

## Town of Groton

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## Park Commissioners

Gineane Haberlin, Chair  
Kenneth Bushnell  
Robert Flynn  
Jonathan Strauss

### Meeting Minutes

Date: March 26, 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), James Gmeiner (Youth Soccer)  
Handouts: Agenda  
Pending Field Use Permit Requests for 2014 ball field use

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Gineane Haberlin called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm. Commissioners reviewed and signed pending invoices.

*Gineane Haberlin moved to approve the Groton Community School request for annual picnic at gazebo and on the slope between playground and gazebo pending receipt of certificate of insurance. Jonathan Strauss seconded and motion carried 3:0 (Robert Flynn abstained).*

Presented by James Gmeiner, the Commissioners reviewed and approved soccer permit requests. Lacrosse representatives worked out agreement brokered by Robert Flynn but the board of the lacrosse group later opposed the proposed arrangement. Earlier in the day, Lacrosse submitted a new set of requests together with an explanatory email that contained some caveats and conditions (such as netting and provision of certificate of insurance).

Gineane Haberlin spoke with Michael McCarthy, athletics director at the GDRSD. She asked him to submit field use permit requests for his desired use of Park Commission properties and to also expect to provide a certificate of insurance. Michael McCarthy expressed interest in using baseball diamond at Town Field.

Robert Flynn presented the flagpole estimates that he had collected. For installation, the Park Commission can order a new hole dug or spend more and dig out old footing in order to reinstall in same location. Police detail may be needed. The Historic Districts Commission needs to be contacted as they have jurisdiction over this common. While reviewing estimates, commissioners asked which contractor has the most complete scope and who was a responsive party to deal with? Gineane Haberlin commented that once the new flagpole goes in, the Park Commission should ask Groton Garden Club to help beautify that area. Veterans Agent Bob Johnson was coaxed into the meeting and he contributed to discussion of desirable flagpole attributes.

*Jonathan Strauss moved to select Earthsafe to remove existing flag pole and install new flagpole, specifically 40 feet high, white in color, aluminum pole with exterior hardware provided that the contractor can commit to completion of the installation by Memorial Day. If this vendor cannot meet that deadline, then the motion calls for the second choice vendor to be the Leominster contractor. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and motion carried 4:0.*

Portable restroom finalist vendors were considered. One contractor shaved tiny amount off quoted prices and the other contractor, Triangle, stated that it had already provided its best possible price in the first round of estimates. Triangle as a vendor had provided satisfactory service when it had the Park Commission's account several years ago.

*Jonathan Strauss moved to select Triangle as the Park Commission's portable restroom vendor. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and motion carried 4:0.*

Gineane Haberlin asked Robert Flynn to remove the Garden Club volunteer effort from the drafted Commons scope of work and issue the request for estimates. This plan was agreeable to all. Mulch will be ordered by the Garden Club and these materials will be paid for by the Park Commission.

#### Christine Hanson Memorial Playground

For repair work, Gineane Haberlin proposed not using Northeast Playground as the installer. Northeast's slow work pace slowed the initial playground inspection which pushed the repair project into the playground installer's busy season. Now that we are in this business's busy season the vendor's proposed hourly rate of pay for its installers has been increased. Kenneth Bushnell knows a person who can do this work. This solution is agreeable to the Park Commissioners. Kenneth Bushnell will check in with Town Clerk regarding possible conflict of interest does not occur.

#### Sargisson Beach

Raising the issue of the stewardship of Sargisson Beach by the Conservation Commission, Gineane Haberlin and Jonathan Strauss attended the Conservation Commission meeting on March 25. The Park Commissioners would like to see the resource well-tended for the recreational benefit of residents. The active recreational components of Sargisson Beach are not a priority for the Conservation Commission. Acquisition and conservation of undeveloped land that has high conservation value is the Conservation Commission's top funding priority. The points of view of the two respective commissions clashed.

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) will meet on April 1st, 2014. At the meeting, a vote on the Ledge Rock project will be taken. What dollar amount will be recommended to go forward to Spring Town Meeting? Fran Stanley will post a public meeting for April 1 for Park Commissioners to attend the CPC meeting and post a public meeting for April 2 to allow attendance at a Finance Committee meeting by as many of the Park Commissioner as care to attend.

#### Baseball Infield Mix Materials

Baseball use of fields tends to have light wear on grass but the field costs are centered in the purchase and application of infield mix materials. The Park Commission has budgeted to spend the same amount on infield mix as last year. Kenneth Bushnell will order materials only with delivery of same to the field. This limited contribution leaves the job of spreading the material to the use groups to arrange.

#### Flags

Fran Stanley will order four more U.S. flags. Gineane Haberlin authorized letter to former chair Don Black requesting return of any extra flags that he may have.

#### CPC funding for Park Commission projects

For Ledge Rock, Jonathan Strauss stated that \$41,000 is reasonable to receive from the CPC to do engineering. The Park Commission easily has \$200,000 worth of work that could be done to improve existing fields and the basketball court at Town Field. If basketball court is not rebuilt at Town Field, the Park Commission might aim to build 2 to 3 courts together somewhere in Town Center part of Groton. If no PARC grant, then reserved CPC funds are returned to unallocated reserve. The Park Commission may compose list of priority items for the CPC. Jonathan Strauss suggested a comprehensive program to integrate trails and build connectivity.

#### Patierno property

The owner has an offer from an abutter for \$550,000. The Town of Groton whether through the Park Commission or otherwise would not offer that much. Assessed value was listed at \$194,900 in 2004 and current assessed value is \$269,700. A Patierno representative suggested to Gineane Haberlin that the Park Commission purchase the land for \$350,000. About \$500,000 is needed to prep the site with eleven acres of loam. The DPW may grant strip of

land sufficient to allow construction of a 100 car parking lot. The Park Commission discussed whether the site with its proximity to shooting range and under a cell phone tower was suitable for its proposed use.

#### Tarbell school

There may be renewed interest. Perhaps the Park Commission could add basketball courts there. The Pepperell basketball courts are well designed as a successful nearby model.

Fran Stanley asked to confirm that nobody will be parking on the basketball court behind Lost Lake fire station. Need to mark four Park Commission visible holidays of Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day and July 4<sup>th</sup>. Commissioners requested updated FY2014 budget report to track spending to date.

#### Sports turf maintenance: re-seeding

Kenneth Bushnell recommends re-seeding on August 15th each year for all sports fields. The cost is an estimated \$800 per field. Town Field, Woitowicz, Cutler and all of Cow Pond are fields for which Kenneth Bushnell has estimates.

#### Use Group Fees

Robert Flynn raised concept of charging use groups fees to go into gift account. The Park Commission, although it has a growing budget, is presently underfunded to pay for all recommended field maintenance. This idea was discussed. Jonathan Strauss cautioned about unintended consequences if Park Commission moves in that direction.

#### Groton Youth Lacrosse as an organization

The Groton Dunstable Youth Lacrosse League, Inc. is not a current corporation. Secretary of State's office revoked its certification on June 18, 2012. The Park Commission needs to ensure that the certificate of liability insurance is a valid insurance contract that will protect Town's liability exposure.

Regardless of organizational status, both soccer and lacrosse appear to have much more than a year's operating expenses banked. Would it be possible to invite these use groups to spend some of their savings on projects that will benefit their players such as a Cow Pond playground, Cow Pond walking track, and Cow Pond lights directed toward the practice fields.

*Jonathan Strauss moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 pm. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and motion carried 4:0.*

Next regular monthly meeting: Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> 7 pm at Legion Hall.

Notes by Fran Stanley.