



**Town of Acton**  
**Recreation Commission**

Minutes

ROOM 126, ACTON TOWN HALL

**DATE: October 4, 2016**

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| <b>ATTENDEES</b> | Present were Ms. Nancy Gerhardt, Commissioner, Ms. Carol Gerolamo, Commissioner, Mr. Tom Heinlein, Commission Chair, Mr. Joe Will, Commissioner, Ms. Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director, Ms. Melissa Rier, Recreation Coordinator, Ms. Mary Lou Repucci, Recreation Secretary, and Mr. John Eppling. |
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**TOPIC: CITIZENS CONCERNS**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | Ms. Fochtman reviewed and updated the citizen concern topic from the September 6, 2016 Recreation Commission meeting as follows: Mr. Barry Rosen had contacted her about the impact on Community Gardens of the Acton Water District prohibition against outdoor watering. A series of meetings and conferences ensued between Ms. Fochtman, Mr. Rosen and Mr. Matt Mostoller, Water District Environmental Manager. Ms. Fochtman advocated on behalf of the gardeners to obtain approval from Mr. Mostoller for watering with hand-held containers. Mr. Rosen contended that Community Gardens are exempt as farms and took action to form a coalition challenging legality of the watering ban. Mr. Rosen also made helpful suggestions to be made available to the gardeners on how best to conserve water. The ban remains in effect. |
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**CONSENT AGENDA**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>  | September 6, 2016 minutes                           |
| <b>ACTION ITEM</b> | September 6, 2016 minutes accepted as amended, 4-0. |

**ACTION ITEM REVIEW FROM JULY 12, 2016**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | Camp Acton Rate: The Recreation Department received Board of Selectman approval of the proposed increase from \$15.00 to \$25.00 per site per night. |
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**TOPIC: MODEL AIRPLANE POLICY**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | The Commissioners reviewed a draft of "Rules and Regulations for Small Unmanned Aircraft on Town Property," prepared by Town Counsel, to be edited for Board of Selectmen approval. Mr. John Eppling suggested revisions to the section titled, "Rules for Drone Use at School Road Field," including changing "Drone" to "Model Aircraft." Ms. Gerhardt preferred revising "Drone" to "Small Unmanned Aircraft" to conform to the main body of the document. Technicalities of sound level rating in decibels were discussed along with restrictions on flying elevation in proximity to Hanscom Field. Mr. Eppling will provide a link to Ms. Fochtman, to be forwarded to Town Counsel, regarding the 400-foot elevation limit. He also recommended revising section 3, "Space Rules," to clarify that "either a pilot or a spotter" must maintain visual line of sight. Weight limits were also discussed and the fact that what is appropriate to one field might not be to another. The rules under consideration apply specifically to the School Street Field. Mr. Will questioned referring to the School Street Field as "Town property" due to the fact that it is leased. Mr. Will offered to edit the entire document. |
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**TOPIC: LAZARO PROPERTY PURCHASE**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | Lazaro Paving Corporation has offered to sell a 7.26-acre parcel of real property located at 53 River Street in South Acton to the Town for \$875,000, to be funded by Free Cash. Once purchased, a combination of sources including Acton Housing Authority (\$200,000), the |
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|  | Community Preservation Committee (\$300,000) and others can potentially offset the cost of the purchase from the Town General Fund. Acquisition of the property is high priority for the Open Space Committee. The property is historically significant and could serve multiple purposes. Ms. Fochtman presented a plan for the area involving breaching of the river impoundment to allow water flow, thereby narrowing the upstream bed and creating a green space. (The Commonwealth of Massachusetts favors this plan.) The resulting park would offer recreation space, affordable senior housing, parking for the commuter train and a possible river walk to future shops on Main Street (Route 27). A condition of sale would be environmental testing to rule out contamination. Mr. Will favored purchase of the property with the exception that for purposes of obtaining approval by the Community Preservation Committee it should be relegated to Open Space, not for Recreation. The Commissioners voted unanimously to recommend purchase. The 53 River Street parcel will be a warrant article at Special Town Meeting on October 5, 2016, subject to a two-thirds vote. |
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#### TOPIC: NARA MASTER PLAN

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| DISCUSSION | Discussion deferred to future meeting. |
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#### REPORTS:

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| DISCUSSION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Bruce Freeman Rail Trail – An inter-departmental discussion took place between Recreation, Conservation and Engineering to add a new 20-space lot in the area of the NARA Park volleyball courts. (The volleyball courts will be relocated, first to Elm Street and then to Jones Field, for expansion and improvement.) The new lot will help meet the needs of increased traffic from the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail without impacting the existing lot. It will also enable more efficient monitoring by the parking lot attendant. Charging out-of-town users to park at NARA was also discussed (other than Bruce Freeman Rail Trail cyclists entitled by law to eleven designated spaces). The new lot will also benefit customers renting the Picnic Pavilion. Ms. Fochtman explained the complexity of parking issues and that a request had been made for Community Preservation Act funding of a study to analyze this topic that in fact was declined. A capital request will be made this year to fund the new lot.</li> <li>b) NARA Sports Pavilion – Ms. Fochtman reported that the second modular building has been placed on its foundation. She and Mr. Tom Tidman met with the Office of Michael Rosenfeld to obtain interior schematics for review. Ms. Fochtman will forward an electronic version to the Commissioners when available.</li> <li>c) Morrison Farm – Four raised-bed gardens were built by Acton-Boxborough junior-high school students. The Board of Selectmen will discuss what to do with the farm house and barn at its next meeting. Ms. Fochtman was approached by Mr. Danny Factor of the Commission on Disabilities about an accessible building.</li> <li>d) T.J. O'Grady Skate Park – Maintenance of the new skate bowl was discussed. Crowd Funding perks are being implemented to raise money for the Skate Plaza.</li> <li>e) Playgrounds – Equipment was replaced at the NARA playground in early August. The Town received a grant to enhance handicap accessibility at the Gardner Playground with a paved entrance to the basketball court. The grant also provides \$11,000 toward purchase of bike racks at seven locations. Ms. Gerhardt inquired about handicap access to NARA Beach. Ms. Rier replied that a Moby Chair is available. The importance of outdoor accessibility was emphasized.</li> <li>f) Community Preservation Committee (“CPC”) – Proposals are due by November 14. Ms. Fochtman reviewed the list of capital projects to be requested at the upcoming Town departmental budget meeting.</li> </ul> |
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#### NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION: NONE.

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| MEETING ADJOURNED TIME: | Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM. |
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\*Supporting and referenced documentation relating to these minutes are available on the Docushare site; <https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-1985>