

Town of Groton

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Park Commissioners

Gineane Haberlin, Chair
Kenneth Bushnell
Robert Flynn
Jonathan Strauss

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 13, 2014
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
Other attendees: Matthew Frary (running for Park Commissioner), Kevin Potter (Athletic Director, Lawrence Academy), Sean Eldredge (President, Groton Dunstable Youth Football and Cheer), Jeffrey Ohringer (Groton Dunstable Youth Soccer), Phil Jordan (Groton Athletics Assn.), John Llodra (Groton Dunstable Youth Lacrosse), Cheney Harper (Sargisson Beach Committee), Andrew Davis (Sargisson Beach Committee)
Handouts: Agenda
February 12, 2014 draft minutes
Paterno property concept plan
Pending Field Use Permit Requests for 2014 ball field use

Gineane Haberlin called meeting to order at 7 pm. While waiting for other scheduled speakers to arrive, the Park Commission heard from those use group representatives who were already in attendance. Sean Eldridge representing Groton Dunstable Youth Football and Cheer asked for his football request to be approved. Football wants a flag pole installed on the far side of the field adjacent to the goal post. The location may be parallel to far goal posts on the North side of the football field. The group observed that there is a flag pole already for soccer near the snack shack. And, there is an existing flag pole at the baseball field. Commissioners were agreeable to the location for football flagpole. Football will cover costs and installation for the new flagpole.

For flagpole materials, aluminum is more expensive, takes longer to arrive and is harder to install than the fiberglass poles. Fiberglass poles flex more in the wind, but aluminum poles may have more durability overall. Permit may be needed for building permit (digging into the ground and footing) and Con Com application. Jonathan Strauss will investigate football flagpole permitting and cost.

Kenneth Bushnell moved to approve designated appropriate height flag pole pending approval of building commissioner and conservation commission. Gineane Haberlin seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Phil Jordan spoke on behalf of the Athletics Association. The use groups who want to be operating at Cow Pond fields this season have reviewed individual sports' groups requests and coordinated field hand off conditions, etc.

Jonathan Strauss informed the use group representatives that the Park Commission had arranged for fertilization and irrigation so please let us know if there are going to be trucks on the field. Don't want to run over the irrigation heads. Truck access to field might be used for flagpole installation.

Kenneth Bushnell moved to approve football permit pending submission of certificate of insurance. Robert Flynn seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Sargisson Beach Committee

Cheney Harper, a member of the Groton Lakes Association and the Sargisson Beach Committee addressed the meeting regarding her group's efforts to restore and stabilize the Sargisson Beach area. Andrew Davis coordinated PowerPoint presentation and added commentary regarding his volunteer efforts at the site. Approximately 170 feet

of the shoreline has erosion with undercut banks of 1 to 3 feet in height. Banks are undercut due in part from the impact of motorboat wave action. Granite ledge bordering the water has deteriorated and the restoration plan calls for rebuilding the wall during the low water level. Bob Pine of Pine & Swallow evaluated and made engineered drawings of recommended work. Cheney Harper asked the Park Commission to write a letter of support to CPC for this project (March 31, 2014 deadline for this letter). CPC may fund the entire SBC project [initial proposal \$170,500 for single stage project; with some thought to revising amount down to \$50,000 and which would result in the work being done in several stages). As a point of information, it was noted that the Conservation Commission (Con Com) is asking for \$175,000 for its own account. Right now, CPC unallocated reserve will drop down to less than \$10,000 after this funding cycle. With Registry of Deeds receipts down, the projected state match will probably be less for this fiscal year.

Andrew Davis has been the volunteer steward of this Con Com property for several years. He has worked with boy scouts on site maintenance and restoration. Boy scouts' materials cost have been 100% paid for by Con Com funds. Types of projects have included weed removal from the beach and the installation of some trail erosion control measures.

Jonathan Strauss asked why Con Com has not provided funds for desired maintenance of this property. The Con Com receives some money regularly from annual CPC grants and they have \$500,000 in their present accounts. Andrew Davies explained that the Con Com cannot use their funds for recreation. Other funds are restricted to purchase of properties, etc. This year's municipal budget is strained by the School District budget situation. Town Manager recommended spending \$15,000 on safety issues to make it safer for swimmers. The Park Commissioners were in general agreement with the SBC aims to support the total reclamation of the beach. The Park Commissioners decided to support the SBC application for Sargisson Beach. Town Meeting would then be given a chance to vote on the project and decide how it wishes to care for this property.

Other Sargisson Beach property observations were that out of town guests who return for 3 weeks each year contribute to upkeep by picking up other users' trash. The first week the high school gets out, rowdy teenagers/young adults often flip the on-site portable restrooms. Andrew will ask for increased police patrols during this time.

Kevin Potter, Lawrence Academy Athletics Director, addressed the group and requested use of Town Field for junior varsity baseball team on the large baseball diamond. John Llodra noted that Lawrence Academy just allowed lacrosse to use some of its fields and that there is a weekly indoor basketball reservation at Lawrence Academy facilities that benefits Groton youth.

Jonathan Strauss moved and Robert Flynn seconded a motion to approve Lawrence Academy's Town Fields baseball request provided no town sponsored events during time period and Lawrence Academy's ability to be flexible with conflict with an offset of any repairs due to usage within usage, pending submission of certificate of insurance. 4:0

For the use groups as a whole, Gineane Haberlin reviewed changed Field Use Permit Request Forms regarding notice of field problems and no subleasing. To expand, there is no umbrella-ing allowed as permit requesters must certify that the fields are utilized by registered members of the requester. To do otherwise creates an issue for liability insurance and misstates extent of requesters' need. For example, Groton Dunstable Regional School District (GDRSD) athletics department needs to ask Park Commission directly for use of its fields, not just have ad hoc use or funneled indirect use through other use groups. Park Commissioners may follow up with GDRSD by emailing Karen Tuomi or speaking with Michael McCaffrey about need for field use permit requests and certificates of insurance.

Youth baseball asked for conflicting Town Field times but those potential conflicts were avoided through in meeting coordination with T.J. Rivett from youth baseball.

Robert Flynn moved to approve the youth baseball amended request for field space pending submission of certificate of insurance. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Phil Jordan commented that his lacrosse experience with DRSD history is problematic in that there is no guarantee of access from School Committee for use groups to access school fields. The group surmised that the GDRSD Spring sports schedule must be set by now. The Park Commission is curious to learn about the current usage of GDRSD's fields. In the past, use groups recalled an instance when District fields have not been released for use, then GDRSD high school lacrosse has been seen using Waitowicz field without permission.

The for-profit Primetime lacrosse application request for use of lacrosse suitable fields for summer camp use was considered. There was no use group representative in attendance. Jonathan Strauss commented that the Park Commission has typically not approved private groups' use on the field for profit unless there is some strong affiliation to the Groton users. The Park Commissioners are already considering a series of use requests for Cow Pond fields that cannot be fully accommodated and other fields have similar subscription rates. Park Commissioners set aside the Primetime permit request.

The Lacrosse request for Waitowicz, Cutler and Cow Pond were considered. John Llodhra was present to represent lacrosse organization. Different uses have different field lining needs so if soccer uses Cutler, then we need to coordinate. With baseball possibly using Cutler for coach pitch and lacrosse definitely needing Cutler, then Jeff Ohringer asked Commissioners to withdraw soccer request for Cutler. The Groton School is charging Lacrosse for field use on its campus and Larter Field costs \$2,000 per program for lacrosse to rent

The conversation trended to overly broad permit requests. A dawn to dusk use for duration of three months for example is not helpful considering shortage of field space. Phil Jordan asked that requests be specific so that needs can be assessed. Several commissioners agreed with that approach. Building field use request from the sport's actual schedule needs is important. Soccer has not set its game schedule yet as that is a league decision. So, Jeff Ohringer did not have the schedule available to him when he composed soccer's requests. Jeff Ohringer communicated the anecdote of an observed depression at Larter field in Dunstable. A contractor was hired to address the problem and the contractor mistakenly fixed a Waitowicz depression at Youth Soccer's expense.

Gineane Haberlin moved to approve the youth lacrosse request to practice at Cutler Field Wednesdays & Fridays from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm pending submission of certificate of insurance. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Gineane Haberlin moved to approve youth lacrosse group use of Waitowicz Field described in permit request for Monday through Friday and Saturday pending submission of certificate of insurance. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Soccer's submitted requests are from March 20 to July 17 seven days per week. Is there any non league soccer at Cow Pond? Jeff says there is a recreational group. Jeff continued that the recreational group has not submitted anything to the league soccer group. They use the fields on a pick up basis. Lacrosse noted that Sunday morning use of Cow Pond would be helpful for their use group's needs. Phil Jordan said that they are taking a scrub section of Cow Pond to be considerate of youth soccer's Cow Pond field needs. Robert Flynn observed that he would tend to advance an organized youth league group over the interests of an adult recreational group.

Jeff Ohringer opposed the idea of putting use group care into fields they use and then have a different sport use them. Jeff requested that Park Commission not assign lacrosse to Cow Pond 1 and 2 for Sunday games, but that practice is an open question. There was general consensus supporting the concept of preserving quality of game fields over practice fields. Phil Jordan said that if a field is secured through a blanket permit that is a problem if the requestor is not using it and somebody else is. Jeff Ohringer will get a schedule in to the Park Commission. Space not allotted to soccer for scheduled use will be reserved by the Park Commission to be assigned to other users. Phil Jordan asked to amend the lacrosse permit request for Cutler & Waitowicz to make it dawn to dusk as well. Commissioners did not find that a productive course. The previous way of reserving dawn to dusk fields is not constructive given the present demand and scheduling complexity. Commissioners designated Rob Flynn to liaise with lacrosse and soccer use groups.

Chris Davies is taking over the scheduling of the practices. The league schedules the weekend games. On the issue of field maintenance, Jeff Ohringer noted that the condition of the Cow Pond fields is horrid at the end of the season. There is no time for seeding yet that is needed for proper field care. Jeff Ohringer says that soccer tends to beat up the center of a field and lacrosse tends to beat up the area around the lacrosse goals. Jonathan Strauss commented that football and lacrosse did not exist ten year ago and credited the soccer use group with building Cow Pond playing fields. Jonathan Strauss reiterated Robert Flynn's earlier point that whatever sport is played, they are all our children.

Kenneth Bushnell confirmed with lacrosse that its group would seed for soccer in the same manner that they seed for football when they hand off the fields. Park Commissioners would prefer to fully fund care of fields. Robert Flynn stated that the Park Commission should maintain all the fields equally, not have a rainbow of colors. Jeff Ohringer asked Park Commission to seed the fields and if Park Commission budget does not stretch for this care, then the fields are not getting needed care. After much discussion, Jonathan Strauss asked use groups to split extra care based on usage. Phil Jordan said that when programs pay for fields, then it builds a sense of exclusivity and ownership. He asked if there could be full disclosure of monies put into field care.

Fran Stanley asked to update gmail schedule to show reserved times space and time for approved field use.

When will the fields be opened by the Park Commission? The Park Commissioners will take a field walk and decide. John Llodhra asked for the Park Commissioners' criteria since he operates an early spring sport.

Jonathan Strauss moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 pm. Robert Flynn seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 19th 7 pm at Legion Hall

Notes by Fran Stanley.