

Town of Groton

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Park Commissioners

Gineane Haberlin, Chair
Kenneth Bushnell
Robert Flynn
Jonathan Strauss

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 18, 2013
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Legion Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 75 Hollis Street, Groton
Commission attendees: Gineane Haberlin, Jonathan Strauss, Kenneth Bushnell, Robert Flynn
Handouts: Agenda, November 26, 2013 draft minutes

Gineane Haberlin called meeting to order at 7:01 pm. There are no pending field use permits. Commissioners reviewed the most recent set of minutes.

Jonathan Strauss moved to approve the November 26, 2013 minutes as drafted. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Commissioners commented that the Cutler Field tree work had been done. The removal of trees and branches overhanging the parking area opened up the site, letting in more sunlight. Hazel Grove tree work is expected to be done early in the New Year.

The tree work as well as the playground inspection by Northeast Playground Builders out of Braintree occurred on two of the coldest days of the year. Gineane Haberlin reported on the playground inspection. The inspection was performed on December 13, 2013. In addition to the written report, the inspector provided fifteen photographs that detail several of his findings. The overall condition of the Christine Hanson memorial playground was deemed "fair, some repair needed". Gineane directed Fran Stanley to contact the manufacturer (Landscape Structures; O'Brien and Sons are the exclusive Massachusetts representatives) and start working on obtaining the replacement parts indicated in the report. Kenneth Bushnell will inventory the extra playground supplies stored at the Town Field shed.

Given the immediate repair needed for the playground, Gineane Haberlin revisited the playground budget with Town Manager Mark Haddad. Mark Haddad proposed a line item transfer of \$25,000 at Spring Town Meeting to be spent on repairing the Christine Hanson playground, moving Prescott play structures to a newly created Cutler Field play area and upgrading the Hanson playground. Gineane Haberlin rethought her previous suggestion of training a Town employee to inspect the playground. Perhaps it is better to have outside professional who does this sort of work day in and day out.

Commissioners reviewed and signed off on pending invoices. Gineane Haberlin asked for an explanation of the Hazel Grove #5 electric bill. This is the only meter at the Groton Fairgrounds that is paid for by the Park Commission. Typically, use groups arrange to pay for their individually metered electric use. The replacement hockey rink liner will be paid for out of the Evan Holofcener gift fund.

Kenneth Bushnell, who helped to install the hockey rink, recommends that the Park Commission replace all the rink boards next year. The Evan Holofcener gift fund can be earmarked to pay for the replacement board material costs. Kenneth Bushnell estimated that the rink would need 30 ¾ inch 4 X 8 plywood sheets, cut once, edge sanding and painted white on both sides. Robert Flynn added that a bench would be nice for putting skates on and possibly lights could be strung up over the rink to increase playing time on short winter days. Park Commissioners will coordinate with nearby residents to put forward plans that have their support. Also, the Park Commission will consult with Veterans Agent Bob Johnson to see if some of these projects could be Eagle Scout projects.

Park Commissioners discussed the next step in a plan to collect landscaper estimates for maintaining Park Commission properties up to specified standard. Landscaper oversight may include such tasks as watering, fertilization, aeration, dethatching, seeding, over-seeding, weed control, insect control, etc. The scope of work is important to define. Including more tasks reduces the chances of wasted energy and expense for ill-timed landscaping treatments and avoided field repairs. However, some contractors treat the grass through aeration, seeding, fertilization, etc. but do not have the capacity to maintain on-site irrigation systems. Reference was made to a four application process. Commissioners noticed that Dunstable's Larter field looks well maintained by contractor Greenscapes so there may be some practices in place in Dunstable that could be imported for the care of Groton's fields. Other contractors mentioned were Aslan, Turf Unlimited, J.B. Turf, TruGreen, Turf Logic.

Field sizes for popular sports are 100 yards by 60 yards for soccer and lacrosse with football's deeper end zones requiring a 110 yard by 60 yard field size.

Park commission attention for this request for proposals (RFP) centered on the ball fields at Cow Pond, Woitowicz and Cutler. Kenneth Bushnell will look at the structure of the RFP to incentivize proper oversight of fields by a contractor and what consequences will flow from failure to provide consistent field oversight. Commissioners will work on RFP language in January meeting and hope to be awarding work by mid-March. Robert Flynn strongly recommends a full sealed bid process as it can result in competitive prices for the Town and a fair process for the bidders.

Jonathan Strauss explained that after speaking with a number of residents with long time involvement in Town policies and activities, he is reconsidering the Ledge Rock option. Despite the costs of site prep for the fields, Ledge Rock still looks like the most viable and least controversial option for adding multi use field space. Jonathan Strauss recommends re-applying for the Commonwealth's PARC grant and arranging for the \$309,000 in CPC funding to be re-encumbered to await the results of the second PARC grant application. Gineane Haberlin will look into why Groton's PARC grant application failed this fall, coming in 29th out of 45 with only the first 25 projects receiving funding. Commissioners agreed with Jonathan Strauss' plan to request \$41,000 in CPC funds to engineer the fields and parking and go before the Planning Board with a level 2 site plan review. This will make the project more shovel ready and further define costs.

With Laurie Smigelski's resignation from Park Commission, the Park Commission now has an empty seat on the CPC. Gineane Haberlin presently serves as an at-large CPC member and she likes the broader scope that comes with that role. The Park Commissioners agreed that CPA funds represent an important funding source for Park initiatives and that even some time participation by a Park Commissioner liaison would be better than no dedicated representation.

Jonathan Strauss nominated Kenneth Bushnell to serve at Park Commissioner liaison to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Robert Flynn seconded and motion carried 3:0 (Kenneth Bushnell abstained).

Future meetings

Next regularly scheduled Park Commission meeting will be Thursday, January 9, 2014. At the next meeting, Commissioners would like to make plan to have a new flag pole installed by Memorial Day as well as new rails for Minuteman Common.

Jonathan Strauss moved to adjourn meeting at 8:50 pm. Robert Flynn seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Notes by Fran Stanley.