

APPROVED COPY

Parks Commission Meeting Minutes

September 28, 2011 at Legion Hall

ATTENDEES: Don Black, Dave Howes, Jeff Ohringer, Laurie Smigelski

ABSENT: Jon Strauss

GUESTS: Don Billingsley, Pierre Comtois, Tom Delaney, John H. Dunleavy Jr., Anna Eliot, Ellen Emerson, K. Wm. Krikorian, Vartan Krikorian, Jay Lawrence, Rick Mason, Val Prest

Meeting was called to order at 7:08 by Mr. Black.

READING OF THE MINUTES: Minutes for the September 14th meeting were read. They were unanimously approved with amendments.

BILLS SIGNED: There were no bills to be signed.

FIELD USE REQUESTS

- Jay Lawrence on behalf of the First Parish Church for a Halloween Spook Walk on Minuteman Common – access needed from October 24th through November 1st.
 - Mr. Lawrence requested a change from Minuteman Common to the Town Field. He will need access starting on Monday, October 24th or Tuesday, October 25th. Mr. Black will meet with Mr. Lawrence to discuss the characteristics of the Town Field that will influence the setup of the Spook Walk. The Police Department, Groton Electric Light Department, and the Library will be notified of the event schedule. The Park Commissioners unanimously voted for approval of the Halloween Spook Walk at the Town Field.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- A paper for closing out the CPC Millstone project was received for signature. The Commissioners unanimously voted for it to be signed. Mr. Black, as Project Manager, signed the closeout paper.
- A copy of a letter dated September 27th to Tom Delaney, DPW Director, from Milton Kinney, Building Commissioner/Zoning Enforcement Officer, was received on. It referenced a safety inspection of the Exhibition Hall barn at Hazel Grove held recently. Mr. Kinney wrote in the letter that a plan for stabilization of the barn must be in place and approved by the Building Department no later than October 7, 2010. Failure to do so will cause the Town of Groton to move forward in addressing the matter.

REPORTS

- Exhibition Hall at Hazel Grove Park discussion continued from the last meeting.
 - There is a \$30,000 request on the Town Meeting warrant in order to dismantle the hall and preserve it for rebuilding later on. This money is not designated for fixing the building, only dismantling. Ms. Eliot said that the Selectmen do not want to spend any money on shoring up the building. They do not want to take any chances that the building would fall on people and/or horses. Mr. Prest mentioned that if the building were taken down, it would lose its historical value. This would deter plans to put it on the National Historic Registry.
 - Mr. Prest inquired if the shoring up was for historical reasons. Ms. Smigelski replied that the premise is to buy time for the Hazel Grove Committee to submit their final report next June. They will be making recommendations on what to do for the site in increments of 1, 3, and 5 years. It is believed that the Exhibition Hall will be pertinent to those findings.
 - Ms. Eliot asked if the barn is grandfathered for building code issues. Mr. Prest said if the barn is found to be 30% - 40% against building codes, then the current building codes would kick in.
 - At present, there is a bid of \$4,000-\$8,000 to shore up the buildings. Mr. Black expressed concern as to where the funds would come from. It was questioned if the DPW would be able to do the work to offset some of the cost. Mr. Delaney said the DPW would not have the time to do the work this fall. Much discussion ensued regarding where the funding might come from and how to get the work done.
 - Bill Krikorian, a licensed builder and one of the horse owners, spoke on his own behalf and not that of the Riding and Driving Club. He has volunteered his expertise and time to do some of the work. He feels that the club should pay a portion of the expense to shore the building up. He said the annual membership is \$4,000. He believes that the bulk of the membership dues should go to solving this issue. He also asked if the town could pay the money upfront and the club could pay it back over time.
 - Mr. Prest said the steel cables in the hall are the only thing keeping it together right now. He also said that it would take \$250,000 to fix it permanently, not temporarily.
 - Mr. Mason asked how long would the shoring up last. Mr. Black replied that the Concord company said up to ten years.
 - Discussion around the barn being partially empty brought information that the club expects the barn to be full in November. They are expecting about eight new horses.

- Mr. Delaney asked if anyone knew of other barns that had been shored up that the owners might give information on how they funded them and how the work was done.
- The key concern by everyone throughout the meeting is that no one wants to see the barn come down. Funding for shoring up is a key issue. Who should pay for it – the town or the riding club? The barn is insured by the town, but should the riding club pay for the repairs because they are utilizing the property? If Hazel Grove is shut down by building code violations, will the riding club be able to come back in the spring? The estimated time of closure, if it happens, is from November 15th to April 15th. If a demolition permit is given will there be a six month demolition delay because of the historic value (which would give more time to figure things out and resolve the issue so a demolition would not occur)? Mr. Black said the Historic Commission has the authority to waive the six month delay clause.
- Mr. Black will speak with Mr. Kinney of the Building Department to negotiate a different deadline date other than October 7th, in order to get another Parks meeting in and allow the Riding and Driving Club time to get together and discuss what they could do.
- The Parks Commissioners have asked that the Riding and Driving Club come back to the next meeting on October 12th with a definitive plan on what they would be able to do to help resolve this situation.
- The Parks Commissioners will take a position at the next meeting on whether or not to close Hazel Grove for the winter.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Cow Pond parking – Mr. Delaney explained that the area which needs mowing but can't be parked on is part of the capped landfill. He suggested that the DPW area be used to park in. Two signs were put up last week to send people to that area and it appears to be working out well. Discussion around other alternatives to gain more parking continued. Nothing definitive came from that discussion.

OTHER:

- Ms. Smigelski brought up the e-mail that Parks received regarding the irrigation system at the Forge Village fields. The e-mail questioned why the sprinklers were on while it was raining very heavily. They are on a timer. The commissioners discussed and voted unanimously that next year they will put rain sensors on the sprinklers.
- Mr. Ohringer asked about the moratorium on fertilizing the fields and commons for the rest of the year. The Commissioners discussed and agreed that Mr. Ohringer could continue to oversee the fertilizing the fields till the end of the sports year.

- Mr. Howes asked how could the Commissioners help with the funding of the Hazel Grove situation. Mr. Black suggested that they ask the Groton Trust Funds to help out. Ms. Smigelski noted that ultimately the barn is a town building. The Riding and Driving Club currently pay for porta-potties and electricity.
- The Commissioners agreed that, at this point with current information, the position they are likely to take is to close the Hazel Grove barn for the winter.

ADJOURN/NEXT MEETING: Meeting was adjourned at 8:54pm. The next meeting will be held at the Legion Hall on Wednesday, October 12th at 7:00pm.

Respectively Submitted,

Becky Babcock

Administrative Assistant

Parks Commission



TOWN OF GROTON

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Office of:
Building Commissioner
Zoning Enforcement Officer

September 27, 2011

Town of Groton
Tom Delaney, DPW Director
173 Main St
Groton, MA 01450

Re: Town of Groton Hazel Grove Park (Fairgrounds property), Exhibition Hall, Jenkins Rd

Dear Mr. Delaney,

As you are aware, a safety inspection of the barn known as the Exhibition Hall located on the above referenced property was conducted recently. It is my understanding that as a Town building, you are responsible for its oversight. When the safety inspection was conducted, the structural integrity of the building was a concern for any future snow loading. As noted by structural engineer, Lynwood Prest, any snow loading to this barn could cause a structural failure and the barn could collapse. To date, I am unaware of any plans or actions taken to address this building's condition.

Please be advised that no later than October 7, 2011, a plan for stabilization of this barn must be in place and approved by this department. Failure to do so will cause the Town of Groton to move forward directly in addressing this matter.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact this office.

Respectfully,

Milton Kinney, C.B.O.
Building Commissioner / Zoning Enforcement Officer

cc: Park Commission – Don Black, Building Department-file