

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINTUES

Approved 3-0-1

April 11, 2023

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its first in-person meeting in the second-floor conference room at the Community Center on Tuesday April 11, 2023 at 7:00pm.

Commission Members: Phil, Lasker, Leslie Mayer, Shirley Canniff, Jen Rothenberg, Josh Fenollosa and Sarah Carrier. Scott Walker was not in attendance. Recreation Director Joe Connelly was also present.

Anticipated Speakers: Cecily Miller, Rachel Oliveri, Juliette Bennett, Greta Mastro, Clara Schneider and Stewart Ikeda

Members of the public: Chris Carlsmith, Steve Kerlik, Barry Jaspen, Chuck Teroni

Preliminary Matter: Phil Lasker, Park & Recreation Commission chair, took formal attendance via a roll call and welcomed anticipated speakers and public attendees to the first in-person Park and Recreation Commission meeting since 2020.

AHS & Public Art Request Review

Cecily Miller began by thanking the Commission for taking the time to hear the group's presentation. The group is requesting that the Climate Futures project be approved for six months as a pilot program rather than the initial request of three years.

AHS student interns Juliette Bennett, Greta Mastro and Clara Schneider shared a slide show presentation outlining the history of the Climate Futures project started by Tom Starr. The goal of the project is to show climate change is real, prompting questions, discussions, and change. The interns explained the extensive research each student conducted while creating the future markers. They also stressed the importance of installing markers in parks that would connect the predictions to the location, encouraging a feeling of reality within the community.

The Commission commended the interns for their passion, research, and presentation. The Commission requested more information on the proposed installation, location, and timeline as well as the QR codes and posts for the markers. It was noted that smartphone use cannot be assumed considering the demographic of park users. The group discussed a suggestion to post laminated notices on park bulletin boards to inform users about the project goals and future markers. Ms. Mayer stated that markers cannot be installed on trees as shown in the presentation slides.

Mr. Connelly stressed that the Commission does not determine what constitutes art. He expressed shared concerns about setting a precedent for message specific projects – "if the Commission says yes to one group, they must say yes to everyone". Previous conversations indicate that users do not want to see park spaces used for advertising, memorials, etc. These types of projects are typically met with resistance and the Commission does not permit these types of installations on Recreation property. Ms. Miller stated that the Arts Commission would be responsible for determining what is considered art. Ms. Canniff noted that users proposing projects with opposing viewpoints would have the same rights.

Mr. Ikeda shared statements of support and suggested that the pilot program be implemented as soon as possible so that the markers would be installed before EcoFest. He also recommended leaving the markers in place through Town Day to increase public exposure and awareness.

Ms. Rothenberg made a motion to approve the project as a pilot program for six months, to be revisited in October, with the following conditions; notice language to be reviewed and approved by Mr. Connelly, markers can be installed in the requested

locations but not attached to trees, an email blast will go out informing the public about the project. The motion was seconded by Ms. Canniff and approved by roll call vote.

Ms. Rothenberg – Yes

Ms. Mayer – Yes

Ms. Canniff – Yes

Mr. Lasker – Yes

Bench Donation – Reservoir:

Mr. Connelly received a bench donation request from David Morgan in honor of Open Space Committee Member Ann LeRoyer. The request does not require a vote.

Capital Project Updates

Spy 98% complete and Parmenter 98% complete

- PIP passed lab test.
- Rubber being installed this week.
- Handrails are installed.
- Parmenter paving work will be completed in the spring after PIP installation.
- Estimated opening in early May after inspections.

Robbins Playground

- Third Public Input Meeting was a success. Revisions have been well received.
- Mr. Connelly met with the agency today. Adventure Shed plans will be available for review before April 25, 2023.
- The project is budget is currently at the high end.

Arlington Reservoir Phase II

- Small punch list items remain. Mr. Connelly will reach out to Sumco. Planting replacement will take place in the spring along with path clean up.
- Landscaper will remove sand from grass areas.

Stratton, Peirce, Bishop ARPA Project –No change

- Bishop is open. Sealcoating will be done in the spring. Working on punch list now. It has been reported to Mr. Connelly that drainage issues are causing erosion between the basketball court and the third-base bench. A retaining wall will be built behind the bench to save the basketball court. The birch trees behind the wind chimes will be removed to allow for the mound to be graded and mulched. The trees will be replanted.
- Stratton is open. Working on punch list now.
- Peirce is open but will be closed this week and April vacation week so that the mulch can be removed. PIP will be installed next week.
- Mr. Connelly provided the School Department fencing options for Stratton but has received no response to date.

Hurd Field Project

- All base bid items are complete except plantings and electricity (Eversource). Expected opening Memorial Day weekend.
- All changes approved to date. Scoreboard will be installed in July.
- Next steps include installing irrigation and a generator, adding water bags for trees, removing temporary fencing to allow access to the path. Ms. Mayer noted that the hidden corners of the field are filled with empty containers and bottles. Mr. Connelly will look into security lighting.

Poets Corner

- Filing with ConCom on Wetland delineation on Thursday, April 13, 2023. Follow-up public meeting scheduled for next Thursday. Chuck Teroni stated the resource areas located on the parcel owned by the Archdiocese will require approval from ConCom.
- The Commission briefly discussed the potential impact Town Meeting Article 12 and potential substitute motions to remove the CPA request. Ms. Canniff noted that the Archdiocese has already indicated that if Article 12 and substitute motions are approved by Town Meeting, the church land will be sold to a developer.

Representatives from Arlington Youth Soccer and Ultimate Sports were in attendance to discuss the needs of user groups and potential field ideas. Ms. Rothenberg also stated the importance of building up the girls' softball program which currently uses only AHS and Buzzell Fields.

Mr. Lasker explained how the project would allow the Town to rest fields for at least one season, which is important to the regrowth and longevity of the fields. Due to constant use and limited fields, the Recreation Department is currently not able to rest any fields.

Arlington Court Needs Assessment

- First public input session was a success.
- A public survey is underway. Results so far indicate strong support for more tennis courts. Ms. Rothenberg noted that there is also a need for multiple full-size courts in a single location.

CPA Requests – Hills Hill

- Waiting on Town Meeting. The Select Board has voted unanimously to support Hill's Hill. Mr. Teroni requested more information on the land, questioning whether it was protected by Article 97. Ms. Mayer and Mr. Fenollosa explained the history of how the land was gifted/deeded to the Town specifically for youth recreation use and not protected by Article 97.

Discussion of Town Meeting Warrant Article 12 – Artificial Turf Moratorium

A forum which will be conducted by a facilitator and a panel of experts has been scheduled for May 2nd to discuss the pros and cons of turf fields. The citizen created warrant article demands a 3-year moratorium on turf projects to allow for additional studies. The TM moderator has stated that Article 12 will be tabled until after the forum.

Ms. Mayer noted that the Select Board has voted "no action" on the article but anticipates that substitute motions will be filed after TM begins.

Ms. Canniff made a motion to support the Select Board's recommendation of no action on Article 12, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. Approved 4-0 by roll call vote.

Ms. Rothenberg – Yes
Ms. Mayer – Yes
Ms. Canniff – Yes
Mr. Lasker – Yes

If the moratorium passes, all potential turf projects under the jurisdiction of ConCom would be stopped. Belmont Hill has paused all action on the Poet's Corner project. The Commission discussed the need for projects to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis rather than prohibited under a blanket moratorium. Ms. Canniff reiterated the Archdiocese's intention to sell their parcel to a developer if the project does not go through which would result in the loss of open space. Ms. Rothenberg noted that the school department has installed turf fields at Arlington Catholic and Arlington High School. Mr. Teroni noted that ConCom determined that the small area under their jurisdiction beneath the existing turf sites were not cause for concern.

Mr. Carlsmith and Mr. Kerlik, Arlington Youth Soccer, inquired if there were any informational documents or blogs available to the public. They also asked about potential field sizes if the project were to move forward. Discussions have included a 90' baseball diamond, a condition of Belmont Hill, 11 v 11 soccer field as well as three 7 v 7s and one 9 v 9. This space would also allow for expansion of other user groups including Ultimate Sports.

Ms. Canniff made a motion to approve Chair Phil Lasker to draft a letter to Town Meeting members regarding Article 12 and related FAQ and to be reviewed by Ms. Mayer prior to distribution, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. Approved 4-0 by roll call vote.

Ms. Rothenberg – Yes
Ms. Mayer – Yes
Ms. Canniff – Yes
Mr. Lasker – Yes

Town Public Forum on Artificial Turf Fields – To be held on May 2nd in the Town Hall Auditorium. Mr. Connelly stated that the forum will be facilitated and will include a panel of experts to educate the public with facts and information.

Approval of Minutes: 2/28/2023

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve the minutes of February 28, 2023, as presented, seconded by Ms. Canniff. Approved 4-0 by roll call vote.

Ms. Rothenberg – Yes
Ms. Mayer – Yes
Ms. Canniff – Yes
Mr. Lasker – Yes

Comments and Items for Future Meetings: N/A

Correspondence Received: N/A

New Business: N/A

Open Forum – Public Comment:

- Mr. Fenollosa - The Bike Park Group clean-up event at Hill's Hill was very successful. A large group of children/teens and a state senator participated.
- Mr. Jaspen - Recommended leaving the Climate Futures markers up longer than the approved six months to see if the predictions come true.
- Mr. Teroni - Learned a lot about the Poet's Corner project. The Archdiocese land is outside the jurisdiction of ConCom.
- Ms. Garnett – Will be moving out of state. Multiple ConCom members will serve as liasons to the Park and Recreation Commission in her place.
- Ms. Rothenberg – Users are seeking more court use for Pickleball.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to adjourn at 9:38pm, seconded by Ms. Canniff. Approved 4-0 by roll call vote.

- Ms. Rothenberg – Yes
- Ms. Mayer – Yes
- Ms. Canniff – Yes

- Mr. Lasker - Yes

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Deanna Stacchi.