

Town of Groton

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Park Commissioners

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

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 11, 2013
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Legion Hall, 75 Hollis Street, Groton
Commission attendees: Jonathan Strauss, Robert Flynn, Gineane Haberlin, Laurie Smigelski
Guests: Kevin Potter (Lawrence Academy Athletics Director) and Tom Delaney (Department of Public Works Director)

Jonathan Strauss opened the meeting at 7 pm.

Field Use Request

Kevin Potter was present to represent Lawrence Academy's request for use of a Town field for soccer practice. Park Commissioners took opportunity to discuss prior and future cooperation between the Town, the school district and the private school. Lawrence Academy (LA) has used this field for this purpose for the past 10 years. LA lines the field, uses the field for practice only and is careful to avoid use when portions of the field are wet. Kevin Potter stated that LA is open to reciprocal requests for use of LA facilities from the Town of Groton. Kevin Potter anticipates submitting a field use request form for use of the Town Field's 90 foot diamond for junior varsity baseball practice in the Spring.

Jonathan Strauss explained the need for a Certificate of Insurance and Robert Flynn asked LA, as a field user, to alert the Town about field conditions that require maintenance or Park Commission attention.

Gineane Haberlin moved to approve the field use permit request for the Town Field behind the public library as described in Kevin Potter's application subject to the submission of a certificate of insurance. Robert Flynn seconded and motion carried 4:0 (Kenneth Bushnell absent).

Coordination with Department of Public Works

Jonathan Strauss thanked Tom Delaney for improving the driveway entrance to the Cow Pond Field parking lot. DPW employees applied an asphalt apron to allow for better traction with less erosion at this entrance.

Tom Delaney provided Park Commissioners with an overview of DPW operations with respect to DPW work on properties under Park Commission supervision. The Town hires two summer time employees plus one supervising employee (foreman) to cut grass. Labor, gasoline, mowing equipment and maintenance of the equipment are all paid for out of the DPW budget. The summer time employees are paid \$10/hour and work from May 15 to November 15. DPW has never repaired nets, fertilized, limed or seeded Park Commission properties. Occasionally, DPW employees will do other small repair projects such as installing fence rails, hot top for parking lot entrance, etc. Perhaps 4 to 5 thousand dollars a year are spent on weed trimmers and other supplies. As Tom Delaney recalls, the Park Commission only owns the infield mower and an ancient tractor stored in a garage adjacent to the Town Field behind the public library. When grass grows more slowly due to Summer 'burn', then more side projects can be done. When grass grows quickly or another super priority is present (like the October 2011 snow storm that downed trees across many roads), then no Parks related side projects or repair requests are done. There is no DPW line item for any capital improvements to be done on behalf of Parks.

Gineane Haberlin thanked Tom Delaney for supplying a couple of empty roll-offs to Hazel Grove. Tom Delaney explained that he could often respond to minor requests such as this if given enough lead time to work it into his employees' schedule. Supplies like stone dust must be purchased via prevailing wage law. The only known exception is for the hire of a contractor who is an owner operator such that he/she does not have employees doing the work. Typically, the DPW can make progress on Park related projects on rainy days and during the fall and spring. Tom Delaney asked to be informed about any building maintenance issues that the Park Commissioners observed. The example of the leaking roof at the Town Field garage was given. Notices can be sent to highway@townofgroton.org.

Robert Flynn asked Tom Delaney to share field maintenance issues that he observed with the Commissioners. He asked Tom Delaney's crew to paint the fence rails purchased at the end of FY13 for use on Minuteman Common. The group discussed Town Field drainage. Tom Delaney's crews have been working on this issue and the problem is somewhat alleviated. If the basketball court is repaved, then this work needs to be contracted out to contractors with the right equipment to create a smooth finish. However, if the basketball court is demolished, then this is perhaps two days' work and Tom would replace the court with loam and seed. Finally, the group discussion touched on broken split rail fencing at the Town Playground (Christine Hanson Memorial Playground). Purchasing and replacing the broken rails is an example of the type of small project that DPW can typically accomplish if allowed enough latitude to do the work on its own schedule.

Jonathan Strauss asked Tom Delaney how to get a Town budget that allows the Park Commission to do time sensitive work more quickly. Park Commissioners envision that any employee hired would be supervised by the DPW. Tom Delaney explained that with one dedicated employee (foreman) and the two summer time employees, the work load of these employees is maxed out with mowing. The current mowing does not include all of the Town fields. For example, the 11-acre Hazel Grove site is mowed by volunteers using their own equipment.

Tom Delaney hypothesized that if the Town builds Ledge Rock field, then he recommend that the employees be expanded to include 1 extra full time employee to be added to the existing complement and for this crew to have bigger equipment (a larger mower). Until then, Tom Delaney is looking for economical ways to address demand. For example, he is exploring the purchase of a second hand mower to be sent to Hazel Grove. If that comes to pass, then the field would still be mowed by volunteers, but the volunteer would not have to use their own equipment to mow the field.

Tom Delaney observed that some jobs are not that much more expensive under the prevailing wage law. For example, a job that uses a lot of equipment but few manpower hours might result in a negligible price difference. Conversely, a job that is mostly labor will cost considerably more when the prevailing wage scale is applied.

The group discussed ways to expand and improve the Cow Pond parking lot. Tom Delaney recommended a dirt parking lot and use of one or two retention walls. Lots of material would need to be shifted.

Gineane Haberlin asked about coordination between DPW, Parks and the Groton Pool and Golf Center with certain pieces of equipment that may have overlapping uses. Could the Park Commission borrow a Groton Pool and Golf Center slice seeder to use at Cutler Field for example?

The Park Commission would like to build Town investment in the Park properties to the point that preventative maintenance is kept up with since equipment and buildings have life cycles. Accordingly, the Park Commission would like to establish maintenance plans and set basic expectations for mowing, etc.

Minutes and letter to Town Clerk

Robert Flynn moved to accept August 28, 2013 minutes as drafted. Gineane Haberlin seconded and motion carried 3:0 (Laurie Smigelski abstained; Kenneth Bushnell absent).

Jonathan Strauss moved to approve clarifying letter from Park Commission to Town Clerk regarding Laurie Smigelski's liaison appointment to the Community Preservation Committee. Robert Flynn seconded and motion carried 4:0 (Kenneth Bushnell absent).

Fran Stanley shared request from public to learn the scheduled date for Groton's fireworks display. Jonathan Strauss stated that Don Black organizes this event which is typically held the first Monday after July 4th. Historically, the Park Commission has just paid for portable toilets used during the event.

The next regular meeting will be held on September 25 at 7 pm at Legion Hall. Fran Stanley to post September 16, 2013 joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee as the Park Commission members may want to be present to represent the Park Commission warrant article.

Commissioners made a list of projects with commissioner assignments:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Commissioner Assignment</u>
1. Cutler Field – parking lot and tree work	Jon
2. Flagpole on Firemen's Common & hardware for other Parks flagpoles	Laurie to test for lead paint Rob to run numbers
Note: Paint or replace. If replace, install 40 ft pole instead of 55 ft pole.	
3. General Commons Fencing Maintenance	Kenny to look at Minuteman Common Rob to add in other commons fencing
Note: add split rails for Playground area here? Note: granite posts and metal hardware connections needed	
4. Basketball Courts	Jon
Note: Line up resident Matt Frery for his knowledge of repair needs.	
5. Gazebo repair	Rob
Note: carpentry repairs; secure electrical	
6. Hazel Grove: parking lot at trail head for walkers, equestrians, bikers. Tree work to clear track overhangs & make access for trailhead parking lot.	Gineane, Laurie
Note: \$20k for tree work; \$10k for 30 car lot Note: interface with Trails Committee	
7. Christine Hanson Playground: remove poison ivy, trim overhanging branches, sand box, replace wood chips with cushioned/accessible surface.	Gineane, Rob
8. Signage for Park properties	Gineane
9. Locks to secure multiple areas.	Rob

Note: might want to ask public safety officials for their access preferences.

Individual commissioners send digital photographs to Gineane Haberlin by Friday, September 13 and she will put together a PowerPoint presentation for use at Monday's meeting (September 16th).

Robert Flynn moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 pm. Jonathan Strauss seconded and motion carried 4:0 (Kenneth Bushnell absent).

Notes by Fran Stanley.