

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: March 7, 2017
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Legion Hall, 75 Hollis St., Groton, MA
Commissioners present: Kenneth Bushnell, James Gaffney, Timothy Siok, Evan Boucher, Robert Flynn
Visitor: Laurie Smigelski (HGAA), Bob Johnson (Legion), Anna Eliot (Selectman), Don Black, DJ Caruso (youth lacrosse), Dick Dorff (high school ultimate Frisbee), Jon Strauss, Dinesh Maricherla (TechProCC), Ashish Dwivedi (Boston Warriors Cricket Club)
Handouts: Agenda, January 25, 2017 draft minutes

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

Consider Board of Selectmen request that the Park Commission take on the responsibility of overseeing the Memorial Day Parade and Veteran's Day Ceremony.

Bob Johnson shared some history and background on the present request to have the Park Commission take over the organization of the Memorial Day Parade. Bob Johnson stated that he has been organizing the Memorial Day Parade for the past 19 years, mostly as a solo effort. The Legion may be able to accomplish some military specific items done better than others such as arranging for military speakers, military fly overs, etc. He said that he is willing to be consulted but the need is for assistance with both advance planning and labor on the day of the parade. He noted that he is one of the younger members of the Legion and yet he himself is old enough to draw Social Security.

Evan Boucher thanked Bob Johnson for his contribution to the Town by organizing the Memorial Day Parade each year for so many years. Don Black said that he is willing to assist and take on some of these organization responsibilities. He said that he would like there to be documentation with spreadsheets, etc. so that this celebration and other celebrations such as fireworks and even flags could be concentrated in the celebrations and commemorations portion of the Park Commissions. Don Black added that he would like to look after the commons if possible as an appointed position and not as serving Park Commissioner.

Kenneth Bushnell stated that the Park Commission has done a lot of work on the commons lately with flag pole replacement, tree work and repair of Minuteman Common fencing.

Timothy Siok said that other towns appoint specific committees just for those celebrations and that this seems like a successful model. Robert Flynn agreed that a separate committee is better than working under the Park Commission's authority because the Park Commission does not have administrative support to offer because our assistant is budgeted for 2 hours a week. He added that the Commission tends to meet monthly and he doesn't see that he has the labor to offer.

Don Black stated that he would like this to be under the umbrella of the Park Commission. Anna Eliot said her history in Town is that these duties were always done by the Park Commission. She said that she does not know if this means that the Park Commission had this authority or if the Park Commission organized such events because Don Black was always leading the Park Commission. Anna Eliot noted that many of the stops along the way of the Memorial Day celebration are on Park Commission properties. In sum, this is a cherished Town tradition and out of respect for the war memorial and the significance of the day she has asked the Park Commission to assume this responsibility.

Bob Johnson explained that the only budget allotted in the Town budget is \$500 worth of wreaths and ribbons. The police department has never charged for its services on the day. Don Black said that there is no budget for the Veterans Day Ceremony. Dave Elliot said that the Legion is down to four or five members and we do not have new members and we are looking for continuity that this Memorial Day Parade will take place year in and year out. Dave Elliot commented that if the celebrations are assigned to the Park Commission, then this would guarantee continuity.

Timothy Siok and Robert Flynn maintained that a separate celebrations committee could assure continuity just as well as assignment to Park Commission could. Anna Eliot said that this is a cherished ceremony and it was a courtesy to the veterans and out of respect for the Park Commission's autonomy that the Selectmen asked about Park Commission involvement. As for the annual fireworks display, Anna Eliot stated that this event has always consisted of a joint effort.

Kenneth Bushnell said that the park commissioners are already busy with regular oversight of its properties. Evan Boucher said that he will volunteer to help run these events whether they are overseen by the Park Commission or part of separate committee. Jon Strauss said that he did not think that celebrations were placed under the Park Commission's umbrella because of the involvement with Park Commission properties. There are no budgeting issues or permitting issues that the Park Commission must do. In his view, even if the Park Commission does not take on the celebrations authority this does not mean that these events will not enjoy Park Commission support.

Anna Eliot stated that should the Park Commission decline, then it would be easy for her to return to the Selectmen and the Selectmen can then appoint a celebrations committee.

Robert Flynn moved to have the Park Commission take responsibility for overseeing the Memorial Day Parade and the Veterans Day Ceremony. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and the motion failed with 0:4 (Evan Boucher not voting).

Timothy Siok and Evan Boucher expressed interest in serving on or volunteering for the future celebrations committee. Robert Flynn knows of a younger Groton veteran who may want to volunteer as well.

Hazel Grove Agricultural Association (HGAA)

Laurie Smigelski addressed the Commission on behalf of the Hazel Grove Agricultural Association. Laurie Smigelski reported that she wants to have the Exhibition Hall demolished later this month.

As far as the property line goes, abutter Brian Lagasse stated that he has no interest in contributing to a survey of the property line between the fairgrounds and his family's property at 63 Gratuity Road. Bruce Easom has offered to help answer the question by researching deeds at the public library or the Registry of Deeds. This research may be helpful as Bruce Easom wondered whether a survey alone would resolve the issue.

In the future, Laurie Smigelski said that the HGAA is thinking of a potential CPC application to fund construction of new footing for the riding ring (inside the oval of the harness racing track).

Field Use Permits

All approved field use permit requests are conditioned on the receipt of a valid certificate of insurance that lists the Town of Groton as additional insured. Commissioners reviewed requests largely field by field and discussed any requests with overlapping start/finish times between lacrosse, ultimate Frisbee, senior lacrosse, baseball and cricket.

Robert Flynn moved to approve the field use permit request for Fireworks at Town Field on July 7, 2017. Evan Boucher seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Note that the entirety of Town Field is reserved for this event.

Kenneth Bushnell moved to approve the field use permit request for Groton Community School to use the Smith Social Pavilion for a school picnic from 5 pm to 7:30 pm on June 2, 2017 with a rain date reservation of June 9, 2017. Evan Boucher seconded and the motion carried 4:0 (Robert Flynn abstained).

Robert Flynn moved to approve the GDRHS Ultimate Frisbee field use permit requests at Cutler for a tournament on either May 13, 2017 or May 20, 2017 as well as the same group's request for use of Woitowicz on weekdays from 3 pm to 5:30 pm for the date ranges as written. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Robert Flynn moved to approve the CMYBL field use permit request for the basketball court at Town Field on summer evenings 6 pm to 8 pm as written. Timothy Siok seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Robert Flynn moved to approve the Groton Ancient Warriors field use permit request for lacrosse at Waitowicz on Sunday evenings from 6:30 pm to 8 pm as written. Evan Boucher seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Robert Flynn moved to approve the Groton Dunstable Youth Lacrosse field use permit request for lacrosse at Waitowicz on weekdays Monday through Friday 5 pm to 7:30 pm and Sundays 11 am to 6:30 pm for the date ranges as written and at Cow Pond the multiuse field referred to as the "football field" and the area adjacent to the football field which is in front of the shed and in the extreme outfield of the small baseball diamond for weekdays Monday through Thursday 5 pm to 7:30 pm and Sundays 11 am to 7 pm for the date ranges as written. Evan Boucher seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Evan Boucher moved to approve the Lawrence Academy field use permit request for Junior Varsity baseball at Town Field on weekdays Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 3:30 pm to 5 pm and Wednesdays from 2 pm to 3:30 pm for the date ranges as written. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Evan Boucher moved to approve the Groton Dunstable Youth Baseball League field use permit request for baseball at Town Field on weekdays Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday from 5 pm to 8 pm and Wednesdays from 3:30 pm to 8 pm and weekends 8 am to 8 pm for the date ranges as written with the exception only three reserved dates – June 2, 2017 (picnic), June 9, 2017 (picnic rain date) and July 7 (fireworks). Kenneth Bushnell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Robert Flynn moved to approve the Groton Dunstable Youth Baseball League field use permit request for baseball at Cow Pond baseball fields 1 through 4 seven days a week from 8 am to 8 pm. Evan Boucher seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Evan Boucher moved to approve the Groton Dunstable Youth Soccer field use permit request submitted by Chris Martinez for soccer camp at Cow Pond multiuse field "A" for 9 am to 3 pm use from July 31, 2017 to August 4, 2017. Robert Flynn seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Robert Flynn moved to approve the Challenger field use permit request for a soccer camp at Cow Pond multiuse field "A" for 8 am to 4 pm use from August 21, 2017 to August 25, 2017. Evan Boucher seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Evan Boucher moved to approve the Groton Dunstable Youth Soccer field use permit request for soccer at Cow Pond multiuse fields A through D seven days a week from 8 am to 8 pm from spring field opening to June 30, 2017. Robert Flynn seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Dinesh Maricherla (TechProCC) described what his group would need in order to play cricket on the ball fields. A cricket field consists of a very large oval with regulation fields having more width than the typical multiuse field that is suitable for soccer, lacrosse and football. Boundaries are marked by small cones rather than paint. Within the oval, the preferred cricket pitch is a 25 yard by 8 yard rectangle on level ground with short grass. Cricket's wickets and bails are used within the pitch. Due to the weight of the cricket ball and the danger to the player of an erratic bounce, the quality of the pitch is important to player safety as well as game play. Temporary astroturf can be rolled out and used for cricket. Dinesh's team TechProCC is open to using temporary astroturf and he applied for use of Town Field, Waitowicz and Cow Pond Field. Commissioners did not think that Cow Pond would be suitable due to berms surrounding the largest field and the fact that youth soccer and youth lacrosse depend on use of those fields. For Town Field, youth baseball has a longstanding request for that field. Waitowicz field is not reserved for Saturdays and Dinesh's group wants weekend time, 8 am to 8 pm. The temporary astroturf could be stored in the existing shed at Waitowicz when not in use.

Ashish Dwivedi (Boston Warriors Cricket Club) spoke up for his club. They have not yet submitted a field use permit but they are interested in constructing a permanent pitch. A permanent pitch is usually poured concrete topped with astroturf. A crushed stone and clay base can be substituted for the concrete but the clay base requires more maintenance. Commissioners were dubious about installation of a permanent pitch. Timothy Siok offered to meet with a Boston Warriors representative to walk Cutler Field. Cutler Field is smaller than the cricket group's ideal but it is under-utilized and Commissioners are most likely to consider an experiment on this field because of its less frequent use. Jon Strauss suggested Cutler for cricket as 80% of something is better than 100% of nothing. In the conversation, it appeared that temporary pitches at Cutler would be acceptable to the Commissioners for any weekend except the May 13th and 20th dates reserved for ultimate Frisbee.

Cricket field use permit requests will be revisited by the Commissioners at their April meeting.

Fencing at Town Field

Commissioners revisited discussion of fencing at Town Field. Commissioners used information gathered by Kenneth Bushnell about granite post availability and pricing for the same. Split granite and 'stone face' granite that has very irregular features is the most expensive option when sourcing from modern granite quarries. Reclaimed granite is unlikely to be feasible or affordable as the re-used granite would to be available in sufficient quantity and have some additional stone work to drill holes for rail hangers. Prices become more competitive as the granite posts approach the more commonly purchased configurations (so-called "off the shelf"). Commissioners will need to contract for installation of the granite posts as well as the material.

Commissioners discussed the size and finish of the granite posts. 8 inch by 8 inch granite posts, 5 feet long (2 feet in the ground and 3 feet above), pre-installed "V" rail hangers to hold wood rail at a diagonal, 2 rails per post, posts to consist of 2 split sides and 2 thermal sides. The granite posts alone, looking at 8 by 8 thick and 5 feet high are about \$215 each.

In one location at the top of the hill, the Commissioners agreed to 2 larger granite posts. These will be two granite gate posts located on either side of well tile will be 12 inch by 12 inch with single epoxied eye bolts which can be used to affix decorative chain to prevent unauthorized vehicular access to Town Field. This will be a prevailing wage project unless there is an owner operator who can do the entire job solo. There may be such a person who recently installed a long run of granite post fencing for Lawrence Academy.

The Douglas Fir rails will be 10 feet long and painted dark green to match the wood rails along Broadmeadow Road and at Minuteman Common. The Douglas Fir rails can be easily purchased from a supply yard, painted green and attached to the rail hangers. The cost to the Park Commission for the rails will be limited to material costs of the wood and the paint. Commissioners will have to decide whether to contract out the rails. Perhaps that could be a separate requested quote when the written requests for estimates go out for the granite posts and installation.

The Park Commissioners now have enough specificity so that the Historic Districts Commission can be approached for permission to remove the existing (and deteriorating) stone wall and to replace it with the fencing that the Park Commissioners have planned.

Groton Dunstable Youth Basketball League Gift to benefit Basketball Courts

Commissioners directed Fran Stanley to send a letter to the GDYBL thanking the organization for its \$5,000 gift. The money is being held in a gift fund and will be spent on improving the Cutler basketball court lighting. Evan Boucher has looked into the work and the costs. The least expensive route will be to use GELD's help. GELD is drawing up a cost estimate. There will be rear facing spot LED strobes to light up the parking lot near the basketball court in addition to the court lights. The remainder of the electrical (motion sensor with timer) will be done by an electrician contracted for by the Park Commission.

Other Business

Improved pedestrian access to Cutler Field from the Windmill Hill side of Townsend Road was discussed. Commissioners discussed painting a crosswalk on Townsend Road and then putting in a wood chip path from the end of the crosswalk down to the playground.

Kenneth Bushnell will check on whether the Park Commission needs to order new service flags. The present service flags flying at Sawyer Common are faded and the Park Commission has some replacements but perhaps not a full set.

Evan Boucher reported that DPW recently purchased a 60-inch ride on PTO Kubota driven aerator. The Park Commission has budgeted up to \$10,000 of its capital improvements money to purchase an aerator. If Park Commission buys a diesel ride on machine, then it could start buying useful attachments to it that would increase the

usefulness of the machine. A 40-inch machine could do all the baseball clay infields. A weighted piece of fencing could be dragged behind it to smooth out the baseball infields. State bid prices are being used by the Park Commission to ensure competitive price. Evan Boucher will come back to the group when he has an estimate.

Spring start up for Baseball Fields was briefly discussed. The labor last year was \$6,100 with the Park Commission paying separately for the materials.

There is a big downed white pine at Cutler Field that DPW will pick up. Commissioners discussed the split tree next to the Town Field basketball court (Broadmeadow side) and agreed that considering the dead limbs in the middle of the canopy, it needed to be removed to avoid creating a hazard. Other tree work that could be done includes limbing one fir tree on Sawyer Common up to 6 feet and considering whether the cedar tree near the gazebo presents a hazard. Kenneth Bushnell will gather an estimate from Mead Tree as this vendor has done capable work for reasonable prices.

Evan Boucher moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$1,500 on tree work with the priority of removing the split tree near the Town Field basketball court. Robert Flynn seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioners directed Fran Stanley to send written requests for written estimates for fertilization. The Park Commissioners have been satisfied with current vendor's results, service and prices, but the Town has an obligation to occasionally solicit quotes to ensure that prices remain competitive.

Minutes

Evan Boucher moved to approve January 25, 2017 draft minutes. Kenneth Bushnell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Next regular meeting: Tuesday, April 4, 2017 at 7 pm.

Notes by Fran Stanley