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Parks and Recreation Minutes 12/12/2000

Tuesday, December 12, 2000

The Parks and Recreation Commission meeting came to order at 7:30 PM in the Fox Library Conference Room. Commission members in attendance included Bernice Jones, Don Vitters and Mary Tegan. Also present were Superintendent of Recreation Joseph Connelly, Mark Shea of the Department of Public Works and Rich Bento Director of Public Works.

Public in attendance included: Leslie Mayer and Brian Hasbrouck.

Review of the Reservoir Beach and Dam Situation

Mr. Bento reviewed the current situation with the Reservoir Dam and gave background information concerning the inspection status. Mr. Bento stated that the inspection by DEM revealed a list of deficiencies to the dam's structure. Mr. Bento explained that DEM was currently using 1,000-year storm calculations to determine dam safety. Mr. Bento stated that he did ask DEM to consider a 500-year storm for calculations if the reservoir was not filled to capacity (159' level), but was left at 153' level throughout the year. Mr. Bento reviewed the most important findings of the DEM.

1. Deforestation of the dam.
2. Water level remaining at 153' level.

Mr. Bento reviewed the safety concerns of the DEM if the dam was to burst. Mr. Bento stated that the Town still wants to keep the reservoir as a flood control source. Mrs. Mayer and Mr. Hasbrouck discussed their involvement as members of the Reservoir Subcommittee of the Vision 20/20 Committee. Mrs. Mayer reviewed the results of the census survey that showed the overwhelming desire of the community to keep the beach as a swimming source.

The Commission and Mr. Bento discussed the effects of the dam on the future of the beach. Mr. Bento stated that he has hired engineers to look alternative solutions. The plan is to make the beach hydraulically independent from the rest of the reservoir. Mr. Bento reviewed the timetable with the Commission. Mr. Bento stated that the plan was not to miss a swimming season with any work that is done.

Mrs. Tegan asked if it was possible not to do anything to the dam and leave it as is. Mr. Bento and Mrs. Mayer stated that was not an option.

Mr. Bento and Mrs. Jones discussed which department would fund the project. Mr. Bento suggested that DPW take the lead and report to the Commission when information was available. Mr. Vitters stated the desire to have any work done at the site be compatible with the entire area. Both Mr. Bento and Mr. Vitters discussed the importance of looking at this situation in a positive light.

Mrs. Mayer and Mr. Hasbrouck stated that their subcommittee will be having a public hearing and working session in early spring or late winter. Mrs. Mayer invited members of the Park Commission to attend.

Spy Pond Shore and Crosby RFP

Mr. Vitters recommended splitting the projects in an RFP so to attract different landscape architects. The Commission agreed. Mr. Vitters and Mr. Bento discussed improvements that could be done to Spy Pond Shore to aesthetically improve the area. Mr. Vitters stated that it might make sense to include some additional maintenance such as PTS treatments to the area. Mr. Shea and Mr. Bento discussed the size of the area in question. Mr. Vitters asked Mr. Connelly to set-up a meeting with Pat Loheed, Mr. Bento and himself to discuss options.

Capital Update:

Mr. Connelly gave updates on Scannell Field, Hills Hill, Magnolia, Parallel Playground, Cutter Playground and Thorndike Field. Mr. Vitters stated the importance to improve Cutter Playground as stated to the abutters. Mr. Shea discussed a timetable and options.

Mrs. Mayer expressed concern that the Peirce School Playground was not in the school building project or in the Commissioner's capital requests. The Commission discussed their interpretation of previous events leading to the project losing CDBG funding. Mr. Vitters stated that he believed the funding previously approved for the project was removed for other needs, but would be replaced when the school project was underway. The Commission stated that this was told to them by Alan McClennan and Donald Marquis. The Commission stated that they would apply for monies for Peirce Playground through this year CDBG requests.

Mrs. Mayer expressed her concerns that the playground was currently not in any written plans. Mr. Vitters and Mr. Connelly explained that the reason why it was not in their capital requests. Mr. Connelly did explain that it was in their Park Improvement Master Plan.

Mr. Vitters and Mrs. Tegan explained that promises were on record and are in Commission minutes. Mr. Vitters will review the minutes of last April's Town Meeting to find the exact wording of the explanation for removing the Piece Playground from the CDBG funding plan.

Field Policy Review

Mr. Connelly reviewed the memo being mailed to field users. Mr. Connelly checked with the availability of the Commission for a January 23rd meeting. Mr. Connelly will mail out the information to the leagues and to other town officials.

Field Publicity Campaign

Mr. Vitters and the Commission discussed ways to publicize field renovations and field issues in the Arlington Advocate and on line. The Commission discussed the timing of the articles and size of the articles. Mr. Vitters asked the Commission members to be thinking of topics they may be interested in writing about for next months meeting. The Commission agreed that this would be a good way to educate residents to the field issues. Mr. Vitters and Mr. Connelly will contact the Arlington Advocate to see how this process would work.

Maintenance Report

Mr. Shea reported on Cutter Playground.

Recreation Report

Mr. Connelly reviewed the success of on-line registration and the Saturday basketball program

Other Business

Mr. Connelly reminded the Commissioners of the meeting with the Friend of Robbins Farm on Wednesday, December 13 at 7:30 PM at the Jefferson Cutter House.

Mrs. Tegan and Mr. Connelly discussed the Arlington Youth Sport Symposium. Mrs. Tegan expressed interest in being involved in any future symposiums.

Mrs. Jones reviewed her meeting with the Friend of Robbins Farm and Chief Ryan concerning Eastern Avenue traffic concerns.

Approval of October 10, 2000 and November 14, 2000 Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes. Mrs. Jones motioned to accept the minutes of October 10, 2000 and November 14, 2000. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Tegan and approved 3-0.

The Commission adjourned at 10:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

 Joseph J. Connelly,

Superintendent of Recreation