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Recreation Commission Minutes 12/14/2011

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, December 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, December 14 2010.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Don Vitters, and Jim Robillard. Commissioner Nancy Campbell arrived at 7:15 pm. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included: Judy Weinberg, Maryanna Foskett, Robin Varghese, Mustafa Varoglu, Elizabeth Carr Jones.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Vitters motioned to table the minutes of the November 9th meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Robillard and approved 4-0.

Open Forum – Public Comments

Mr. Varoglu commented that the Article 36 off-leash hours signs have been removed from Menotomy Rocks Park. Mr. Connelly is working with the Friends of Menotomy to get these signs back up at the entrances. Ms. Weinberg offered to assist with printing and replacement.

Menotomy Rocks Park – Council Rings and Playground Fencing

Ms. Foskett reviewed the request for the council rings at Menotomy Rocks Park. Ms. Foskett explained how the rings looked and suggested two locations to start; near the playground and near the picnic area in the woods.

Ms. Mayer asked how the logs were secured. Ms. Foskett indicated that logs are not secured in installations that she has seen, but that the size and weight of the logs make them difficult to dislodge. Mr. Connelly suggested not installing the logs near the playground just in case they were moved within the play area and into a critical fall zone. The Commission agreed that starting with the one location in the woods would be a nice start, and once the playground fencing is installed then perhaps it could be considered outside the fencing.

Mr. Robillard motioned to approve the request as discussed, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0.

Mr. Connelly reviewed the playground fencing request and the written support received from the Friends of Menotomy. Ms. Weinberg stated that once a final price is received, and if it is within budget, the Friends would be financially supporting the entire project. The Commission discussed fencing off the rectangle area around the playground only and not including the sandbox. The Commission also requested two gates. Mr. Vitters motioned to approve the request with the changes stated and that full funding come from the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robillard and approved 4-0.

Robbins Farm Cooperative Learning Garden Pilot Review

Ms. Carr-Jones reviewed the proposal and changes since their presentation last meeting. Ms. Carr-Jones explained that they reviewed the revised proposal with the Friends of Robbins Farm and it received their support. Ms. Mayer commented on the overwhelming success this past year. Mr. Connelly stated that working with the gardeners and their administration has been a pleasure. Ms. Campbell stated that the program has been terrific. Mr. Vitters commented that the evolution of the garden is a tremendous asset to the community. Ms. Campbell motioned to support the 2011 proposal as presented, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0.

Ms. Mayer thanked Ms. Carr-Jones and stated that the Commission looks forward to reviewing the season during their summer meeting when it would further discuss the year round possibility for the garden.

Michele Desmond Bench Request for Natalie Talanian

Mr. Connelly reviewed the request, which would add another bench to the Spy Pond location at the end of Pond Lane. Mr. Robillard motioned to approve the request, seconded by Ms. Campbell and approved 4-0. Mr. Connelly outlined the placement of the next set of bench donations.

Off leash Implementation (Article 36) Monthly Review

Mr. Connelly reviewed the correspondence with the Commission from the following individuals:

- Concerns – Jeffrey Woodcock, Alex Cheimets, David Philbin, Virginia Gregory, Chad Mikkelson
- Other – Mona Zefitel, Robin Varghese, Susan Bernhard

Ms. Mayer discussed her concern over the direct disregard for the new bylaw by the group that lets their dogs run off leash at 4 pm at Robbins Farm. Mr. Connelly agreed that this type of direct violation does not help the article going forward. Mr. Varghese stated that he felt those individuals using the park at that time showed a need for expanding the hours. Ms. Mayer and Mr. Connelly agreed but stated that those individuals know the current bylaw, know the efforts that were put into achieving the current compromise and should be operating within its restrictions and not ignoring the times because they do not work for them.

Mr. Connelly did review a memo from the Animal Control officer to the Board of Selectmen showing actions taken by his office to this point in the program

Stanton Foundation and Thorndike Field OLRA Update

Mr. Connelly stated that the Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) between the Stanton Foundation, the Town of Arlington and A-Dog were still being reviewed. Mr. Connelly discussed the foundation's desire to bid the project differently through a gift from the trust. Mr. Connelly stated that Town Counsel and the foundation's attorney were reviewing different options.

Ms. Mayer and Mr. Connelly stated that the intent was for the MOU's to be signed shortly so that the design process could begin.

Capital Improvement Project Update

Summer Street Playground – Mr. Connelly stated that the playground was officially opened. Mr. Connelly reviewed a few final punchlist items but explained that these could be done while the facility was open. Mr. Connelly stated that the facility was sprayed for static electricity and passed a series of tests prior to opening.

Robbins Farm Slide – Mr. Connelly shared his conversations with the Capital Planning Committee and their concerns over the design and funding for the hill slides, which had been redone with the last 8 years. The Commission discussed these concerns and

understands the financial concerns, but feels strongly that the safety issues must be addressed. Mr. Connelly stated that he was working with landscape architect Andrew Leonard and with members of the Friends of Robbins Farm Park, who are researching other installations of a similar nature, on options.

Wellington –Mr. Connelly stated that the survey work was completed and that he was meeting Mr. Leonard on site later that week to review.

Recreation Programming and FY 2011 Budget Impacts

Mr. Connelly stated that the difficult municipal budget projections for FY 2011 would indirectly affect the Recreation Department. Mr. Connelly discussed the impacts to the Natural Resources Division of DPW and the requests in which his office frequently relies on the Natural Resources Division to assist with.

Mr. Connelly and the Commission discussed the importance of maintaining the current field treatment plan and current fee structure and cost sharing program. The Commission discussed its strong commitment to this program and agreed to look at options that would allow the success with field maintenance and use to continue even in these difficult financial times.

Rink and Recreation Update

Mr. Cunningham reviewed the rink schedule and rink issues to date. Mr. Cunningham stated that rink renovation was a success but the facility still had aging issues with mechanical components not addressed within the rink bed and board replacement and renovation. Mr. Cunningham reviewed the electrical issues that cost about \$1,000, the condensing tower that would cost about \$75,000 to be replaced and the \$25,000 already spent on the new hot water tanks and holding units.

Mr. Cunningham reviewed the upcoming Ed Burns Tournament and discussed the request from the subcommittee to park on Summer Street field. Mr. Cunningham reviewed how he would monitor and park the cars. The Commission discussed the issue of parking on fields. Mr. Mayer stated that she had concerns for the precedent this would set and that it would not end up being a onetime occurrence. Mr. Robillard stated that he too did not want cars parking on the ball fields. The Commission discussed options such as providing shuttle busses that could assist with the transportation from other lots, such as the high school, McClennen Field or the Reservoir.

The Commission thanked Mr. Cunningham and his staff for an excellent job.

Mr. Connelly reviewed the rowing program proposal. The Commission expressed its concern that the request was excessive and asked that program coordinator redraft the proposal, reducing the number of nights the pond is used.

Special Requests

N/A

Other Business

Ms. Campbell motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation

