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Recreation Commission Minutes 09/14/2010

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7 PM on the first floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, September 14, 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: Laurie Coltz, Susan Robertson, Sheri Donovan, Kevin Nigro, Diane Johnson, Karen Grossman.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Vitters motioned to approve the July 27, 2010 minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg, and approved 5-0.

Open Forum – Public Comments

No comments

North Union Field/Thompson School Land Swap

Ms. Coltz and Mr. Nigro reviewed the request from the school department to potentially swap park and school land at North Union Field/Thompson School. Mr. Nigro reviewed how the current fields would fit on the proposed new site. Mr. Robillard said he was concerned with the outfield now abutting private properties and with the impact that foul balls, creating unsafe conditions, would now have on playground/basketball court/spray pool areas. Ms. Rothenberg asked if the middle of the recreational area including the playground, basketball court and spray park would be preserved, during and after construction. The Commission and Mr. Connelly discussed their desire to have the spray park and basketball court improved. Ms. Mayer stated that it was important to see more details about the envisioned layout of the entire property, including how the new school would be accessible from the street and where the parking would be located in relation to the recreational properties.

Ms. Coltz stated that that information was not known at this time. The Commission said that information was invaluable to make a decision. Mr. Nigro stated that he and Mr. Connelly discussed having a joint public hearing on the issue.

Mr. Vitters discussed the process with Mr. Nigro. Mr. Connelly stated that the Park Commission must have a unanimous vote. The process after that was being clarified.

Mr. Connelly stated that it was important that the Commission had a strong commitment from the school that the recreational areas would be restored as part of the overall school project and not get reduced if budgeting became an issue. Ms. Mayer expressed the concern that this could impact the Commission's Capital Plan for other planned projects, which is not desirable, and that planning and consideration would need to be given to the displacement of recreational and athletic activities for an extended period during project construction. Ms. Johnson and other school representatives said that the park properties would be made whole again at all cost and the use of Peirce Field at no charge to displaced users would be considered.

Ms. Johnson and Ms. Donovan reviewed the benefits of having the students attend the current Thompson School as the new one was being built. Ms. Johnson explained that it would be a two year process and could save the overall project approximately \$2 million dollars.

Ms. Donovan stated that the new school would be built to accommodate 380 students plus a child care center located within the new facility that might service another 80 students. The Commission expressed concern about understanding how the new use of a child care center would impact site recreational needs, uses, parking and traffic.

The Commission discussed having a joint public hearing. Mr. Vitters and Ms. Mayer stated that the timing of the hearing depended upon when the necessary information was available from the architects. Mr. Nigro stated that this information would be available by mid October. Ms. Donovan suggested having the meeting at the Thompson School. Mr. Connelly agreed that would be optimal.

FY 2012 Capital Plan Review

Mr. Connelly reviewed the FY 2010 Capital Plan with the Commission. Mr. Connelly stated that some items were adjusted from last year based on current needs. The Commission reviewed the below plan:

Mr. Vitters motioned to approve as amended, seconded by Mr. Robillard and approved 5-0.

~	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Location	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
~	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
Florence Ave		\$435,750				~
Hibbert Street	\$288,750	~		~	~	~
North Union				~	\$236,250	~
<i>Peirce School Turf Area</i>		\$75,000	~	~	~	~
Reservoir	~	~	~			\$315,000
Robbins Farm		~	\$483,000			
Spy Pond Tennis				\$446,250		~
Wellington Play ground & Clean-up	~	~			\$427,624	~
Bishop Play ground	~	~				\$225,750
Robbins Farm Giant Slide	\$75,000		~	~	~	~
Magnolia Field Basetball Court	~	~	~	\$75,000		~
Thorndike Fenced OLRA	\$25,000	~	~	~	~	~
Feasibility Study	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Subtotal CDBG Parks	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$146,000	\$98,000	\$0
Subtotal Town Parks-CDBG	\$348,750	\$470,750	\$493,000	\$385,250	\$575,874	\$550,750
Total w/o CDBG	\$398,750	\$520,750	\$493,000	\$531,250	\$673,874	\$550,750

Friends of Magnolia Park and Community Garden Review

Tabled until a future meeting

Fenced Off Leash Area Task Force Recommendation, Stanton Donation and Request for Public Hearing

Mr. Connelly reviewed the feasibility study prepared by Leonard Design and the recommendation by the Fenced OLRA Task Force to have the Thorndike Field option be the first fenced off-leash recreation area.

Mr. Connelly stated that funding for the project, which could be \$200,000 or more, would mainly come from a gift by the Stanton

Foundation which had agreed to donate 90% of the total project cost to the Town.

The Commission briefly discussed the generous gift of the foundation and the draft agreement being reviewed by Town Counsel.

Mr. Connelly and Ms. Mayer requested that the Commission hold a public meeting to solicit input from the abutters and general public. The Commission discussed the format of the public input session.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to support the task force recommendation that Thorndike Field be the selected site for a fenced off-leash recreation area with the stipulation that the off leash hours, granted through Article 36, at Thorndike and Magnolia Field be eliminated upon the opening of the fenced off-leash recreation area. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 5-0.

The Commission discussed how the site would be permitted and some basic rules including possible dog maximums. The experiences of successful fenced off-leash areas in other communities will be reviewed.

Rink and Recreation Update

Mr. Connelly updated the Commission on the status of the fall Recreation programs stating the numbers were lower than anticipated at this time. Ms. Mayer and Mr. Connelly discussed the summer adventure program and the agreement with the high school to use the Wellington Ropes Course.

Mr. Connelly and Ms. Mayer agreed that a meeting should be held to review the plans prior to next seasons use.

Special Requests

Sunshine Nursery – Menotomy Rocks Park – 9/29/2010

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve the request, seconded by Ms. Campbell and approved 5-0.

Capital Improvement Update

Thorndike Parking - Mr. Connelly stated that the project was 99% complete with the speed bump yet to be installed. Mr. Connelly stated that the department had received numerous compliments with regards to the final outcome.

Summer Street Playground – Mr. Connelly stated that the project was moving along however several delays were encountered. Mr. Connelly reviewed the schedule with the Commission.

Mr. Connelly did discuss installing inexpensive motion detector lighting upon the completion of the project at the playground. The Commission approved the installation.

Other Business

Warrant Article 26 Implementation Plan – Ms. Mayer reviewed the process thus far and the upcoming Robbins Farm meeting, which is being facilitated without charge by retired judge and former resident Rudy Kass. Ms. Mayer stated that a final draft of the implementation materials would be presented to the Commission after the Robbins Farm public input meeting. Mr. Connelly stated that the Attorney General has approved the bylaw so the process had to move swiftly from this point forward.

Request for Fence Gate – 65 Thesda Street – Arlington, MA- Mr. Connelly reviewed the request. Mr. Robillard motioned to approve the request, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg and approved 5-0.

League Expansion – Mr. Connelly reviewed the recent issue with leagues expanding into different age groups without Commission approval for league expansion. Mr. Connelly will send out an e-mail reminding all field users of this policy.

Spy Pond Pathway and Erosion – Ms. Grossman addressed the Commission reviewing the known erosion and drainage problems

at Spy Pond Park. Ms. Grossman reviewed a plan prepared by Carol Johnson and Associates highlighting potential solutions. Ms. Grossman explained that a company called Staylock would donate 3 tons of the material at no cost and would arrange for it to be installed at no cost so that they could use it as a sample site for others to review.

The Commission discussed both the long term and short-term solutions. The Commission asked Ms. Grossman to have the representative from Staylock submit a short scope of work to Mr. Connelly to review. Mr. Vitters complimented the work of Ms. Grossman and the generosity of Carol Johnson and Associates to provide the necessary site analysis. Ms. Grossman stated that she would be going in front of the Conservation Commission to review the proposal. Ms. Mayer stated that we should place Ms. Grossman on the October agenda to discuss the plan in greater detail and share the results of the Conservation meetings.

Portable Restrooms – Mr. Connelly discussed the issue of finding an appropriate, secure location for the portable restroom at Thorndike Field now that the parking lot work is complete and in light of tipping issues. The Commission agreed that if it is tipped again it will have to be removed for the season.

Skateboard Park – Mr. Connelly and Ms. Mayer reviewed their meeting with park users to assist with some fundraising efforts to improve the course design with additional elements.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Robillard and approved 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation