



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Town of Southwick

Park and Recreation Commission

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Park and Recreation Meeting Minutes

August 9, 2023

6:30 pm

Hybrid Meeting

Attendance: Jeanne Reed-Waldron, David DeiDolori, Rick Harriman, Michael Sheil, John Whalley III, Cindy Sullivan

Absent: Cara Cartello

The meeting was opened by Commissioner Jeanne Reed-Waldron at 6:31 pm. The next meeting of the Park and Recreation will be September 13, 2023.

Public Comment: No public comment

Review Minutes and Bills

Motion was made by David DeiDolori and seconded by Michael Sheil to approve the meeting minutes for July 12, 2023 as presented. Motioned accepted unanimously.

Buildings and Grounds Update: David Sutton reported on the following items

Whalley Park Maintenance Staff: David Sutton reported the Whalley park staff were under the impression they only needed to line the fields for high school games. He has retrained his staff to know what procedures needed to be followed. He taught them how to use an edging machine he reported it took him several hours to train them to do this around the sidewalk areas. Using the lawn mower or scag to mow the lawns.

Commissioner Reed-Waldron asked about the staff working. David reported he has 3 people at the park working. David D. asked about the lining of the fields even after the complaints came through. He (David D) emphasized the importance of the fields needing to be lined for our paying customers. David said he would make sure the fields were taken care of for every game even on the weekends. Commissioner Reed-Waldron asked about the new policy and if it has been reviewed and addressed with the employees at Whalley Park. Suggested times need to be spread out and work needs to be completed. David wants coaches to call him on his personnel cellphone number if there are any issues, but they are not doing so. Commissioner Reed-Waldron would like David Sutton to be on top of the employees. David discussed that 60 hours isn't enough nor are they getting paid enough. He also said he has other responsibilities besides Whalley Park. He reported again he will be spending more time with them. David D. wants the fields to be the priority and other things should be secondary but still needs to be done.

Softball field was also discussed. David is working on getting the fence moved to make it regulation. Commissioner Harriman said the inner circle around the mound doesn't need to be done. They showed up only 10 minutes before the start of the game to line the field they need to show up earlier.

Field Maintenance: David Sutton said they are doing the best they can. The 70 foot has been rented and needs to be ready for them to play. David is going to take care of because the tractor is on site now. The York rake is being used and the staff is being trained on it. Tall grass areas need to be weed wacked and around the playground. Sharepoint software should be accessible, so staff know when games and lining fields. Also suggested that employees are being reminded and supervised. Commissioner Reed-Waldrone wants expectation of park maintenance to be made clear to employees. Commissioner Harriman also asked about the grass clippings being placed in the correct place. David assured the board that is now happening. Soccer has not committed to the Fall practice schedule at this time.

Stage: The stage the Rotary Club uses has been kept up all summer. This does cause a hindrance when other people are renting the pavilion. We need a solution to this issue. We would like to invite the rotary to our meeting in October to discuss how this will be working next year. If there is no room in the garage, then we need to have a better plan.

Communication with Commissioners: Commissioners asked for more communication between David Sutton and the Commissioners. They have asked him to come to meetings and call or send emails, so they are aware of what's going on. David updated the commissioners on fertilizer at Whalley Park. Asked for Walt to come to the meeting in October to discuss fertilizer. David D. asked David Sutton to respond to emails and update the commissioners on larger items. For example, the sidearm mowing on the Rail trail. Open communication is important.

Beach update: Trees were cut down by the neighbor. Ultimately saved the town money.

Whalley Park:

- a. **Sun Shade:** Discussed options and location. Commissioner Whalley will get brochure from the vendor who designed the playground to see what they have. We will hold off on quote until we see what the company has available for options. Ms. Rebecca Perron sent photo of where she wanted the location of the sunshade to be located. She didn't have an opinion on size and material etc. Postponed until next meeting.
- b. **Spray Park Update:** Commissioner Whalley updated the group on Rob Levesque. He doesn't really know where it stands. He will be in contact with him. We will try to schedule a meeting to nail down the details of the scope of service.

Pickleball CPC Application: Trying to be clear about who signs the CPC application. Jeanie is going to investigate whether the applications need to be split into two applications based on location and who signs them. Update at next meeting hopefully will go to CPC at September meeting.

Rail Trail: Sidearm mower was used. Discussed rail trail cameras. No need to update them currently. Police dept is not monitoring them anymore based on dispatch being moved to Westfield. If it becomes an issue, we will address it. Mr. Joe Deedy has some fill for the rail trail access road. Mr. Whalley said he had a spot on his land it can be placed for future use. They will meet to figure that out.

Fireworks Fund: Commissioner Reed-Waldron would like the fireworks to be placed under Park and Recreation funded by the town and we would pay the vendors. Mr. Deedy spoke on the issue and said he would organize the event as he does through his organization and connections. He no longer has the available funds or resources to continue to supplement the lack of donations to the event. We discussed asking for \$14,000 from the town and the commission would not be responsible for raising the funds or organizing the event. We would coordinate with the Southwick Civic Fund to make it an event for the town. We will keep it under old business moving forward to come up with a plan.

Town Beach:

Beach closing on August 20th. Senior Sizzler went very well. It was at town hall because of weather. We appreciate that Joe Deedy helped make the event special with all his extra food items he offered the Seniors for free. He also provided his ice cream truck. The beach staff came to town hall and worked setting up, serving, and cleaning up. The Police Department also assisted with food prep and serving. LT. Bannish made his pasta salad, and the Seniors loved it. The Rattletones were amazing. The Seniors were dancing and laughing, and everyone had a great time.

Old Town Beach: Letter was sent to resident.

Old Business:

Rugged Maniac: Discussed doing parking. Decision was made to not collect money and put a sign at the end of the driveway saying no Rugged Maniac parking. The pre-paid parking has become an issue. No barriers to close the park but the commissioners didn't want to collect the money. We will continue to discuss this issue moving forward.

Locking restrooms at Whalley Park: Discussed issue of the locks on the bathrooms. We discussed locking the bathroom automatically WIFI is an issue. We were informed that there are other ways to lock the doors without using WIFI. We will continue to investigate this issue. Mr. Deedy will share info and we will work on it. It needs to be done as the safety issues are continuing and commissioners are receiving complaints.

Meeting called to a close

8:02 pm Mike Sheil motioned to adjourn the meeting; David DeiDolori seconded the motion. The meeting was called to a close.

Jeanne Reed-Waldron_____

John Whalley_____

David DeiDolori_____

Mike Sheil_____

Rick Harriman_____

