

TOWN OF GROTON

Park Commission
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Park Commissioners

Tim Siok, Chair
Donald Black
Kenneth Bushnell
Anna Eliot
Gail Chalmers

Meeting Minutes

Date: May 19, 2020
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting
Commissioners Present: Tim Siok, Donald Black, Anna Eliot, Kenneth Bushnell, Gail Chalmers
Others Present: Steele McCurdy, Michael Luth, Mark Haddad, Jason Webb, Tom Delaney, Dawn Dunbar, Kathy Shelp, The Groton Channel, Kara Cruikshank- Admin. Asst. And other interested parties.

7:00 P.M Tim Siok called the meeting to order.

Discuss and Vote on Closure of the Fields

Chair Siok stated the number one matter of business is the opening of the parks at this special Parks Meeting. Tim wanted to open it up for discussion. Town Manager, Mark Haddad said he went to the Select Board and they talked about protocols on how to open the Town Hall and the Country Club. After the Governor presented the four-phase opening, the Select Board received the park protocols. The Select Board decided to not hold any summer camps at the Country Club and cancelled park programs for safety reasons. They do not believe they can administer proper social distancing, and they are just not comfortable. Mr. Haddad believes they made the right decision and believes the town does not have the ability to do the cleaning that they need to. Mr. Haddad recommended to the Park Commission, to keep everything closed with a few minor exceptions, for example pickleball. Police Chief, Mike Luth, said that if the town has a standard that the town sets, it would be more-clear cut for the residents to understand and if they need some to do sort of enforcement. Commissioner Anna Eliot believes the guidelines from the state are explicit and easy to understand and we should follow them. Commissioner Chalmers asked if there are signs posted on all the grounds? Chief Luth stated there are signs that were posted on the courts and playgrounds. Dawn Dunbar said playgrounds aren't being considered until phase 2, June 8th. Fire Chief McCurdy said in terms of what to do with fields and parks, he agrees with state guidelines. They will be a difficult to police.

Ms. Eliot would like to share and be creative with the user groups to manage their own types of schedules and types of game that won't violate any protocols issued by the state. She said these groups have been very responsible and don't want to risk the health of the children either. Jason Webb asked if the Select Board has already voted on the parks and fields yet? Mark Haddad said no, just the Country Club. Jason suggested to conduct an experiment- Make a list of acceptable activities and see what happens. Have no portable facilities, no trash. Dawn Dunbar thinks that the policy is contradicting and a lot to put on the police force.

Commissioner Black asked if the user groups would organize their schedules like tee-times times at the Country Club, fifteen-minute increments? Kathy Shelp stated she has done activities her whole career and she has a lot of concerns about enforcing the rules. She stated there needs to be some sort of balance in these decisions that we make and right now we should be most concerned with people's health.

Tim Siok made a motion to keep parks and spring sports closed until further notice. Don Black seconded the motion. Roll Call: Bushnell-aye; Siok-aye; Chalmers- aye; Black-aye; Eliot- no.

Tom Delaney and Chief Luth agreed to secure the signs at the basketball and tennis courts if they are down. Commissioner Gail Chalmers suggested to look at the signs at play structures as well.

Ms. Eliot would like to re-assess the vote next meeting according to the guidelines. She would like to invite user groups to the next meeting. Mr. Siok agreed to re-assess at the next meeting, June 2.

Commissioner Updates

Tim Siok- Mr. Siok said to Mr. Haddad, our fields have had extensive damage by the storm and we may need some funding. Mr. Haddad said when it comes to storm damage, we can go to the finance committee. Mr. Haddad suggested to work with Mr. Delaney and they will address it. The pavilion and the concession stand will be replaced by insurance.

Anna Eliot- Ms. Eliot would like user groups to be invited to the next Park Commission Meeting to have a discussion with them and get their input so they can be apart of the process. She would like the State Guidelines sent to them as well. Administrative Assistant, Kara Cruikshank, agreed to invite and send the user groups an invitation.

Kenny Bushnell- Mr. Bushnell stated all of the fertilizer has been done on all of the fields. We should be expecting a bill from them.

Park Commission Invoices

April 2020 Park Commission invoice amounted to \$244.97

Mr. Siok made a motion to approve the invoices for \$244.97. Ken Bushnell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.

**Respectfully submitted by Kara Cruikshank, Land Use Administrative Assistant
Date approved: June 2, 2020**