

Town of Groton

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Park Commissioners

Gineane Haberlin, Chair
Kenneth Bushnell
Robert Flynn
Matthew Frary

Meeting Minutes

Date: August 31, 2015
Time: 6 p.m.
Location: Legion Hall, 1st Floor Meeting Room, 75 Hollis Street, Groton
Commission attendees: Gineane Haberlin, Robert Flynn, Matthew Frary, Kenneth Bushnell
Handouts: Agenda, Mark Haddad email on Park Commission Composition dated August 26, 2015

Gineane Haberlin called this emergency meeting of the Park Commission to order at 6:07 pm.

Agenda item 1: In context of Fall Town Meeting with closing of Town Warrant, discuss Town Counsel opinion regarding reducing Park Commission seats via Town Meeting vote.

Park Commissioners reviewed the August 26, 2015 email regarding Section 3-1 of the Charter and Town Counsel's advice on how the Park Commission's number of elected seats can be reduced. As described in this email, the Charter lists the Park Commission as an elected Town Office, but does not set the number of members of the Park Commission.

Charter Section 3-9 states that "all other elected officers shall have the powers and duties that have been conferred upon their offices by law, this charter, by-law or other town meeting vote". Town Bylaw Chapter 44 sets the number of Park Commissioners and Town Counsel advises that the route to take for reducing Park Commissioners from five members to three members is by amending Bylaw Chapter 44 and not the Charter. Chapter 44 can be amended through a vote of the Groton Town Meeting.

Gineane Haberlin asked the other commissioners if the Park Commission wants to have a warrant article at Fall Town Meeting to reduce commissioner seats from five to three. Robert Flynn commented that he did not see any urgency for such a change to occur at this time. With the Bylaw, a proposed change could be brought forward at any Town Meeting whereas the Charter is only reviewed periodically and at less frequent intervals. Gineane Haberlin noted that the Park Commission has been a five member board since the 1950s. Kenneth Bushnell expressed interest in having another Park Commissioner who can get work done in the field. Matthew Frary commented that more members allow for more opinions which can be helpful for the board.

By consensus, the commissioners agreed to defer action now and reconsider the issue at the Spring Town Meeting six months from now.

Agenda item 2: Determine method for arranging payment of June, 2015 fertilization invoice which may involve Town Warrant vote for payment of this invoice at Fall Town Meeting.

Commissioners were familiar with the June 26, 2015 Turf Unlimited invoicing for fertilization round 2 (of 4) for the Park Commission's ball fields – Woitowicz, Cutler, Town Field and Cow Pond. The Commissioners approved of this expenditure as it is necessary to keep the grass fields in a playable condition. Fran Stanley explained that there was insufficient budget in the Park Commission's FY2015 main budget that ended on June 30, 2015. Neither were there sufficient funds in other Park Commission accounts (gift funds or warrant article funds) to pay for the \$5,000 worth of fertilization. The Town's preferred method for addressing such matters is to have the Fall Town Meeting vote to pay the invoice out of free cash. Commissioners expressed regret at the payment delay for the vendor. Fran Stanley directed to have fertilization vendor contact Park Commission before putting out future Round 2 treatments to avoid such issues in future.

Next meeting: Monday, September 21, 2015 at 7 pm.

Matthew Frary moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 pm. Gineane Haberlin seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Notes by Fran Stanley.