

Town of Groton

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Park Commissioners

Kenneth Bushnell, Chair
Evan Boucher
Anna Eliot
James Gaffney
Timothy Siok

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 11, 2018
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Town Hall First Floor – Assessor's Meeting Room
Commissioners Present: Kenneth Bushnell, Evan Boucher, Anna Eliot, James Gaffney, Timothy Siok
Commissioners Absent: None
Others present: None

Chair Kenneth Bushnell, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Field Use Applications

- Woitowicz Field - Girls Youth Lacrosse, October 21, 2018

Kenneth Bushnell made a motion to approve the field use request submitted by Groton Girls Youth Lacrosse to use Woitowicz Field on October 21, 2018 for a Lacrosse tournament. Tim Siok seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- Cow Pond Fields A, B, C & D – Groton Dunstable Youth Soccer

Kenneth Bushnell made a motion to approve the field use request submitted by the Groton Dunstable Youth Soccer for use of fields A, B, C and D for the fall soccer season with the start date of August 26, through November 25, 2018. Tim Siok seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

- Cutler Field – Groton Dunstable Youth Soccer

Tim Siok made a motion to approve the field use request submitted by Groton Dunstable Youth Soccer for use of Cutler Field for the fall soccer season with the start date of August 26, 2018 through November 25, 2018. Evan Boucher seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Chair Bushnell informed the Commission of a field use request received from NMAFY on August 14, 2018. Kenny explained that there was a sense of urgency in responding to requestor because the organization needed an answer in order plan the fall football program. The request did not meet the criteria for Groton field use. Kenny wanted to communicate immediately, so the requestor could locate a field for his organization. On behalf of the Commission, Chair Bushnell denied the field use request.

Anna Eliot asked if the Park Commission charged field use fees from the user groups of the Town fields. She would like to evaluate the cost to maintain the fields. Evan Boucher stated the Commission has discussed charging fees in the past. He said the Town has not supported charging fees to the sport organizations and other town-based organizations that use the park properties. He said the process and management of taking in fees would need to be figured out. Anna said a revolving fund would need to be set up; this would need to be worked out with Tricia Dufresne, Groton Town Accountant. Kenny Bushnell said the practice of not charging fees has been in place forever. He stated that some of the user groups have contributed to the fields in ways over the years by building storage sheds, adding water systems and caring for the fields. Tim Siok believes it is time to look into how Groton's Park Commission compares with surrounding towns' Park and Rec programs. He said to is important to see how and what they charge for fees and what Groton is not offering residents because of our current practices. Residents could be going to other towns for opportunities we could be offering here.

The Commission decided to set up meetings with all major user groups this upcoming winter to have a conversation about field use. The Commission will also speak with Groton Town Accountant, Tricia Dufresne, about steps to set up a revolving fund for Park Commission fees.

The Groton School Community Days of Service and Carol Wheeler Park - Update

Tim Siok reported that the community service project held on September 10, 2018 was very successful. Tim, along with Robert O'Rourke, and 23 students from the Groton School cleaned up the over grown Carol Wheeler Park. Tim was very pleased with the work that was done. The park looks much better, the work done by the 15 and 16-year-old students was great. There is more work that can be done, but Gail Chambers who reported that the park needed attention stopped by to express that she is very pleased with the cleanup.

Tim will also represent the Park Commission at the next Groton School Community Service Day, scheduled for October 2, 2018. The location is the Town Playground. There are materials that will be needed for the playground work. Tim will need wheel barrels, shovels, rakes and about 25 yards of mulch. Tim will work on getting the tools and materials as the work day gets closer.

Tim requested that a thank you be sent to the Groton School for their work.

Cutler Field Action Plan –

Sign - Anna Eliot informed the Commission that HDC approved the proposed sign for the Town Field Basketball Court at its August 21, 2018 meeting. Anna needs to bring the proposed sign for the Cutler Field Basketball to the Sign Committee for approval, but first must have an approval from the Park Commissioners regarding the design and polices posted on the sign.

The Commissioners reviewed the proposed mock-up for the Cutler Field Basketball Court. All agreed the sign states what the Commission needs/wants to communicate to the users of the basketball court. All members were satisfied with the design/look of the sign. The Commission would like to have the sign graffiti proofed.

Tim Siok made a motion to approval the proposed Cutler Field Basketball sign stating the rules and policies of the field as presented with graffiti proof protection. Evan Boucher seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Lights - Evan Boucher met with the Town Electrician, Tim MacGregor, at Cutler Field to discuss a plan to install new lighting and put the field lights on a timer. Mr. MacGregor provided a quote for the work. The quote stated the request to put the lights on a timer would require a rewiring of the system and new equipment. The quote for the materials and work from Mr. MacGregor is in the amount of \$3,300. The cost of the work would be higher but Evan spoke with Mr. Kelley from GELD who would donate labor services.

After a discussion, the Commission decided not to move forward with the new lighting plan at Cutler Field. The Park Commission has a limited amount of funds; spending \$3,300 on a new lighting plan at Cutler Field could not be justified at this time. The Commission believes the new sign at the field will help enforce proper use of the field. The sign will also assist the Groton Police Department in enforcement of proper use of the field. The Commission asked Maureen to write a letter to the residents expressing concerns about the lights to make them aware of the decision not to install new lighting at Cutler Field.

Town Field Fence - Update

Kenny Bushnell received an invoice for the granite ordered for the Town Field fence. The Fletcher Granite, the supplier, requested to have the check in hand before delivery of the granite. Maureen will ask the accounting office to expedite the check tomorrow and have it delivered to Kenny to manage the delivery of the granite.

Capital Projects – continued to October Meeting

Commission Member – Updates

Anna Eliot told the members, that Don Black took her to the fields and properties under the jurisdiction of the Park Commission. She also met with Nic Gualco, Town Conservation Agent to discuss the connection and partnership of the Conservation Commission and the Park Commission. Anna has been attending the OPRP meetings.

Kenny Bushnell reported to the members, that an email was received from a resident reporting dog waste at Woitowicz Field. Kenny did a site visit, he found the field to be in good shape. The DPW was made aware of the of the report. Maureen emailed the resident noting the receipt of the email and Kenny's site walk.

Admin Updates –

- a) Scout Fundraiser at Cow Pond will take place on September 29 and October 13, 2018.
- b) Report of a down tree in the Common. The down tree was the result of a car accident. The DPW is working with the insurance of the responsible individual hitting the tree.
- c) Received two emails asking for an update on the Cutler Field action plan. The individuals were informed Cutler Field Action Plan discussion was on the September 11, 2018 agenda.
- d) Letter to 58 Jenkins/Hazel Grove sent.
- e) The Town has hired a new attorney.
- f) Email sent to Town Manager requesting to be put on the next Sign Committee agenda.
- g) Trees from Woitowicz Field damaged a pool at 25 Bayberry Drive. Mead Tree Service removed the trees, because Tom Delaney, DPW Director, did not have the man power to take care of the situation.
- h) A Hazel Grove well testing has been done. Reports given to Board of Health.
- i) There has been a request to use the Old Burying Ground for a Movie.
- j) Budget for FY20 should start being thought about
- k) Review of 2018 meeting dates, October 2, November 13 and December 4, 2018.

Invoices

The Commission reviewed the pending invoices.

Kenneth Bushnell moved to approve and pay pending invoices. Tim Siok seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Chair Kenneth Bushnell held out the invoice in the amount of \$2,200 for the extra work at the baseball field. He wanted to discuss the work and ask for “individual” approval for the invoice. He explained the work needed to be done because the condition of the field had been greatly compromised this year because of the weather.

Tim Siok made a motion to approve the New England Sports Turf invoice in the amount of \$2,100 for field improvement. Evan Boucher seconded. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Park Commission Account Balances

Maureen provided the members with spreadsheets indicating the Park Commission’s general ledger balances as of today. The Commission reviewed the data. The capital improvements amount will be discussed more in depth at future meeting. The use of CPC funds will also need to be discussed regarding capital improvements. The regular operation amount will need to be studied and evaluated in preparation of the upcoming budget talks.

Master Plan Report for Planning Board

After a discussion, the Commission’s response to the Master Plan Implementation Report will be submitted to the Planning Board.

Open Space and Recreation

- a. Maintain Groton’s recreational facilities in a manner that limits environmental impacts.
Yes, the Park Commission has maintained its fields and properties, using non-harmful and even organic materials. The Park Commission would like to use organic only fertilizer for the fields but it is cost prohibited.
- b. Review Groton’s private and public recreational offerings to ensure that programming is inclusive, diverse, cost-effective and sustainable.
The Park Commission is currently reviewing the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of its offerings to the Town. The Commissioners are working on identifying user groups of the park properties and fields, along with what is “actually” under the charge/care of the Park Commission. The Open Space & Recreation Plan – OPRP is likely to indicate what the Town wants, if anything, from the Park Commission.
- c. Create new recreation facilities for Groton residents
The Park Commission prioritizes the repair, replacement and improvement of the properties and facilities under their care. The Park Commission is often consumed with the clean-up and care of its parks and fields. The clean-up can be because of fallen trees, over grown parks, materials and trash left from a user of a field and other things such as hornet nest removal.

Currently, the Park Commission is working on having signage installed at the Town Basketball Courts stating the polices and rules for use of the courts.

The items that the Commission has earmarked for Park Field improvements this fall are the fence replacement at Town Field Playground and Town Tennis Courts. The Commission started to implement a Walkway at Legion Hall. There have been discussions of other projects the Commissioners would like to have done for the Town residents: i.e. a skate park and softball field.

Community Services and Facilities

- d. Consider establishing a Parks, Recreation and Community Education Department to provide a range of affordable recreation opportunities for all ages.

The Park Commission would like to see a dedicated labor employee for the Commission. The dependability the DPW for labor can be challenging, often resulting in paying outside vendors for work required to be done at the Town's fields and parks. There needs to be additional evaluation of policies and procedures. One Commissioner stated that after the labor issue is addressed, he would like to see if Commission is competitive with neighboring towns and if there would be an advantage to having a Parks and Recreation Department.

Minutes

Anna Eliot made a motion to accept the minutes of August 7, 2018. Kenny Bushnell seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Adjourn

Evan Boucher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 pm. James Gaffney seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Next meeting: Tuesday, October 2, 2018

Minutes by Maureen Adema