

## Town of Groton

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## Park Commissioners

Gineane Haberlin, Chair  
Evan Boucher, Interim Vice Chair  
Kenneth Bushnell  
Robert Flynn

### Meeting Minutes

Date: July 18, 2016  
Time: 7 p.m.  
Location: Legion Hall, 75 Hollis St., Groton, MA  
Commissioners present: Gineane Haberlin, Robert Flynn, Evan Boucher, Kenneth Bushnell  
Also in attendance: Tim Siok, Robert Pine, James Gaffney, Jonathan Strauss  
Handouts: Agenda, draft minutes from June 6, 2016

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Gineane Haberlin called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. Pending invoices were reviewed and approved.

### **Field Use Permits**

Commissioners reviewed the fall request from football and cheer for use of a Cow Pond field as well as the Lawrence Academy request for use of Town Field for soccer practices.

*Kenneth Bushnell moved to approve the football and cheer field use permit request as submitted. Evan Boucher seconded and the motion carried 3:0. (Robert Flynn absent).*

*Kenneth Bushnell moved to approve the Lawrence Academy soccer field use permit request as submitted. Evan Boucher seconded and the motion carried 3:0. (Robert Flynn absent).*

### **Fertilization and Grub Control**

Gineane Haberlin announced that Turf Unlimited had offered to do some grub control but that the Commissioners had not agreed to that extra expense. Grub control has not been budgeted. Instead, the usual round two fertilization was done after July 1<sup>st</sup> for \$5,000. Four rounds of fertilization have been budgeted for a total of \$20,000, but for the past two years emergency Park Commission expenses have consumed budget monies such that the second round of fertilization that is typically done in June was deferred until after the start of the new fiscal year on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Gineane Haberlin suggested that the next budget formulated for the Park Commission – typically starting in November – budget for grub control.

Robert Flynn entered the meeting.

### **Groton School Workday**

The Park Commissioners discussed the Groton School workday offer. Evan Boucher offered to be the main contact for lining up the event. Dates and times will be selected by the Groton School. In the discussion, two main tasks were identified --

1. weeding the baseball diamonds. This was an accidental chore the first time Groton School helped with weeding but the baseball diamonds benefited from the attention and having more weeding done at Town Field and Cow Pond Fields would be beneficial; and
2. spreading tumbled playground chips at the Town Field playground (Christine Hanson Memorial Playground). The plan is to get a substantial load of chips to be spread around. In 2015, Dirt Doctors of Pembroke, NH provided four cubic yards of material for a total charge of \$215. The playground will need a much larger quantity than was distributed in 2015. Perhaps the vendor who supplies playground chips for the new Cutler playground would be a business to ask for a competitive quote.

The list of anticipated tools needed is: wheelbarrows, work gloves, rakes and some shovels. The rakes and the work gloves will probably be used on both tasks.

### **Cutler Playground**

The existing Cutler Field playground was demolished today in anticipation of the installation of the new playground by O'Brien contractors next week.

### **Middle School Track**

Jonathan Strauss who was the applicant for the CPC grant to repair the Groton Dunstable Middle School Track attended the meeting and spoke up to provide the Commissioners with a progress report. In the past few days, many of the repairs have been done. The track was resized to a true 400. Steve Burne who is employed by the Groton Dunstable Regional School District is overseeing the repair of the grounds around the track. Park Commissioners expressed appreciation for receiving this active recreation project update.

### **Cow Pond Field Shallow Well**

Robert Flynn reported on the status of the shallow well that feeds the youth soccer side of the Cow Pond fields. The shallow well has only failed once (in 2015) over 30 years of use. Robert Flynn oversaw emergency repairs in June. The three options for the Park Commissioners to consider are: (1) improve the shallow well, (2) dig an artesian well (deep well) or (3) install a bilateral pipe to connect the shallow well to the football side artesian well.

Robert Flynn recommends the third option as trenching a connecting pipe would allow backup irrigation if either of the two wells should fail. Any changes to the shallow well would require permitting through the Board of Health. The existing artesian well should be able to support irrigation of shallow well's area. Should the artesian well fail, the shallow well may assist but is unlikely to fully cover the complete irrigation needs for Cow Pond. Since Board of Health permitting may take weeks, backup irrigation during summer heat may help save the grass in an irrigation emergency. Tim Siok suggests that the pipe diameter match the connections to the existing well apparatus. Commissioners agreed to explore this recommended option. Robert Flynn will ask irrigation contractor Kurt Dawson for an estimate to do this work. The route of the trenching will need to be planned to avoid damaging existing irrigation lines and to keep well back from the perimeter areas that might be used for site parking improvements.

### **Cow Pond Parking Lot Engineering Study**

Robert Pine, who is a Massachusetts professional engineer and a fellow for the American Society of Landscape Architects, addressed the Commissioners regarding his preliminary thoughts for reworking and improving the Cow Pond parking. Robert Pine and Robert Flynn walked the site together. Gineane Haberlin observed that safety considerations are the Park Commission's highest spending priority and the commissioners had all seen room for improvement in safety as well as functionality for the Cow Pond parking areas.

Robert Pine handed out sketches and he saw room to connect the two parking lots which would create better traffic flow and increase available ingress and egress. Robert Pine counted a potential 88 parking spaces in the flat gravel area behind the baseball diamonds and another 110 parking spaces in the parking area parallel to Cow Pond Brook Road. Commissioners requested a child drop off area.

Commissioners discussed whether a PARCC grant could pay for the parking improvements. The Planning Board would provide permitting and they typically want to see trees planted to improve the visual landscape. Paving is also suggested for larger parking lots. The Parking Commission could ask to waive the paving requirement.

National Heritage would weigh in on how to minimize impact on turtle habitats. One thought is to have three two-way access points from Cow Pond Brook Road. This would allow the Park Commission to temporarily close the back road to the baseball parking lot during turtle nesting seasons and still have a more functional parking area.

Organizing parking on the flat in gravel is a consideration. There are a number of ways to delineate parking versus travel areas including parking bumpers, tree placement, and changing the gravel from gravel to star pack (gravel mixed with stone dust) in travel lanes.

The cuts required in the hillside would create material that could be reused on site. Robert Pine did not offer an expected construction cost, but he did estimate that the cut and regrading might require a week of bulldozing. The next steps are possibly surveying and engineering. Robert Pine offered to make a drawing and write up

recommendations by September. There was brief discussion of the Commissioners' planned walking track for Cow Pond that would be similar to the Larter Field walking track that the Town of Dunstable has. The Larter Field walking track is paved which allows easy passage by wheelchairs, strollers and bicycles. Robert Pine recommended a pervious surface like star pack covered with a thin layer of stone dust which is cheaper than paving and has the additional benefit of being pervious.

### **Park Commission Vacancies**

James Gaffney introduced himself and expressed his interest in landscaping, construction, and youth sports. He volunteers for youth sports. Tim Siok greeted the group. This is his third Park Commission meeting and he did not offer additional comments.

Gineane Haberlin announced that she is resigning from the Park Commission effective August 1 as she is moving out of state. She is resigning in time for both James and Tim to be appointed to vacant seats and not have to experience runoffs when her seat is soon to be open. She recommends that the Park Commission recommend both James Gaffney and Tim Siok to the Board of Selectmen for appointment. The Park Commission can then meet in August with the new full composition and vote to reorganize then.

*Gineane Haberlin moved to have the Park Commission recommend to the Board of Selectmen that they appoint James Gaffney and Timothy Siok to one open seat and also the soon to be open seat on the Park Commission. Evan Boucher seconded and the motion carried 4:0.*

Evan Boucher will attend the Board of Selectman's meeting with the applicants as there is unlikely to be enough Park Commissioners available during this part of the summer to hold a joint Board of Selectmen/Park Commission meeting.

Robert Flynn raised the issue of the ownership of the Cow Pond field parcels. Some or all of the parcels are owned by the Town of Groton but the Park Commission's name does not appear to be on the deeds. Commissioners suggested that Robert Flynn raise the matter at a Board of Selectman's meeting to see if the Selectmen are interested in exploring the matter further and possibly changing the ownership to the Park Commission.

Kenneth Bushnell asked if weeds in the baseball field can be sprayed. Gineane Haberlin remembered budgeting for that expense as it has been paid for in the past.

### **Minutes**

The Commissioners reviewed draft minutes from past Park Commission meetings.

*Gineane Haberlin moved to approve the June 6, 2016 draft minutes as corrected. Robert Flynn seconded and the motion carried 4:0.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Notes by Fran Stanley