

TOWN OF GROTON

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**Park Commissioners**

Jonathan Strauss, Chair
Laurie Smigelski, Vice-Chair
Kenneth Bushnell
Robert Flynn

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 26, 2013
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Legion Hall, 75 Hollis Street, Groton
Commission attendees: Jonathon Strauss, Laurie Smigelski, Kenneth Bushnell, Robert Flynn
Guests: Anna Eliot, Bruce Easom, Meredith Scarlett, Phil Jordan, Gineanne Haberlin, Tim Svarckopf

Jon Strauss opened the meeting at 7:03 pm. In the interest of time, review of the minutes was deferred to a later date.

PARC grant application:

Bruce Easom asked the Park Commission to send a letter to Town Manager requesting that a warrant article be prepared for Fall Town Meeting that would transfer the care and custody of Ledge Rock field to the Park Commission. Melissa Cryan at the Commonwealth reviewed the Spring Town Meeting language and did not find it sufficient to meet the requirements of the PARC grant.

Bruce Easom made a second request asking the Park Commission to ask Town Manager to prepare a warrant article for Fall Town Meeting that places a conservation restriction on Ledge Rock field as required by the PARC grant process as well as the Community Preservation Act process. Please ask Town Counsel to provide a draft of the two proposed warrant articles to the Park Commission (Jon Strauss and Bruce Easom) by July 10, 2013. The PARC grant application is due July 17, 2013 and the grant application working group will spend the final days assembling the individual components of the application.

The group discussed potential restrictions that might be a part of the final language.

Laurie Smigelski moved that the Park Commission accept Bruce Easom's request and send letter to Town Manager detailing the requested action on these two warrant articles. Ken Bushnell seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Football requests:

Park Commissioners discussed a request that came in from the football use group to install temporary stands along the Cow Pond field used for football. The ensuing discussion highlighted the fact that the sport uses at Cow Pond are closely interlaced there. Will construction of the bleachers disrupt the fields or make it difficult for other sports operating at other times. After some discussion, the Commissioners decided that a formal proposal and presentation for bleachers is needed in order for the Park Commission to adequately assess the impact of the proposal.

The football use group also requested that the field used for football in the fall be laid up in the spring season. Phil Jordan, the president of the lacrosse use group opposed lay up without a discussion of the use of other fields as options. Phil Jordan would like to explore field use and field alternatives with football before the decision is made on laying up. He continued, saying that he would like to build a lacrosse plan that dovetails with soccer and football use.

It was noted that jurisdiction remains with the Park Commission even though operations for various sports may be autonomous. Ken Bushnell commented that every sport that slices, seeds and aerates after its playing season and before handing over to the next season's sport is the way to proceed with maximum field productivity and usefulness.

Hazel Grove Update:

Tim Svarckopf updated the Park Commissioners on several project under way at Hazel Grove. The authority status of Hazel Grove to manage the grounds is in question so Hazel Grove will act as a 'friends of' group until further notice.

The shed is coming tomorrow (June 27, 2013). A waterproof shell plus siding will be added mid-month.

The group is removing the dilapidated red horse trailer and other trash.

A welcome kiosk is planned to be constructed as part of an eagle scout project. The eagle scout will fundraise and build this summer.

Money is needed for signs taking the form of sandwich boards. Good communications and improved signage raise visibility and raise exposure to nontraditional use groups at the site. A sign may be installed at the intersection of Mill Street and Jenkins Road to point to the location of Hazel Grove.

To the left of the Exhibition Hall, the group has removed the paddocks and regraded the soil in that area. More general clean-up is planned.

The group plans to have a pre submission hearing with the Community Preservation Committee. Three projects are contemplated:

1. Pursue National Historic Registration. Hazel Grove's harness track is one of two surviving public tracks in the Commonwealth [Spencer is the other town]. Some other towns maintain public riding rings and trails for equestrian use.
2. Clearing for parking near trailhead near the trail to Fitch's Bridge. This area is heavily wooded. Jon Strauss suggested that since the Cutler field work involves clearing trees, perhaps the tree work at Hazel Grove could be added to obtain a better price.
3. Bring in utilities, meaning bringing Town water and burying electrical.

Other projects include replacing a section of track fencing. This project cost is \$5,000 and the Park Commission has agreed to put \$2,500 from the FY14 budget for this project.

Permitting will be needed and permit applications are put in on behalf of the Town of Groton. Debris has been found at the site. It is unclear whether the debris was dumped by the Pony Club or the Riding and Driving Club. A bid on trenching was requested. Well costs and rates of flow necessary for fire protection drive the need for Town water on site. Gineanne Haberlin will send e-mail to the Fire Department regarding the use of tanks for holding emergency water. Rob Flynn suggested involving Nashoba Technical School.

The Hazel Grove Agricultural Association created a website to help coordinate use groups and organize improvements. Casual equestrian use is increased due to increased public communication about available times. The Hazel Grove group has registered as a nonprofit with the Commonwealth and has a federal tax identification number. The Riding and Driving Club is a nonprofit and the Pony Club has federal 501(c)(3) status.

Budget Update:

The Park Commissioners reviewed remaining FY13 general fund monies and agreed to spend money for sandwich boards for Hazel Grove (about \$407), purchase rails and paint from Moores Lumber (about \$650) and as there is no standing inventory for U.S. flags, purchase eleven replacement flags from Carrot-Top Industries (about \$318). One bill for sand and gravel (\$764.58) was misinvoiced by the vendor to the Groton School instead of to the Park Commission. The Commissioners will prioritize that bill for payment if it has not already been paid.

Field Use Request:

Request made by Victor Volpe, registrar for Groton Dunstable Youth Soccer Club for use of Cow Pond 2 field from July 11, 2013 to August 1, 2013. More specifically, the application requests use of the field for five evenings (6 pm to 9 pm).

Rob Flynn moved to approve the field use permit request. Laurie Smigelski seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Jon Strauss will send thank you notes to Don Black and the Groton Garden Club for their respective contributions to Groton's parks and fields.

Laurie Smigelski moved to adjourn the meeting around 9 pm. Ken Bushnell seconded and motion carried 4:0.

The next meeting will be held on July 11 and a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Park Commission will be held on July 15, 2013.

Notes by Fran Stanley.