## Meeting Minutes

## Park Commissioners

Donald Black, Chair

Brenden Mahoney, Vice Chair

Anna Eliot

Gail Chalmers

## TOWN OF GROTON

Park Commission

173 Main Street

Groton, MA 01450

Tel: 978-732-1893

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**Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2023**

**Time: 5:00 PM**

**Location: Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room**

**Commissioners Present: Donald Black, Anna Eliot, Gail Chalmers, Brenden Mahoney**

**Others Present: Tammi Mickel - Parks Assistant; Mark Haddad, Town Manager; Fran Stanley, Groton Housing Coordinator; Dan Twomey, GDYL Director; Matt Ricard, GDRSD Athletic Director; Andrea & Dan Murdock; Justin Frazier, Robert & Linda Bicknell; Nancy Sarlan; Darcy Donald**

**5:00 PM**  Chairman Donald Black calls meeting to order at 5:00PM

**Cutler Field-** Don Black said there used to be 2 softball fields at Cutler field, however for many years there has not been a demand for girls’ softball fields so the field has been used by lacrosse. The softball diamonds have not been maintained. A few months ago, a group for girls’ softball came to us for use of fields as the sport is becoming more popular and they don’t have any fields to play at. So, we put in the CPC application to revamp the softball fields at Cutler Field. Don Black said he believes the application has been approved but would then need to go to town meeting. Dan Twomey was at the Select Board meeting last week and heard about the application and was concerned that lacrosse would not be able to play at Cutler field. Don Black said we always try to accommodate all user groups. Dan Twomey said there were a lot of unanswered questions, no known timing and he was concerned there is not a full understanding on how popular lacrosse has become. He stated there is not enough room at Cow Pond. Dan Twomey said Chris Campy submitted a letter which he handed to Don Black. Don Black said we can get 2 fields in but if 2 games are playing at the same time, parking would become an issue. He said we are looking into a use of a field another field on Townsend Rd. that could be used for softball. He said lacrosse will have full use of Cutler field this year. He said he will visit Lawrence Academy to see if they can get use for one of their fields. Matt Ricard said the middle school has 2 softball fields that are playable and the High School field is about a week away from being playable. Don Black asked Matt Ricard if they are offering the use of those fields for girls’ softball? Matt Ricard said yes. Mark Haddad said the CPC like to see projects done asap. If asked if the Parks want to alter the application, so we can use the money for Cutler field for lacrosse. Anna said she is CPC member; she applauds efforts to accommodate everyone and the CPC is picky about their applications. The recommendation to change from softball to lacrosse, we will need to come up with a cost and a plan. She also said it takes the user groups appearance at the CPC meetings. Dan Twomey said he understands the CPC and is not asking for a change in the CPC application but is it going to impact the use of the field for this season. Brenden Mahoney suggested that there needs to be better communication with the user groups to see how many players there are and keep track of that so we can better forecast the needs in the future. Don Black said he would like to applaud Matt Ricard for offering the use of the school fields for girls’ softball. Anna Eliot said she would like to give credit to the user groups. Is the CPC something we still need to do? Brenden Mahoney said he was down at the field and the field needs work. The gate needs to be fixed, there are divots in the field, the basketball hoops are bent, there is a tree down and the picnic table is in rough shape. Anna said the application was approved for 2 softball fields; however, we can possibly come up with a cost to reclaim the fields to par. Where the school offered use of softball fields and because of that generous offer, we would like to revamp the field. Anna Eliot said we will need to go to the CPC before it goes to town meeting. Brenden mentioned the idea of putting in one softball field and one lacrosse field or a multi-use field. Don Black said he will work on getting this CPC application on the agenda at the next CPC meeting.

**Cow Pond / Hoyts Wharf Rd. Update –** Don Black said our engineer Matt Waterman has not done anything new to report. We filed a pre submission application to the NHESP but we have not heard back. He said this is a conceptual plan to reconfigure for more space and parking.

Linda Bicknell, who is a resident on Hoyts Wharf Rd., said she has a severe problem with the speeding and not stopping at the stop signs. Anna Eliot said that is why we want to hire engineers to come up with a plan and look into the traffic, wetlands and affordable housing. Linda Bicknell stated she was not in favor of the 40B project going on across the street. Anna Eliot said the Parks has nothing to do with that project. We are trying to get a feasible study done to alleviate some of the traffic problems. Linda Bicknell was concerned on the length of time it will take for there to be changes. Anna Eliot said it can take years. Brenden Mahoney, who also resides in the area said the part of solving the problem is this access road. This would help divert some of the traffic so it would avoid the triangle area. Anna Eliot said the transfer station traffic will always be there which causes traffic. Don Black said we have a conceptual plan which would direct traffic from Route 40, one way into the Cow Pond soccer and football and baseball would come in from Hoyts Wharf Rd. Andrea Murdock, who lives on Hoyts Wharf Rd., said can we get some sort of public signage on the road to get people to listen. Mark Haddad asked if there was a stop ahead sign? The residents said there is not. Mark Haddad said he would talk to Chief Luth about putting something down there. Darcy Donald, who lives on Hoyts Wharf Rd., expressed her concern in regards to the turtles and other species that are already being disrupted due to the proposed 40B project taking place on Cow Pond Brook Rd. Justin Fraizer, a resident on Cow Pond Brook Rd., also spoke of the proposed 40B project. Don Black said the Parks Commission has nothing to do with that project. Justin Frazier said he would like the Parks Commission to have their back on not allowing the 40B project to use parks property to redirect traffic. Justin asked what is the rerouting proposal and how does this link in with the 40B proposal? Mark Haddad said on the Heritage Landing site (40B project on Cow Pond Brook Rd.), because of the size of the project and the septic system, they need to have an offset system for nitrogen loading. They are asking to lease some town owned land for the offset system which not to be built on and right now it is just a proposal and will have to go to the Select Board and Town Meeting. Anna Eliot said part of all these questions is why we are working with NHESP, the Environmental Protection and the Housing Authority.

Don Black said we are being told the best path is to go onto Hoyts Wharf Rd. Justin Fraizer said there is supposed to be signage up and they have not been put up. Don Black said baseball has a sign which will be going up. Justin Fraizer said he would like signs closer to the stop signs and put a police officer at the baseball field entrance at the beginning of the season so their presence is known?

Nancy Sarlan, a resident on Cow Pond Brook Rd., spoke of the Boston Earth composting facility that happened previously. Don Black said that had nothing to do with the Parks Commission. Nancy Sarlan said she knows but the point is that happened in a blink of an eye with no notification which added another problem to an already congested road. She said she is hoping there is genuine transparency on all the other plans on Cow Pond Brook Road. She said she does not know how much more that road can take. Anna said we are trying to reconfigure that so it can work. Linda Bicknell said we have existing problems; can the Parks Commissioners contact the sports teams about the speeding. She said meetings are held in executive session, why don’t they want their input? Don Black said residents should continue to come to meetings and we can reach out to the user groups to inform them of the concerns and he thanks them for coming to the meeting tonight.

**Prescott Playground** – Don Black said we have governance over Prescott playground. We need to redo the mulch. We got highway over; they dug up the ground play area. We will need 100 cubic yards of mulch. The highway department will spread the mulch and playground chips. The Parks Commission will pay for the playground chips.

**Field Bid Updates** – Brenden Mahoney said we have decided to go with DB Lawn Solutions for fertilization and irrigation. DB Lawn Solutions will let him know when they are going to fertilize so he can inform highway so there will be no conflict with mowing. Tammi will send a letter to the previous vendors Turf Unlimited and Dawson Landscaping informing them of the change of service providers.

**Porta Potty Quotes** – Don Black said we are going to stay with the current vendor Regional Restrooms.

**Woitowicz Tennis Court** – Don Black said he looked at the tennis court as an option for Pickleball. The court is not in good shape, there are large cracks and is not safe for playing. He spoke with Shawn at the Groton County Club as they have new pickleball courts. They charge a small fee for usage for the courts. The current pickleball user groups are all set for the spring season but for the summer season we may direct them to the Groton Country Club for use so the basketball courts are available for the kids throughout the summer.

**Carol Wheeler Park** – Don Black said we need to vote on what to do with the parking area at Carol Wheeler Memorial Park. Weather to turn it into a grassed area or fix the parking lot.

D. Black motioned to get a consensus from DPW director & DPW assistant director for input on weather to grass parking area at Carol Wheeler Memorial Park or to repair the parking area.

Upon a motion made by D. Black seconded by A. Eliot, it was;

Voted to get a consensus from DPW director & DPW assistant director for input on weather to grass parking area at Carol Wheeler Memorial Park or to repair the parking area.

***The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: AE, BM, DB, GC)***

**Hollingsworth & Vose Field** – Don Black said Hollingsworth & Vose have agreed to let us use their field. They will draft the agreement. This field can be used for men’s and / or girls’ softball. Don Black said he spoke with New England Sports Turf. Chris Fillidaro from NE Sports Turf said to get the field to playable shape it would cost no more than $2,000.

Anna Eliot motioned to not exceed $2,000 with NE Sports Turf to make the Hollingsworth & Vose field playable.

Upon a motion made by A. Eliot seconded by G. Chalmers, it was;

Voted to not exceed $2,000 to make the Hollingsworth & Vose field playable.

***The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: AE, BM, DB, GC)***

**Field Use Permit**- No spring field use permits

**CPC update and Report** – Don Black said the CPC applications for Cutler field softball diamonds and Town field well were accepted pending Town Meeting.

**Budget Report** YTD we have spent approx. $36,869.66 or 66%, of our $55,759 budget leaving about $18,889.34 in our general expense account.

**Bills:** All invoices were reviewed:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Regional Restrooms | $164.50 |
| Moison Hardware | $7.98 |
| GELD | $391.98 |
| G. W. Shaw | $140.00 |
| Carrot Top | $679.48 |

Upon a motion made by A. Eliot seconded by B. Mahoney it was:

Voted to approve all invoices due.

***The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: AE, BM, DB)***

**Commissioner Updates -** No Updates

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the March 7, 2023 meeting as presented.

Upon a motion made by A. Eliot, seconded by G. Chalmers, it was;

Voted to approve the minutes from March 7, 2023 as presented

***The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: AE, BM, DB)***

**Adjourn:** Commissioner D. Black calls to adjourn at: 6:56 PM.

Upon a motion made by A. Eliot seconded by G. Chalmers, it was;

Voted to adjourn the April Parks Commission meeting.

***The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: AE, BM, DB, GC)***

**Next Meeting: May 2, 2023 @ 5:00pm**

**Meeting Minutes Respectfully Submitted by: Tammi Mickel, Parks Assistant**

Date Approved: 5/2/2023