. Field trips would then become an activity for all campers to participate in rather than an option, a policy consistent with other camps. The Commissioners voted in favor, 3:0. The next steps will be to present the proposal to the Town Manager and to the Board of Selectmen.
 - b. Recreation staff have been analyzing the need for field maintenance funding. Leagues paid \$500 up front this past spring toward this purpose; a customized per-user fee is now under consideration to help pay for soil aeration, grass seeding and fertilization. A survey was conducted to see how adjacent towns fund their field maintenance; it was found that many assess a per-player charge of \$15 to \$25. Recreation has a goal to develop a routine field maintenance program. It also plans to eliminate blanket field permits. Cathy has reached out to the Boxborough Recreation Commission to set a common policy and will

attend their meeting next week. Melissa will be coordinating an intra-league meeting.

7. Reports:

- a. Rail Trails: The Friends of BFRT held its annual general meeting last Sunday. Plans for further connections between the various trail sections were discussed along with the ways in which Acton's signage differs from that of other towns. Cathy has been talking with Leslie Johnson of the Commission on Disabilities, along with Pedal Power of Acton, about providing accessible bicycles for rail trail users, possibly through cooperation with the Zagster Bike Share program.
- b. NARA Sports Pavilion: Consigli Construction has replied to Recreation's request for assistance with construction of the Sports Pavilion. Consigli will provide materials and labor to finish the siding of one of the two modular buildings. At the request of the Town Manager, Recreation aims to finish the accessible bathroom building as a priority.
- c. T.J. O'Grady Skate Park: Steve delivered a check in the amount of \$1,087.86 from the crowd-funding site he designed to benefit the Skate Park. The contractor has delivered a first draft of engineered plans for comment with the goal of beginning work at the end of the school year next spring.
- d. Playgrounds: Cathy was approached by Judy Romatelli of Periwinkle Glass Works about drafting a grant application to fund a mosaic tile mural for West Acton. A design challenge will be put out to the community; an artist will finalize the winning design and will then work with the community to assemble the mural. The subject will be a map of West Acton in a 4' x 6' format to be positioned near Gardner Playground. Concerns over potential vandalism of the art work are being addressed. Judy has been requested to run the idea by the Historic District Commission.
- e. Community Preservation Committee: Melissa will do a 20-minute presentation to CPC on January 17, 2019 to request funding for the Jones Playground renovation project.
- f. Community Gardens: Cathy reported progress on the new well at Morrison Farm. The next step is to obtain quotes for installation of the irrigation system.

8. New Business: Cathy announced her plan to retire from her position as Recreation Director in February 2019. She will be missed!

Documents Used:

Melissa Rier Memo to Steve Barrett et al re: Justification on Camp Tuition Increase to Include Field Trips for 2019, 11/27/18

Meeting adjourned 8:55pm

Minutes submitted by Mary Lou Repucci



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Melissa Rier, Recreation Coordinator

To: Steve Barrett; Lisa Wojick; Kristen Caouette

From: Recreation Coordinator, Melissa Rier

CC: Cathy Fochtman; Mary Lou Repucci

Date: 11/27/2018

Re: Paying for NARA Field Trips

In the past, NARA Camp has offered two optional trips per week; Wednesday trips for children ages 10 – 15 and Thursday trips for children ages 6 – 15, with some extra Thursday trips offered to 4 – 5 year olds (new). In the history of NARA Camp, parents paid extra for these optional field trips. Field trip costs could be anywhere between \$20 to \$50 per person, which includes the admission and transportation. This means campers would come to camp with cash and a permission slip, the staff would collect the money and slip, pass it into the Director, and the Director needs to keep track of who paid and got their permission slip in. The day of the trip, the Camp Director takes all this cash on the bus and to their destination, to pay in for the trip. Extra money came back to camp and is given to the Recreation Department to deposit, which would be the bus money.

I'd like to propose that field trips be included in the camp tuition. This would mean less money handling and instances where money could be misplaced or stolen. Paying for these trips could be done in one (or a combination) of these three ways:

1. Credit Card – Easiest way to pay for field trips. No money handling by any staff and the credit card would be paid off monthly.
2. Check – The Recreation Department closes the following week's registrations by noon on the Friday before. At that time, we have a final headcount of who's coming to camp. We could communicate this to finance to cut a check for the field trips. This wouldn't follow the warrant schedule and the amount would be inaccurate every week because there will always be some kids who don't show up to camp that day, and we'd lose some money for the people who don't show.
3. Cash – Using cash would be like a petty cash system. Field trips roughly cost about \$1,000 per week. Melissa would go to the finance department to pick up the cash and sign off on it that she received it. Then she'd bring it to the Camp Director at NARA and they'd sign off that they received it. The Camp Director will use it to pay for the field trip, get a receipt, and bring back the change to be deposited back into the camp account. This is actually the way the Westford Recreation Department pays for trips.

I've put together a chart of the tuition prices to help cover the cost of field trips with this change. The average cost of the field trips in 2018 is shown on the spreadsheet. I'd like to propose a \$50 increase to include field trips in the tuition. The average costs for these trips per week is \$65. Our youngest campers, the Mighty Minis, don't go on most field trips, but their tuition will also increase to cover the extra \$15. I've also decreased our outside performers/contractors to only three for the entire summer, where we had five this past summer, averaging at \$356.50 per show.

Tuition for NARA Camp

	2018	2019
CIT (Ages 14 & 15)	\$100 (1 week sessions)	\$300 (2 week sessions)
Might Minis (Ages 5 & 6)	\$160 Half Day / \$300 Full Day	\$210 Half Day / \$350 Full Day
Youth (Ages 6 – 13)	\$270	\$320

The Recreation Department will present these changes to the December Recreation Commission Meeting for a recommendation of approval by the Board of Selectmen