

Town of Groton

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Park Commissioners

Evan Boucher, Chair
Timothy Siok, Vice Chair
Kenneth Bushnell
Robert Flynn
James Gaffney

Meeting Minutes

Date: November 1, 2016
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Legion Hall, 75 Hollis St., Groton, MA
Commissioners present: Robert Flynn, Evan Boucher, James Gaffney, Timothy Siok, Kenneth Bushnell
Also in attendance: Laurie Smigelski (HGAA), Bob Pine
Handouts: Agenda, draft minutes from October 4, 2016

Evan Boucher called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Pending invoices were reviewed and approved.

Hazel Grove Exhibition Hall

Laurie Smigelski, representing the Hazel Grove Agricultural Association (HGAA), addressed the Park Commission regarding the deteriorated state of the Exhibition Hall with its wings. The Building Commissioner wrote a letter regarding his inspection of the structure. This October 28, 2016 letter describes what the Building Commissioner found. Park Commissioners discussed the fact that the letter calls for the use of the building to cease and desist.

Laurie Smigelski explained that the HGAA had directed its tenants to move the boarded horses out of the Exhibition Hall wings and stabling them instead in two sturdier stables on site. At the end of the season, there is plenty of room in those two stables to absorb the horses displaced from the Exhibition Hall wings. The HGAA is requesting the Park Commission's support for both the closure of the Exhibition Hall with wings and the demolition of the building. The HGAA views the building as a potential liability for the Town.

In the discussion, it was noted that the Exhibition Hall:

- was underbuilt (not as sturdy as the typical barn),
- had been moved from its original track infield location,
- has a leaking roof, and
- building itself is racking despite temporary shoring installed circa 2011.

If and when the HGAA applies for a demolition permit from the Building Commissioner, the Town's demolition delay bylaw will ensure that there is a review of the proposed demolition by the Town's Historical Commission. There was brief discussion of the potential value of the old barn wood, but it may be that the building is too run down to allow safe salvage of barn wood. HGAA has contacts who may offer to demolish the structure free of charge and load the debris in dumpsters. The HGAA would appreciate Town and or Park Commission assistance with the disposal costs. Evan Boucher noted that the disposal costs are typically calculated in per ton figures and recommended exploration of using the Town's rate for disposal of such waste at Devens. Robert Flynn cautioned that whoever takes down the building will need to be covered by insurance in the event of an accident.

Two well heads are in the wings which will be preserved. Electrical will be disconnected. Riders who trailer in horses to the Park need water for their visiting horses while they are on site.

Kenny Bushnell moved to close the Exhibition Hall with wings at Hazel Grove as soon as possible and give permission to the HGAA to pursue a demolition permit for this structure. Robert Flynn seconded and the motion carried 5:0.

Safety Improvements to Cow Pond Parking Areas

Bob Pine distributed by email a draft letter dated October 31, 2016 to the Park Commission with his recommendations and drawings. Given that the main onus for improving parking at Cow Pond is to address safety concerns and that permitting oversight is needed from both National Heritage and the Planning Board, Bob Pine recommended that the Park Commission emphasize that its proposed changes are for safety rather than characterizing the proposed changes as generic improvements.

This is a draft letter, says Bob Pine and he can incorporate more details when known for the walking path and other project aspects in the final version.

Bob Pine roughly estimated that costs of grading and gravel can run 40 to 50 thousand dollars. For the travelled way – graded base to visually define and cut down on dust (40 to 50k just for that). Plantings are 50 to 100K if Planning Board requirements of large trees are not waived. In the absence of a waiver, then the paving of the parking lot alone would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Improving the parking lot for safety will involve engineering costs (20K), survey costs of local area, basic plans, permitting costs. In all, if the project steers away from complete paving and full sized trees, then it might be accomplished for about \$350,000. Even with \$150,000 the group speculated that a lot of work could be done.

Town owned equipment may be too small to make good use of the DPW staffers' time. So, one question will be whether large equipment is rented for the DPW to use, or will the project be bid out instead.

Bob Pine recommended that for a next step, the group should explore possibilities for funding. Timothy Siok will look into CPA eligibility. Robert Flynn will contact our state representative to explore state grant opportunities.

Group discussed phased sections of the work and whether that would affect economies that would otherwise be present for doing the work all at once. Bob Pine said that different parts of this are divisible and might be phased without increased costs in the next phase. It is fortunate that the material to be cut is sand and gravel as the cut material might be used for needed fill material on the same site. What are the grants? If found, do the full thing. Go in with a full plan to the CPC and then revise backward and contemplate phases if necessary.

Park Commissioners thanked Bob Pine for his work. All agreed that it would be good to address the present problems with the Cow Pond parking lot.

Eagle Scout project -- Kyle Zimmer

James Gaffney volunteered to serve as Kyle Zimmer's Park Commission liaison for his Eagle Scout project.

Irrigation at Cow Pond

Evan Boucher described conversation with youth soccer president Chris Davies regarding whether a deep well was needed and who could pay for it. Evan Boucher shared the Park Commission view that that the Park Commission does not have funds to pay for a deep well but would not be opposed to a use group contributing to the Town, as youth football did several years ago, and privately pay for such well. The grass at Cow Pond has not died and will go dormant with lack of water. Evan Boucher further shared Park Commission intention to perform some field maintenance such as core aeration and slice seeding to improve the grass in these affected areas. Depending on winter rainfall, there would still be time for a use group such as youth soccer to drill a deep well in early spring if they chose to go that route.

Robert Flynn moved to allow any use group to drill a deep well at Cow Pond to irrigate the fields with the understanding that the Park Commission will be involved in the permitting and the design of the irrigation system. James Gaffney seconded. Motion carried 5:0.

Woitowicz Shed

The Town's carpenter still has the shed door repair/reinforcement project on his 'to do' list.

End of Season Site Maintenance

Commissioners approved removal of most portable restrooms and trash removal services either mid-month when use groups conclude activities or at the end of this month.

Core Aerator

Commissioners agreed to slice seed and core aerate the ball fields affected by the defunct shallow well at Cow Pond.

Kenneth Bushnell collected two estimates for the slice seeding work. Chris Philadora can do the slice seeding for \$325 per acre, excluding the cost of seed which the Park Commission would purchase. Timothy Siok commented that the work might require about 15 to 20 bags of seed. Seeds can stay dormant for 6 months. The other estimate was from Turf Unlimited. Turf Unlimited would charge \$1k per 10,000 feet or \$4K an acre. Commissioners observed that the equipment size each contractor has impacted costs, i.e., because the equipment available to Turf Unlimited is smaller than Chris Philadora then the Turf Unlimited labor costs would be higher because the job is more time consuming.

Commissioners discussed timing of the work. The work could be done in early spring or late fall. Regardless of time, the irrigation sprinkler heads would need to be flagged. Fran Stanley will call Kurt Dawson of Dawson Landscaping to ask him to flag the fields.

Kenneth Bushnell moved to approve slice seeding of the soccer side of Cow Pond fields by Chris Philadora for a price not to exceed \$325 per acre with Park Commission to supply the seed. Evan Boucher seconded and the motion carried 5:0.

Evan Holofcener Memorial Skating Rink

Commissioners agreed to set a time to install the rink at Legion Common before the ground freezes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Next meeting: Tuesday, December 6, 2016 at 7 pm.

Notes by Fran Stanley