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Park & Rec Commission Minutes 11-14-06

Park and Recreation Commission
Minutes
Tuesday, November 14, 2006
APPROVED

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7:00 PM on the first floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, November 14, 2006.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Nancy Campbell, Tom Caccavaro and Donald Vitters. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included: Allan Brown, Beth Martin, David Harris, Cathy Saleh, Patricia Worden, Chuck Carney, Anne Murray, Laura Weiner and David Leavy

Approval of Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes of October 10, 2006. Mr. Vitters amended the minutes so that Mr. Warner's name is properly indicated under the Buzzell Field discussion. Mr. Vitters motioned to approve as amended, Ms. Campbell seconded the motion, minutes approved 3-0-1 with Mr. Caccavaro abstaining.

Bishop Field Final Design Approval

Ms. Mayer introduced Landscape Architect Andrew Leonard to review the final design of Bishop Field. Mr. Leonard reviewed the final design and comments received from the October public hearing. Mr. Leonard indicated that construction access would be by Stowcroft Road using a temporary ramp and not through the playground. This area will be cleaned up by the contractor at the conclusion of the project. Mr. Leonard stated that the construction fence would be chainlink and would totally encompass the park during construction. Mr. Leonard continued to review the project scope of work.

Mr. Leonard stated that portable bleachers would be added as alternate #1. The Commission discussed the need for portable bleachers at the site. Ms. Murray expressed concern that they would be used as climbing apparatus for the children during recess. The Commission suggested removing the portable bleachers from the bid.

Ms. Mayer asked Mr. Leonard and Mr. Connelly if the concerns of the abutter, Mrs. Pine, were taken under advisement concerning balls traveling into her yard. Mr. Leonard reviewed the only option was to install a high screening system along the property line. Mr. Leonard indicated that Mrs. Pine did not want her view constricted. Mr. Leonard stated the other option was high hedges but he felt this was unrealistic due to the necessary height of the hedges. Mr. Connelly discussed ways to police the problem from a user/permit prospective.

Mr. Leonard indicated that the requested information sheet for those at the public hearing would be completed upon the approval of the final design. Mr. Connelly will distribute this information and have it put on the Town website.

Ms. Murray asked if the project could be delayed until May 7th so that the school could hold their annual fair. The Commission discussed the impacts of starting the project at this time. Mr. Caccavaro indicated that he did not see a problem with pushing the

project back a week. Mr. Connelly agreed. Mr. Leonard and Mr. Connelly will work with the contractor to try to adhere to the May 7th request. Mr. Connelly will contact Ms. Murray within the next couple of months upon the hiring of a contractor for the project.

Mr. Leonard reviewed the prospective project timeline. Mr. Leonard stated that organized play would not be allowed at the field until the spring of 2008, but recess may be allowed on the field during the late fall 2007 depending on turf stabilization.

Mr. Carney asked if there was any way to phase the project so that a portion of the grass area could be used by the school. The Commission discussed this option with Mr. Leonard. Mr. Leonard recommends not phasing the project due to cost and the tight timing of the work that needs to be completed.

The Commission and Mr. Carney discussed the boundary line between school and park property, as Bishop parents are looking to replace old playground equipment that the Commission believes is on school property. Mr. Carney asked if the old RCN maintenance cage could be removed. Mr. Connelly will send an inquiry to Town Counsel.

Mr. Vitters made a motion to approve the final design for Bishop Field as amended. This motion was seconded by Ms. Campbell and approved 4-0. Mr. Leonard will forward the specifications to Mr. Caccavaro.

Preliminary Cost Estimates for FY 08 Capital Requests

Ms. Mayer summarized the FY 2008 capital requests and the priority in which the requests were being made. Mr. Leonard reviewed his cost projections and summarized how these costs were calculated. Ms. Mayer stated for the record that the cost projections were based on preliminary ideas and by no means a final design. Ms. Mayer indicated that upon funding many more meetings would be held and feedback would be sought.

Pheasant Avenue

Mr. Leonard broke the project down into three phases: drainage, field and playground. Mr. Leonard explained his recommendation that repairing one could not be done without repairing the other. Mr. Leonard reviewed the current area conditions and safety issues. Mr. Leonard recommended a combination of interceptor drains and curbing to help with the run off from the parking lot and a retaining wall with a French drain system to help with run off from the field. Mr. Leonard reviewed his recommendation of using rubberized playground surfacing of a combination of surfacing and wood carpet. Ms. Martin commented her concern would be the woodcarpet creating problems if kicked onto the rubberized surface. Mr. Leonard did indicate that he priced the playground for complete rubberized surface. Mr. Brown, Principal at Stratton School, gave some background to the playground issues. Mr. Harris also shared his frustrations with the playground and field conditions. Mr. Vitters reviewed the capital request procedure with the audience.

Ms. Salah thanked the Commission and the Recreation Department for taking the time to give the Stratton School playground the attention it needed.

Mr. Leonard indicated that the current equipment met current safety standards but new swings and additional swings were needed.

Summer Street

Mr. Leonard reviewed the current conditions of the Summer Street Playground. The Commission and Mr. Leonard discussed the use of the old spray pool with Mr. Connelly. Mr. Leonard indicated that the Summer Street playground needed to be replaced immediately and does not meet code.

Wellington Tennis Courts

Mr. Leonard reviewed the current court conditions and his recommendation to renovate the rear two courts but crack seal the front three courts. The Commission discussed this recommendation with Mr. Leonard. The Commission discussed the use of the courts by high school teams and physical education classes, as well as the public, Mr. Leonard agreed the best thing to do would be renovate all five courts together. Mr. Connelly will amend Mr. Leonard's estimates to include renovation of all five courts.

Ms. Mayer asked Mr. Connelly to resubmit the FY 2008 Capital requests with the revised cost estimates.

Pond Lane Lots Affordable Housing

Mr. Leavy from the Housing Corporation recapped last months presentation for the request to take one of two lots of Park Commission property on Pond Lane adjacent to Spy Pond Shore for an affordable housing unit. Mr. Leavy explained the plan would be to place housing on one of the lots with parking for residents and park users and renovate the other lot for passive recreation use. Mr. Leavy reviewed the conceptual plan with the Commission. Mr. Leavy indicated the plan would be to move the Atwood House to this parcel. Ms. Weiner indicated that the process would involve a vote of the Park Commissioners, Town Meeting and the Legislature. Ms. Mayer indicated that a formal public hearing would be needed by the Park Commission before any vote.

Ms. Worden reviewed the opinions for the Affordable Housing Task Force and comments from the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Ms. Worden indicated that her board was very undecided. Ms. Worden stated that she is against giving up open space for housing. Ms. Worden indicated that open space was limited in the community and giving up open space for affordable housing was not necessary.

Mr. Vitters expressed his appreciation with the efforts of Mr. Levy and Ms. Weiner but explained his apprehension of giving up open space and the permanency of it. Mr. Vitters is still willing to listen to the proposal. Ms. Campbell agreed with Mr. Vitters. Ms. Mayer pointed out the situation with Buzzell Field and giving rights to a piece of land many years ago that could possibly be used now in the current renovation. Ms. Mayer stated that she is willing to discuss the Pond Lane proposal further. Mr. Caccavaro stated that he was open to further discussion on this issue. Mr. Connelly asked if their intent was to move forward this year with the project. Ms. Weiner indicated that it was. Ms. Mayer stated that she wanted to have a discussion with the full Commission as Mr. Carabello was not present, before making a decision to move forward with a public hearing.

Rink Update

Mr. Connelly reviewed the personnel changes at the rink with Dan Brothers resigning and Dave Cunningham becoming interim Facility Supervisor. Mr. Connelly also reviewed the on going Capital Improvement study of the rink.

Recreation Update – Review of 2006 Summer Financial Numbers

Mr. Connelly reviewed last summers participation numbers, commenting that the programs were down by almost 200 participants overall. Mr. Connelly stated that he believed the issue was the quality of the programs and not necessarily the price. Mr. Connelly stated that he will continue to work with staff to improve the quality of the programs and that there are plans in place to restructure the existing summer activities.

Special Events

Alexander – 11/18 – Robbins Farm – 9 PM-12:30 AM – Approved – Ms. Campbell Motion, Second by Mr. Vitters, Approved 4-0

AHS – 5/1 or 5/4 – Spy Pond Field – 8 AM – 10 AM – Approved - Ms. Campbell Motion, Second by Mr. Vitters, Approved 4-0

Bat Houses – Approved for Turkey Hill - Mr. Vitters Motion, Second by Ms. Campbell, Approved 4-0

Review Current Projects

Mr. Connelly reviewed the current projects for Locke, Waldo, Thompson, Menotomy, Spy Pond and Robbins. Mr. Connelly reported that the Deb Hayes bench, which was vandalized at Locke was being repaired. Mr. Connelly indicated that DPW would purchase the Crabapple Tree for Robbins Farm and would meet with DPW for the water spickett at Waldo. Mr. Connelly will also check on the seeding for areas around the Thompson playground that were disturbed during the construction.

Committee Updates

Open Space

Ms. Mayer reviewed the two RFP's received to help the town update the open space plan. Ms. Mayer indicated that Vision 2020 would use the same questions in the censuses insert as in 2000 to receive some comparative data.

Ms. Mayer reviewed the information received at the Friends Advocacy Meeting. Issues including policies, role of Friends groups and communication were addressed. Some specific concerns that came out of that meeting included: signage for all passive parks and playgrounds, private group use of town facilities, and by-law to prohibit smoking at playgrounds. Ms. Mayer will forward the complete set of notes to the Commissioners when they become available.

Other

Mr. Carney asked if the Bishop School parents could be on the December agenda.

Ms. Campbell motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 PM

Respectively Submitted by:

Joseph Connelly
Director of Recreation