

RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

January 3, 2023

7:00 PM

Remote Zoom Meeting

Present: Hema Santhanakrishnan, Commissioner; Joe Will, Chair; Steve Trimble, Clerk; Nancy Corcoran, Commissioner; David Martin, Select Board Liaison, Melissa Settapani-Rufo, Recreation Director.

Public Attendees: Adam Smith, Johar Sunkavalli, Kaushik Nanavati, Mike Whidden, Jimi Two Feathers, Rohit Saini, Jim Salem, Jeff Bergart

I. Regular Business

- a. Review of meeting minutes from December 2022 (taken out of order; second item)
 - i. Held until next meeting for approval. Joe would like to compare the draft minutes against the recording.
- b. Resident's Concerns (taken out of order; first item)
 - i. None raised.
- c. Field and Facility Reservation Process: (taken out of order; fourth item)
 - i. Melissa reviewed some document modifications to the Field Use Policy – notably not before date of September 1st for permit submissions to the Recreation Division.
 - ii. David Martin inquired if there were any issues if a field was reserved and then not used. Melissa cited that weather and other events prevent a field's intended use. David asked if there should be a usage limit and should that be allowed (e.g., an organization cannot use a field more than 50% of seasonal days). He continued questioning whether a group be able to use the field 100% of the time. Melissa noted that both groups desire every weekend with the cricket league expecting both days (Saturday and Sunday) and the radio control flyer group requesting one day (Saturday or Sunday). There are certain fields that Melissa noted supported one activity (e.g., Veterans Field and it is only desired by one group). The School Street location meets the needs of these two primary organizations. The School Street Fields meet the FAA regulations for flying needs.
 - iii. Adam Smith: Acton Resident of Charles River Remote Control (CRRC) organizations stated historically there has been no usage conflicts at School Street Fields but now there's an issue with the cricket leagues taking all the desired dates. First-come, first-serve does not address the usage issue and hopes accommodations on usage is made so that various groups can use the fields.
 - iv. Rohit Saini: Expressing the statement from the prior call suggested the group with the largest population should have priority. That is not a supported position of the Commission.
 - v. Jeff Bergart: An Acton resident who suggested we allow a specific number of business days to submit the requests. The Recreation Division will look for conflicts and using defined usage principles make the decision when no resolution is determined.
 - vi. Jim Salem: Jim agreed that the submission idea raised by Jeff might work.
 - vii. Jimi Two Feathers: Summarized that the fields were not available to the RCCR as the cricket league did not clear the space in a prompt manner if they split a weekend day. He noted that Melissa had a field scheduling meeting and cricket did not attend. He has the permit for one weekend day and one weeknight at this time. He noted the CRRC is willing to pick a day of the weekend and a specific weekday but will not split a specific day. He would like to assist in the resolution but he has the two allocations right now and intends to move

forward with these. Splitting the day is not realistic and it's not about how many people use it at any given time. He agrees that the deadline to submit permits in is not feasible. The CRRC prefers Saturday and is open to any weeknight. He noted all groups except cricket were agreeable. He noted that cricket players continue to drive across the field and leave trash.

- viii. Johar Sunkavalli noted that cricket is interested in using the fields both weekend days and open to negotiating. The CRRC want Saturday and either Tuesday or Wednesday. He noted that they have a promise from the Town that they get the highest priority. Melissa said that the priority was specifically for cricket use and did not, however, prioritize cricket and higher than other non-cricket users.
- ix. Rohit Saini started to disagree with Jimi's assertions. Joe reminded him this is not the topic at hand. Joe let him go ahead in response to Jimi's comments.
- x. Dave Martin suggested the permit timestamp language be removed and that the fields are a community resource. He noted that he was uncomfortable with a "majority of users rules" approach and there should be some principles formulated and stated in the document.
- d. School Street Field Scheduling (taken out of order; third item)
 - i. Joe Will requested the current schedule for 2023. This topic will be deferred until the next session. It would be to everyone's advantage to review and give any comments on the minutes.
- e. Reports
 - i. Events
 - A. An Acton Pride event is planned for June 17 in the afternoon. They would like a flag raising event the prior evening in Town. Dave Martin noted the Select Board approved a flag policy specifying how long it can stay up and Melissa could check that policy but he thought it was a week. Melissa noted June 16th the event planners plan to host drag show at NARA Park. There is an Acton Pride group driving the process and Melissa is supporting. There is a Valentine's Day fundraising dance in discussion.
 - B. Melissa noted the concerts are lined-up for the summer (Michael Jackson, Tusk, etc.) and will be announced on social media.
 - ii. Dog Park/Senior Park
 - A. David noted there is a Select Board meeting on January 23rd and then February 6th if those work for the high level plan. David noted that residents could walk over Isaac Davis Way by right of way provisions.
 - B. It was noted that the Dog Park Committee does not support adding future parking to the right of their planned parking.
 - iii. Human Services Committee
 - A. Melissa is presenting shortly (Hema noted the committee meets the 2nd Thursday) to the committee about the Recreation Division.
 - iv. Community Preservation Committee
 - A. CPA Projects: Recreation topics are next week (Jenks, Boy Scouts and NARA).
 - a. Gardner Playground Renovation

No new updates from last month. Cory York is managing this project.
 - b. Elm Street Court Reconstruction

Bids due January 11th.
 - c. NARA Bridge Boardwalk

- i. NARA Bridge Boardwalk. Submitting for the amount revised down by state funding earmark for \$200k. (~\$155k).
- ii. Start in the fall when the water level is at its lowest.

II. New/Special Business

f. 2023 Independence Day Celebration Proposal

- i. The Select Board and John Mangiaratti placed \$25,000 in the fiscal year 2024 budget for a July 4th celebration. This event historically costs <\$50,000 so this year will be a significantly scaled down event. It must be approved at Town Meeting. If not approved vendors are canceled with no penalty.
- ii. Melissa is planning a smaller 15-minute firework display with a budget of about \$17,000.
- iii. Parking at Nagog Park may not be feasible this year due to new ownership and safety concerns in the Town Forest. She is thinking of using large lots (e.g., KMART, commuter rail) and busing attendees to NARA.
- iv. No live band planned.
- v. Extra portable toilets plus the permanent restroom facilities.
- vi. Recreation proposed that other Town support staff (e.g., police and fire) be paid by each department and not funded from recreation.
- vii. Plans to use the site Eventbrite for free registration to estimate the attendance of the crowd and have the respondent select a parking location for transportation to and from the event. Most attendees traditionally do not live in Acton. The event registration will offer an optional donation for putting on the event.
- viii. The upper lot at NARA is being suggested for VIP parking and lower lot for staff parking.
- ix. Melissa mentioned the Select Board did not support a fee to attend this event.

III. Consent Items

- a. Joe mentioned the Acton Town Report is due the end of February.
- b. Steve moved to adjourn seconded by Joe. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Next Meeting – Melissa will send out possible dates.