

Town of Groton

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Park Commissioners

Gineane Haberlin, Chair
Kenneth Bushnell
Robert Flynn
Matthew Frary

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 15, 2015
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Legion Hall, 1st Floor Meeting Room, 75 Hollis Street, Groton
Commission attendees: Gineane Haberlin, Robert Flynn, Kenneth Bushnell
Visitors: Anna Eliot, Pierre Comtois, Jon Strauss, Kerri Strauss
Handouts: Agenda,
June 1, 2015 draft minutes,
FY15 Summary budget variance report,
Estimate from Mead Tree & Landscape, LLC

Gineane Haberlin called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Pending invoices were circulated for commissioners' review and approval.

Gineane Haberlin updated group on the Eagle Scout project to repair the gazebo. The timelines are slipping and the work will not be started before July 4th. Gineane Haberlin updated the other commissioners regarding the flagpole at the Old Burying Ground. The Old Burying Ground committee support removal of the existing flagpole, but not replacement. Gineane Haberlin will advise the Historic Districts Commission of the flagpole issue at their June 16th meeting. Pending approval from the HDC, Gineane Haberlin will ask Deborah Normandin will then contact Tom McDowell to inform him of the decision to remove the flagpole and not replace.

Regarding Park Commission interest in regulating dogs on its ball fields, Gineane Haberlin ascertained that the Park Commission has jurisdiction of ball fields but Town Counsel stated that to make enforceable rules with fees, the Park Commission would need to have both control and custody of the fields. The Town Clerk is investigating deeds and other records to see if the Park Commission's authority covers custody and control.

Gineane Haberlin reported on a meeting with the School District Superintendent Kristan Rodriguez regarding maintenance and use of the middle school fields. The Park Commission has heard complaints from parents about the poor repair (track) and poor maintenance at the middle school fields. Some fields have irrigation that is not used. Parents with children in sports that play other public schools in our region observe that Groton Dunstable fields do not compare favorably to other schools' fields. The Park Commission angle is that efficiency in vendor selection and oversight can produce positive results (as it has in Groton in 2014) without large extra investments. Presently, it appears that the School District does not have a budget to operate its fields. The fields are mowed and there is about \$20,000 in the budget for the entire buildings and grounds maintenance for the District. Because the School District rents fields at the middle school making the fields a small profit center, it is unlikely that the School District will give operational control to the Park Commission.

Jon Strauss described a possible CPC stand-alone application to resurface the middle school track. This track would have school use and casual use from area residents. Repair of the track may cost \$80,000 while a full rebuild would cost around \$120,000. It is unclear whether the infield which was previously an excellent quality soccer field with irrigation will be refurbished at the same time. As general steward of active recreation in Town, will the Park Commission support this effort? Commissioners discussed the matter and were supportive of the concept was a worthwhile project. Commissioners noted that they did not have jurisdiction over the middle school track. The chair can send a letter of support for Jon Strauss's use.

Anna Eliot suggested that the conversation involve spelling out and explaining the current use structures. Robert Flynn noted that the middle school infield has not had \$5,000 per year spent on irrigation that would improve the field

quality. Robert Flynn asked Anna Eliot about the School District's decision not to fund maintenance of the fields. Anna Eliot responded that the property is owned by the Town but under the school district's responsibility so that question would need to be directed to the School Committee.

Kerri Strauss requested increased porta pottie servicing or extra units during tournament season at Cow Pond fields for baseball, soccer, lacrosse. Boy scouts were also present for a weekend of rocket launching. Group discussed adding porta potties or increasing the frequency of service.

Gineane attended a meeting with the police department regarding commission sponsorship of fireworks. Chief Palma and the fire chief cannot continue to underwrite fireworks without also underwriting the other Town commissions and entities such as GELD. Donald Black is doing fireworks out of the Selectmen's office. Vendors coordinated through the police chief. They are more set up to do fees, take applications, etc. Same number of event porta potties as last year to be provided by Park Commission. Fireworks contract information provided to the Police department.

Vacancy on the Park Commission. Gineane Haberlin explained process for filling this vacancy. July 13th – Park Commission will interview candidates and on July 20th, Selectmen and Park Commission will jointly meet to regarding replacement. Park Commissioners can recommend a replacement, but it is the Selectmen's decision which person to appoint for this vacancy.

ADA assessment will look at Groton's open space and recreation areas with an emphasis on removing barriers to access. Michelle Collette is the Town's ADA Coordinator and the first three properties to be looked at are Cow Pond, Cutler and Town Field's Lawrence Playground. The Park Commission is planning to spend money on these areas and wants to have ADA accessibility built into its plans.

The Town Shed garage doors are both broken. Gineane Haberlin is gathering a quote for replacement. Kenneth Bushnell will collect another estimate.

A fence contractor will be asked to quote Woitowicz's bottom rail fencing, Cow Pond bump out fencing around soccer area porta potties, and also the Cutler Field top rail and gate.

Gineane Haberlin is waiting on an electrician to quote electrical repair of the gazebo which is expected to be an amount less than \$500.

A metal stump (bottom of post?) was found on the walking path at Cow Pond near baseball walking path toward the batting cages. Robert Flynn pointed it out to group and identified it as a possible trip hazard that needs to be removed.

Tree work at Minuteman Common, Town Field and at Sawyer Common was discussed while reviewing the Mead estimate. For the large dead tree at Minuteman Common, GELD will be asked about saving the tree lighting. The Tree Warden will be consulted about Minuteman Common tree work – mainly the removal of the large dead tree -- and the Sawyer Common work. Some of the Sawyer Common tree work may be in the Town's right of way. Gineane Haberlin will consult the HDC about the tree removal and tree trimming at Minuteman Common on June 16. Commissioners discussed proceeding with the Town Field tree trimming and the Minuteman Common tree work.

Park Commissioners received a report that the trees at Sawyer Common looked bad and needed trimming. Commissioners discussed the fact that Sawyer Common trees in question include some memorial trees. Also, straight replacement of cut evergreen with new evergreens may not be appropriate for the location. Friends of the Trees can be consulted about any replacements. Also, the Commissioners agreed to move more slowly on the Sawyer Common tree work to ensure that all stakeholders have been notified and that a suitable plan of action has been made.

Seahorse at Christine Hanson Playground needs to be repaired. There are loose and missing bolts that are difficult to access. Kenneth Bushnell will try to repair it.

Buddy bench donated by the Finney family is expected to have a ribbon cutting ceremony on Sunday, June 28th. Park Commissioners agreed to issue a certificate recognizing the gift to the donating family.

Gineane Haberlin reported that she spoke with Dawn Priest recently and updated her on the status of the accessible swing to be installed at Cutler Field playground.

Gineane Haberlin moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and motion carried 3:0.

Next meeting: Monday, July 13th at 7 pm. Notes by Fran Stanley.