



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **Recreation Commission Minutes 07/27/2010**

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, July 27, 2010

*Approved*

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7 PM on the first floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, July 27, 2010.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Don Vitters, Jim Robillard and Nancy Campbell. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included: Seth Botos, Brian Biciocchi, Bruce Wheltie, Greg Porfido, Chad Mikkelson, John Leonard, Mustafa Vargalu.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Campbell motioned to approve the June 8, 2010 minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Vitters, and approved 5-0.

### **Open Forum – Public Comments**

Mr. John Leonard discussed the issues with leashed and unleashed dogs at Wellington Park. Mr. Leonard asked if the Commission was planning on installing signs on the courts after the renovation. Mr. Connelly stated that they were. The Commission discussed signage and wording. Mr. Leonard suggested placing signs at the courts prior to the renovation informing residents of the project timing. Mr. Connelly agreed that was a good idea for communication to the public.

### **Article 36 Implementation Plan**

Ms. Mayer gave a background as to the passage of Article 36 by Town Meeting and previous Commission discussions. Mr. Connelly reviewed comments received at the June 15<sup>th</sup> public input session as well as potential changes to the policy as a result of that meeting.

Ms. Mayer stated that it has been requested that a special meeting, specific to Robbins Farm, be held. The Commission discussed what this meeting would accomplish. Mr. Connelly suggested a special facilitator for this meeting.

Mr. Porfido stated that the intent of that meeting would be to review areas that were missing from the current proposal including set backs, areas of use and the maximum number of dogs.

It was asked why a special meeting was being held for Robbins and not McClennan Park. Ms. Mayer stated that there are particular specific issues that would need to be worked out at Robbins Farm Park. Mr. Connelly stated that individual park meetings were held over the last two years.

Mr. Vargalu stated that his issues were with the fact that Physical Education classes were being held at the same time, that 15' limit around playgrounds was not enough, the enforcement of effective owner control. Mr. Vargalu stated that other options were available at Park Circle and the entire Robbins Farm Park could be avoided. Mr. Vargalu also stated that he wanted the issue of a

minimum set back from abutters property also included in the proposal.

Mr. Connelly stated to the Commission that there are an equal number of individuals not at tonight's meeting who would argue some of these points and that the Commission needed to understand that this issue is polarizing at both ends of the argument. Mr.

Connelly asked Mr. Vargalu to understand that there are those that say that Brackett School should use there property for physical education classes and not be in the park at that time. Mr. Connelly clarified that this was not his view but the argument was being made by both sides of the discussion.

Mr. Wheltie stated that he believed a section of Robbins Farm Park was used to calculate school grounds during the building project. Mr. Connelly stated that no parkland was turned over to the school that he was aware of. Mr. Wheltie stated that he believed the park should be totally off limits to off leash dogs.

Mr. Mikkelson stated that his concerns with the program were the lack of rotation of the areas. Mr. Mikkelson would like to see the area used from the 8:30-9 am time block rotated. Mr. Mikkelson stated the original proposal pulled the area away from the abutters.

The Commission discussed the issue of the original proposal stating that they were lead to believe with the exception of one outstanding issue there was an agreement of understanding.

Ms. Rothenberg stated that any additional meeting would have to be carefully moderated so that it was truly a work session. Ms. Mayer stated that the meeting would have to be an open public meeting and open to everyone. The Commission and Mr. Connelly discussed the possible time frame of such a meeting.

#### **Rowing Program Review**

Mr. Connelly introduced Mr. Stavros of the rowing program and reviewed the program and some of the concerns from abutters concerning motors, unscheduled programs and hours of use.

Mr. Stavros reviewed the success of the program explaining the growth of the program especially in Arlington. Mr. Stavros thanked the support of the Rec Dept. and Athletic Department for the success. Mr. Stavros did state the program numbers were going to be capped at 120.

Mr. Connelly and Ms. Mayer stated that it was important that the program have an end date so that there was a break in-between seasons. Mr. Connelly will now permit the group like a field user would be permitted. Mr. Connelly asked that he be made aware of any special events so that he can take appropriate action when necessary. Mr. Stavros agreed to improve the communication. Mr. Stavros did state he would like to increase the coaching staff and would like to add an additional launch to the program next spring. The commission suggested that the special request come after the Fall 2010 season.

Mr. Connelly did ask for keys to the gated area and storage unit. Ms. Mayer inquired as to where the gasoline was being stored.

Mr. Stavros stated it was being stored off site and transported when needed. Mr. Stavaros may talk to the private business adjacent to the storage area for assistance in this matter.

Mr. Stavaros again thanked the Commission and agreed to preview the upcoming spring 2011 season with the commission after the Fall 2010 season is complete.

#### **Dallin Safe Routes Program**

Mr. Connelly reviewed the request from Town Counsel to allow sidewalk work to be completed in front of Park Property adjacent to the Dallin Elementary School. The Commission agreed that this made sense to support. Mr. Vitters motioned to approve the request from Town Counsel, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg, and approved 5-0.

#### **Special Requests**

Arts Festival – Spy Pond Park – September 11, 2010 – Mr. Botos and Mr. Biccocchi reviewed the event. The Commission inquired as to amplification and the timing of the event. Mr. Connelly suggested that he meet with the proponents and work out the details for the event. Ms. Rothenberg suggested that the time be decreased to make it more manageable during year one. Ms. Mayer

suggested going with one amplified area to the first year. Mr. Connelly will set up a meeting.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to support the concept and have Mr. Connelly work out the details with the proponents, seconded by Ms. Campbell and approved 5-0.

Friends of Robbins – Concert – 6 – 8:30 pm, August 14, 2010 - . Mr. Vitters motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Robillard and approved 5-0.

International School of Boston – Robbins Farm, September 12, 2010

Conditions – Insurance, Police Detail, DPW Detail. Mr. Robillard motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0.

Tennis Tournament – Crosby Tennis Courts -August 28<sup>th</sup> and September 11 – The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to obtain more information.

Pfizer Picnic – Hurd Field – August 10, 2010 – The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to obtain more information.

Ms. Mayer asked if we could review the actual light usage this last year at our summer meeting. Mr. Connelly will complete a report for Each Field.

#### **Arlington Sport Center Renovation Project**

Mr. Connelly stated that the rink project was ahead of schedule and that ice was schedule to be made the week of August 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Connelly stated that the board system was in place and the system was ready for start-up.

#### **Capital Improvement Update**

Thorndike Parking - Mr. Connelly stated that project was on schedule and could be completed as early as mid August.

Summer Street Playground – Mr. Connelly stated project did start with some clearing of vegetation and necessary pruning. The Commission discussed the pruning process. Mr. Connelly stated that Thorndike was the number one priority right now with the contractor. The Commission agreed with this approach.

North Union Basketball Court – Mr. Connelly reviewed the potential land swap. Mr. Connelly stated he asked the school-building architects for a plan that included the intended new proposed locations for the fields. Mr. Robillard stated that he did not believe a 90' diamond would fit on the other side of the school.

#### **Recreation and Rink Update**

Mr. Connelly stated that summer registration was on going and that Recreation numbers were higher than normal. Mr. Connelly attributed this to the success of the HRC program and affordable pricing.

#### **Other Business**

Mr. Connelly reviewed the issues with the Intercity Baseball League and the fence removal. The Commission discussed the lack of communication from the league.

The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to follow up with the Carp Tournament officials to make sure all their conditions were met and that they understood that any future tournament will rely heavily on their compliance.

#### **Park Policies**

##### *Lighted Field*

Mr. Connelly stated that the lights have been off by 10 PM during each use. Ms. Mayer asked if youth baseball has give a light report for their summer usage. Mr. Connelly stated they have not. Ms. Mayer asked Mr. Connelly to obtain that information and give an overall light usage report at the September meeting. Ms. Mayer also asked Mr. Connelly to make sure youth baseball removes the banners from the backstop.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Robillard and approved 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation