

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINTUES

Tuesday, December 8th, 2020

Approved 5-0 on 12-23-2020

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, December 8th, 2020 at 7:05pm.

Commission Members: Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Phil Lasker, Scott Walker, Shirley Canniff and Associate Member Sarah Carrier. Recreation Director Joe Connelly and Program Supervisor Zachary Vaillette were also in attendance. Associate Member, Scott Lever, was not in attendance.

Anticipated Speakers: Danielle Desilets

Members of the Public: Joy Ahern, Beth Melofchik, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, & Susan Stein.

Preliminary Matter: Leslie Mayer, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call. Ms. Mayer read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Ms. Mayer.

Open Forum – Public Comment

Beth Melofchik was present and stated the existing benches at Cooke's Hollow are not in great condition. Ms. Mayer stated that the Cooke's Hollow property is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Ms. Mayer recommended using the Town websites online feature to submit a request on this. Ms. Melofchik has stated that she has submitted several questions/requests already and has also spoken with Michael Rademacher of the DPW. Ms. Melofchik is looking for this to be addressed as the benches are a health hazard. Ms. Mayer directed that Ms. Melofchik should reach out to Emily Sullivan of Planning.

Bench Donation Request – Thorndike Field – Stan Rezendes by Kathleen Rezendes

Mr. Connelly stated that a Bench Donation Requested was received from Kathleen Rezendes & family. Ms. Rezendes is looking to place a bench in the memory of her late husband, Stan Rezendes. It was determined that a bench donation could be placed near Lake Street at Thorndike Field. There is currently only (1) bench at this property. Mr. Connelly stated that he visited the site with Ms. Rezendes & her daughter. The family understands and plans on going through the process. The donated bench will be placed on a concrete pad and will be handicap accessible. Ms. Mayer asked if a Commission vote was needed. No vote needed as details being shared for informational purposes only. Lake Street Request from family.

KZLA – Reservoir Update

Danielle Desilets, of KZLA, was present for the meeting to provide an update on the Reservoir Phase 2 Project. Ms. Desilets reported that the 100% design development plans submitted on November 13th. The firm is currently focusing on the required permitting with Arlington and Lexington. Unfortunately as hoped, a joint hearing date between the (2) Town's individual Conservation Commissions was not available until the end of February. With the goal for the project to go to bid before this, meeting and plans will now be finalized separately. Plans for the project were submitted to Arlington on December 4th. A hearing with the Arlington Conservation Commission will take place on December 17th. A hearing with the Lexington Conservation Commission is scheduled for January 4th, 2021. KZLA is in the process of finalizing the Lexington submission. Ms. Desilets stated that both Commissions are open to working together. Goal of KZLA is for the bid set to have 90% construction details by end of year with a copy to the Commission for review. An order of conditions and feedback from the Conservation Commissions will be added when received.

Again, the goal is to have the Phase 2 bid out in early February. KZLA has brought in a structural engineer for the overlook portion of the project and an electrical engineer for check in/shade shelter portion of the project. Ms. Desilets noted that the bid has gone out for the work needing to be completed on the concession & pump house buildings. Submissions for this bid are due on December 9th, with the final bid deadline being December 16th. As soon as a contractor is awarded the project, they will be able to begin work at any time. Ms. Desilets noted that the contractor will have permission to use the upper staff parking lot area at the Reservoir as a staging area.

Mr. Connelly stated that the building work is scheduled to be completed in mid-May. Ms. Rothenberg asked Ms. Desilets to review the overall project timeline with the Commission. Ms. Desilets stated the first step is to get the contract together

with the town, which typically takes (4) weeks. An example of this process was shared. If the bid goes out on February 1st, it will be open for about (3) weeks with a site walk occurring in this period. A contractor will be then awarded the project. By the end of March, the contract will be finalized and work can begin. Ms. Desilets noted that at this time, a contractor could possibly access the site and do demo work (playground) before the beach season. Work will not occur during the beach season and the remainder of work will begin/be completed following the closing of the beach. Mr. Connelly stated having the playground removed for the upcoming beach season would be beneficial due to its current condition.

Mr. Lasker stated from a contractor's point of view, accessing and staging may be difficult with what is proposed. With this, he is worried about the planned project schedule. If the Department is going to open the beach for the season, Mr. Lasker does not believe that the contractor will want to begin staging/work, stop, and then return after the beach season. He stated that this makes the overall project much more complicated, with issues related to staging materials. Mr. Lasker noted that he would be in support of the playground demo prior to the season. No other work or staging besides this should occur though. Splitting the project work will be more expensive and lead to issues with the staging area during the season (main parking lot). Ms. Mayer said trail work will be an inconvenience no matter what time of year it occurs as they will need to shut trail down. Ms. Mayer recommended staging on the far end of the parking lot closer to the dam area. Mr. Lasker believes the challenge with this is size of the equipment and possible difficulty of offloading equipment. Mr. Lasker plans to discuss these concerns with Mr. Connelly and Ms. Desilets offline. Ms. Mayer thanked Ms. Ms. Desilets for the updates provided.

Correspondence Received:

Mr. Connelly stated that Correspondence was received after the Meeting Agenda was sent to Commissioners. This correspondence, from Jonathan Rabinowitz, was regarding the lighting of playgrounds. This item be added to next meeting's agenda and discussed then.

Capital Project Updates

CPA Application Update

Mr. Connelly stated that the new snow melt pit at the Ed Burns Arena has been completed and is operational. December 28th is the deadline for all CPA Applications for FY 22. In relation to this, Mr. Connelly reported that he met with Ms. Mayer and representatives from Stantec regarding the Feasibility Study currently taking place. CPA Applications are ready to be submitted. Mr. Connelly is just waiting on the preliminary projects and their budgets that Stantec is creating. These should be completed and received by this Friday. Mr. Connelly will be able to and plans on reviewing all (3) CPA Applications (*Hurd Field, Spy Pond Playground, Robbins Farm Slides*) in full at the next Commission Meeting. Mr. Connelly noted that with the Robbins Farm Project, all additional items not related to the actual slide project have been removed. These items can be added in to the larger playground project if the future. More details on this will also be shared at the Commission's next meeting. Ms. Mayer asked if there was any idea on which projects would get funding and from where (CPA funding or capital funding). Mr. Connelly noted that CPA does not believe they can full fund the requested amounts for all (3) projects. Mr. Connelly stated that he wanted to bring up an item to note. If CPA funding is received, it does not need to be bonded. Any capital funding received would be bonded. Recreation would be responsible for partially paying the total bond. This was noted in relation to bonds for the Phase 1 Reservation Project. It is being requested that recreation contribute approximately \$44,000.00 this year for this projects bond. Mr. Connelly was not previously aware of this agreement. He then shared details about the yearly Reservoir Beach operation. Reservoir Beach is a great asset to the Arlington Community. The property is used year round by residents. During the (10) week beach season, Recreation usually breaks even on the operation. While on paper revenues show in a good year be around \$120,000 to \$125,000, this does not take into account the almost \$80,000 in staffing costs and cost for materials (chlorine). This also does not take into account any full time department staff overhead. Mr. Connelly noted this topic needs to be a larger and continued discussion. With that, the goal would be to get as much CPA funding as available.

Ms. Rothenberg gave an update on the Wellington Park Project. Ms. Rothenberg has been involved with the project alongside Emily Sullivan, Don Vitters, and representatives from the Mystic River Watershed Association. These individuals met last week and reviewed the 95% project completion documents. Mr. Vitters still has concerns on some plantings and Ms. Rothenberg has concerns with the playground equipment proposed. These concerns relate to maintenance, safety, and ADA Compliance.

Ms. Mayer noted to the Commission that Ms. Sullivan from Conservation has submitted a request for funding to CPA for work at Spy Pond. This project would be to have additional areas covered with the same rubberized surfacing material as path. This was noted as there are current issues with the installed material. The Commission spoke on this topic briefly and will be reaching out to Ms. Sullivan on the matter.

Task Group Updates: Town Wide Playground, Mountain Biking, & Field Policy

Mr. Lasker spoke on behalf of the Mountain Biking Task Force. Task Force Members recently met to rate the sites using a scaled system (different features). Based on this, any decision to move forward with mountain biking in Town would be based on the ratings. Mr. Lasker will report back to the Commission on the ratings. Mr. Connelly discussed the field policy working group. Mr. Connelly noted that Debby Hayes, his original predecessor, will be an open public member of the group. Ms. Hayes works for the Boys & Girls Club and her knowledge will be helpful for this process. Mr. Connelly is planning to have the group meet once before holidays and will begin the process in the New Year.

Recreation and Rink Updates

Mr. Connelly stated that earlier in the day, Governor Baker announced a rollback to Phase 3 Step 1. The department is waiting to see if this impacts operations. The Arlington High School hockey season starts this coming Monday. Arlington Catholic and Belmont Hill started this week. Mr. Connelly noted that there are restrictions on what can be done by each team based on their leagues. Middlesex League allows (3) practices a week. Mr. Connelly noted that the curfew causing the rink to close nightly at 9:30 has had a huge impact financially and on the schedule.

Mr. Vaillette provided an update on the Department's Travel Basketball. The program has about 150 participants playing on 15 different teams. There are (20)+ volunteer coaches this season and practices began this week. A staff member will be doing random drop ins on practices to make sure all COVID policies are being followed. Mr. Vaillette stated that Recreation assisted the BOH with the registrations for the COVID-19 Testing Pilot Program that is occurring at the Ed Burns Arena this week. Currently, the department is in the process of preparing program information for the upcoming spring/summer brochure. This is scheduled to be mailed to households in January, with registration for programs opening in February. All program information will be updated online as these program start dates approach.

Approval of Minutes – 11/10/2020 & 11/24/2020

The approval of Meeting Minutes from the November 10th & November 24th Park and Recreation Commission Meeting were discussed. The only edit noted to the November 10th minutes was that on the first page, it stated that Commission Member Scott Walker was not present. Mr. Walker was present on November 10th and this will be corrected. The Commission also determined to table the approval of the November 24th Meeting Minutes to their next meeting. The motion to approve the November 10th Commission Meeting Minutes, as amended, was made by Ms. Rothenberg. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker. The Commission voted to approve the November 10th Meeting Minutes with a vote of 4-0, at 8:09pm. Ms. Canniff obtained as she was not present for the November 10th Meeting.

Comments and Items for Future Meetings

- a. Robbins Farm Slide Options
- b. Feasibility Study Results and CPA
- c. Playground Lighting Correspondence Received
- d. Next Meeting December 22nd

Other

- The Business in the Parks Program has come to an end for 2020.
- Ms. Carrier asked for clarification on the completion percentage of the Phase 2 Reservoir Project with KZLA.

Ms. Canniff motioned to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker. Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved by Commissioners, 5-0, at 8:17pm. The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Program Supervisor, Zachary Vaillette.