



TOWN OF GROTON
Park Commission
Town Hall
1st Floor Meeting Room

PARK COMMISSION
Brenden Mahoney, Chair
Anna Eliot, Vice Chair
Mary Jennings, Member
Jeffrey Ohringer, Member
Gail Chalmers, Member

Date: Tuesday, December 12, 2023
Time: 1:00 PM
Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room
Members Present: Brenden Mahoney, Anna Eliot, Mary Jennings, Jeffrey Ohringer, Gail Chalmers
Members Not Present:
Others Present: David Pitkin, John Reilly, Rob Foley, Mark Haddad, Kara Cruikshank, Fran Stanley

Brenden Mahoney called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Town Manager Updates (MARK HADDAD)- Mark Haddad addressed the Park Commission in regards to a grant that was received by the town for a blue cross blue shield fitness court. The grant amount received was \$50,000, with a CPA Project application in the balance of \$237,000. The project initially was to be placed nearby to the Groton Center, though a conservation restriction would make it no longer feasible. After reviewing sites throughout town, Mr. Haddad is proposing placing the fitness court behind the library, on the left of the basketball court, beside Town Field. The site would be 35' x76', the DPW director has confirmed feasibility for the site in using a retaining wall, and for various reasons, this would be an idea site. Brenden Mahoney also made mention that the project could include a splash pad for children, based on the location of the water line, and excellent timing as Town Field will be having baseball field diamond work done. Mr. Mahoney had a discussion with Mr. Cataldo to discuss a potential design. Gail Chalmers clarified that the fitness court would be for adults and seniors, not for children, Mr. Haddad confirmed as well handicap accessible. Jeff Ohringer asked about possible for vandalism, to which Mr. Haddad gave greater detail about the structures and design. Mary Jennings clarified that the CPA application with the 237,000 is just for the fitness court and not for the splash pad and concept design. Rob Foley addressed the commission to ask when the baseball field diamond project will begin, which hasn't been determined, though the two projects could be done concurrently. Mary Jennings clarified the time line, to which Mark Haddad stated the fitness court could not begin until July 1, 2024. Rob Foley shared some information about the condition of the current Town Field play areas, which need work, as well as fencing changes. Mr. Foley added that pushing the baseball field diamond project would be best pushed off until Fall 2024, he offered returning to a future meeting to discuss finances and needs at Town Field. Anna Eliot made comments about engaging a designer and former a committee in order to get a concept plan. Mary Jennings motioned to approve Mark Haddad's request to select Town Field as a location for the fitness court project in his final application, Jeff Ohringer seconded, and motion carried unanimously.

Mark Haddad addressed the committee again to share that the town is in a deficit of 3 million dollars, and if the override proposition 2 1/2 does not get approved, there will be significant cuts to many departments. Mr. Haddad also shared that the Park Commission expense funds would be cut if that situation happens, and the town would contact user groups for financial assistance in maintaining the fields. Mary Jennings clarified that the entire \$55,579.00 expense budget would be cut. Mr. Haddad also stated that the Park Commission capital budget would remain

and is presently set at \$50,000.00 for FY25. David Pitkin clarified that this situation would be for more than just FY25. Additionally, Mark Haddad asked the commission if a bay at Town Field could be used by Paul Funch of the Trails Committee. Jeff Ohringer offered the old pump house at Cow Pond, if any committee would like to move it. Mark Haddad thanked the commission for their time and apologized for the potential loss of the expense budget.

CPA Application 2025-02 Cow Pond Play Fields Discussion-Request for Letters of Support (ANNA ELIOT)- Anna Eliot shared details about the application, and the need for concept design at Cow Pond Fields, and requested user groups for their letters of support for the project. Rob Foley clarified that the request is for the user groups to show support for the project. Brenden Mahoney shared that Katie Berry sent out a Google survey to get responses from the public as to what they would like to see at the Cow Pond area. David Pitkin asked Anna Eliot if this is as a result of the previous CPA application for feasibility, and now this project will be for concept design. Brenden Mahoney asked David Pitkin if the traffic flow has been improved since the DPW made adjustments at the Cow Pond site parking area, to which is said yes.

Maple Ave Property Discussion (MARY JENNINGS)- Mary Jennings shared that she became aware of a site at parcel 104-31 Maple Ave, which belongs to the Park Commission, Katie Berry confirmed with the Groton GIS.

Green Pickup Bags for Dogs Visiting Field Areas (BRENDEN MAHONEY)- Brenden Mahoney shared that he has researched purchase of green refuse bags for dog waste, and gave pricing to the commission members. Jeff Ohringer stated that dogs using the Cow Pond field as a bathroom has been a major problem. During the winter months, there are no trash receptacles to put the green bags in. Brenden Mahoney mentioned that creating dog areas like at Cow Pond, may help with this issue, as the concept is designed. Rob Foley shared that the dogs making a mess is a major issue for the users, and that the trash barrels are dumped by volunteers into the dumpster at Cow Pond. Brenden Mahoney stated that the green bags information has been presented, and the commission can review this and make an educated decision, this discussion will be continued to discuss dogs on fields.

Affordable Housing Trust project at parcel 249-51 (BRENDEN MAHONEY) – Brenden Mahoney shared the intention of the Affordable Housing Trust, who will be moving forward with building a single building on this parcel.

General Condition of Park Properties- Commissioner updates and estimates.

Town Fields/ New Town Common/ Minuteman Common/Orchard Common (MARY JENNINGS)- Mary Jennings shared some updates regarding the shed at Town Field, and discussed usage with Rob Foley. Anna Eliot motioned that the Park Commission will allow space for the Trails Committee to keep equipment in the Town Fields shed, Jeff Ohringer seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Brenden Mahoney shared that the playground at Town Field has received repairs.

Woitowicz Field/ Prescott Common/ Veterans Memorial Common/Hazel Grove Park/Lawrence Memorial Playground (ANNA ELIOT)- No updates. Anna Eliot mentioned that the community seems pleased with Woitowicz updates.

Badger Common/ Firemen's Common/ Legion Common/Cow Pond (JEFFREY OHRINGER)- Jeff Ohringer shared that they are waiting for the pad to be poured for the new Cow Pond shed, otherwise no updates. Jeff Ohringer stated that the soccer club will be paying for the entire shed.

Cutler Field/ Armstrong Memorial Common/ Lost Lake Pickleball Court/Carol Wheeler (GAIL CHALMERS)- Gail Chalmers shared that Armstrong Memorial is on the backside of the field on Shirley St, otherwise no updates.

CPA Project Updates (ANNA ELIOT)- Mary Jennings shared that she discussed the projects with Don Black. Brenden Mahoney shared the order in which the projects will be addressed potentially.

It was clarified that Mark Haddad mentioned intention to ask the DPW to help with some upkeep at the Town Field.

Park Commission Budget Review (BRENDEN MAHONEY)- Katie Berry shared accounting sheets showing invoice totals for Expense Warrant 13, as well as expenses incurred to date. Brenden Mahoney and the commissioners discussed the current funding structure and potential to restructure. The commission also discussed Mark Haddad's comments earlier in the meeting regarding the potential FY25 budget cuts.

OLD / NEW BUSINESS:

Sign permits/ invoices- Commissioners signed all invoices and permits.

Mary Jennings motioned to accept the minutes, Brenden Mahoney seconded, and the motion carried with Gail Chalmers and Jeff Ohringer abstaining.

Schedule Next Meeting and Commissioner Updates- Wednesday January 10th 5:00pm

Brenden Mahoney moved to adjourn at 3:17pm, Mary Jennings seconded, and the motion carried.

Minutes by Katie Berry.

APPROVED: 1/10/2024
