



TOWN OF GROTON
Park Commission
Town Hall
2nd Floor Meeting Room

PARK COMMISSION
Brenden Mahoney, Chair
Brian Edmonds, Vice Chair
Anna Eliot, CPC Rep
Mary Jennings, Member
Jeffrey Ohringer, Member

Date: Tuesday October 1, 2024
Time: 5:00 PM
Location: 2nd Floor Meeting Room
Members Present: Brenden Mahoney, Anna Eliot, Jeffrey Ohringer, Brian Edmonds, Mary Jennings
Members Not Present:
Others Present: Katie Berry via Zoom, Deanna Kass, Judy Anderson, Groton Resident

Brenden Mahoney called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

BikeTown Discussion with Resident Deanna DeVito Kass- Deanna Kass was present to share her idea for a “BikeTown”, with her young daughter, an idea she saw at Boston Park. Ms. Kass explained that this “BikeTown” option creates a small side street network play area, on pavement, where kids can practice riding their bicycles. This is created with paint, and is made available to kids in a safe environment. She stated that 64x60 feet costs approximately \$10,000.00, as described by an installer. Brenden Mahoney thanked Ms. Kass and suggested that maybe this would be a good addition for the Cow Pond redesign, which Mary Jennings agreed. The Commission also discussed Town Field near the playground and bike trail or behind Prescott.

2022-02 Feasibility Study Updates & 2025-02 Cow Pond Play Fields CPA Projects Updates-

Anna Eliot discussed returning the balance of the 2022-02 Feasibility Study to the Community Preservation Committee and close out the project. Ms. Eliot also suggested returning the 30,000.00 for the 2025-02 Cow Pond Play Fields project, in order to prevent competition for funds with the Town Field project. Brian Edmonds moved to return \$6163.75 to the CPA funds for the 2022-02 Feasibility Study, Jeff Ohringer seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. The commission discussed the idea of the return of the funds for 2025-02 Cow Pond Play Fields, with Jeff Ohringer suggesting that it may not make sense to do so. Anna Eliot suggested that Town Hall does not support the Cow Pond project, which Brenden Mahoney asked for clarification as to who is not in favor of the Cow Pond project, Anna Eliot stated that there has been hostility toward the Cow Pond project by the Select Board and Town Manager, as she stated was made clear in the recordings of the Select Board meetings of August 24th and 31st of 2020 and continued to date, which Ms. Jennings stated is hearsay. Brian Edmonds and Brenden Mahoney both suggested that Mark Haddad perhaps join a future meeting to discuss. Ms. Eliot also suggested that there has been hostility from user groups regarding Cow Pond redesign. Jeff Ohringer moved to table the refunding of the 30,000.00 for 2025-02 Cow Pond Play Fields project, Brian Edmonds seconded, and the motion carried 4-0, with Anna Eliot abstaining. Brenden Mahoney clarified that the 2025-02 Cow Pond Play fields project was just approved by the Town and Select Board in Spring 2024, so he felt that he needed to speak to Mr. Haddad to get a greater understanding of Ms. Eliot's concerns. The Commissioners discussed other Town

projects in the Cow Pond area, such as the water line, and Article 97 of the hill at parcel 39. Brenden Mahoney suggested a joint meeting between the Park Commission, Conservation Commission, and Select Board to discuss the Article 97 hill issue. Brian Edmonds asked Administrator, Katie Berry, to provide a map of Cow Pond Parcels at the next meeting. Brian Edmonds moved to table the conversation to the next meeting, to include the Town Manager, Mary Jennings seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0 with Anna Eliot abstaining.

2024-05 Softball Diamonds at Cutler Field and 2024-04 Town Field CPA Projects Updates-

Brenden Mahoney shared that the softball diamonds project is moving along well, and that the 2 fields have been cut out, with Tom Delaney preparing to remove the debris. Brian Edmonds agreed that the project is moving along well.

Park Commission Properties- Assigned Commissioner updates and estimates- Anna Eliot shared that the playground mulch and sand have been installed, and an estimate has been submitted for pruning the area. Brenden Mahoney shared that continued maintenance of the playground should be built into the yearly operational budget, at least every other year, and weeding every year. Brenden Mahoney shared that he went and repaired the accessible swing himself a couple weeks ago, replacing the chain, it was also suggested that the swing repair should also be built into the operating budget. The Commission discussed the operational budget, and meeting with Mark Haddad. Mary Jennings shared a conversation she had with Nashoba Tech regarding future shed building estimates.

Discussion on Policies and Procedures Manual - Field Usage and Fees- Brian Edmonds shared that work is on track for November preliminary draft. Mr. Edmonds shared that there is contemplation on user fees policy, and discussed this imposing of fees with the other Commissioners. Jef Ohringer shared that he is opposed to the implementing of fees for field use. Anna Eliot shared that it's a project to continue working on, maybe similar to how the Country Club charges fees, but that this may be further off. Brenden Mahoney agreed that creating a fee schedule to maintain well prepared fields may be best. Anna Eliot suggested that that maintenance idea is true also of Legion Common, where Grotonfest held their event last weekend, and the area will need repair and fall fertilizer. Mary Jennings supported the potential of implementation of user fees, with recognition of user group efforts and expenses. Ms. Jennings also stated that implementing of user fees helps to determine what the fields are worth. Brian Edmonds clarified that user groups are individual entities and not part of the Town, so any policy concerning differentiating fees, Town Counsel will need to review.

Capital Improvement Budget Planning Discussion- Mary Jennings shared that with approximately \$42,000.00 remaining, the Commission should discuss and set priority for expending the funds. Brian Edmonds shared that he has reached out to a few landscaping companies for Carol Wheeler. Katie Berry provided the paving estimates from September 2023, which will need updating. Anna Eliot suggested that paving should be done by the DPW. Brian Edmonds suggested talking to Sachin Patel about contributing to the paving of Carol Wheeler, which has an expected cost of about 10,000.00. The Commission discussed the chain gate that was placed at Cow Pond, which was initially part of the Capital Plan. The playground to be placed at Cow Pond would be under the 2025-02 Cow Pond redesign. Mary Jennings shared that Nashoba Tech is willing to build a 12x16 shed for Parks Properties, for the cost of materials, for municipalities only, at only about \$5,800.00. Brenden Mahoney stated that he may reach out to Don Barry of the Softball group to see if he may have need, with Jeff Ohringer reminding that for an expense of \$700.00 the old Cow Pond shed can be moved. Katie Berry shared that the volunteers with Lacrosse repaired the Woitowicz shed, with materials to be reimbursed. Brian Edmonds stated that these sheds, with the one exception of the Soccer shed at Cow Pond, are owned by the Park Commission. Mary Jennings shared that she would withdraw the suggestion

to install cameras to Park Properties. Brenden Mahoney stated that brush clearing may be needed for the Cal Ripkin league, he will bring an estimate to the next meeting. Anna Eliot stated that the Lawrence Academy maintenance team she spoke with, want to be involved in the Town Field project, they did a great job clearing brush at Town Field. Mary Jennings moved to put into the Capital budget for FY26 a shed, location to be determined, Brian Edmonds seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Mary Jennings requested the encumbrance of \$5,800.00 for the FY26 shed. Anna Eliot also suggested the Legion Hall Park bench repair be on the Capital budget. Brian Edmonds will email the DPW to ask about paving Carol Wheeler. Katie Berry will send an email to A1 Odd Jobs to look at Cutler Field Shed, Cow Pond Snack Shack, and the Legion Hall bench, and get pricing and meet Brenden Mahoney on site. Jeff Ohringer stated that he would like to get a crosswalk in the Cow Pond Field area, crossing to the Transfer Station, which Brenden Mahoney suggested the crosswalk be discussed with Chief Luth and Tom Delaney. Brenden Mahoney moved to approve the estimate for pruning at Christine Memorial Playground out of Operational/Expense budget, Mary Jennings seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Jeff Ohringer stated that the trees are blocking the lights in the parking lot area of Cow Pond Play Fields, Brenden Mahoney stated that he may be able to incorporate this project with the brush work at the other side of Cow Pond in the baseball area.

Park Commission Budget Updates- Katie Berry shared current invoices with a balance of \$42,733.72 in Capital and \$42,632.27 in Operational Expense.

Old/New Business:

Sign permits/ invoices- Park Commissioners signed FY25 Operational Expense and FY25 Capital Expense invoices to be processed.

Approve September 3, 2024 Minutes – Brian Edmonds moved to accept the meeting minutes of September 3, 2024, as submitted, Anna Eliot seconded, and the motion carried 4-0 with Mary Jennings abstaining.

Schedule Next Meeting - Tuesday November 12th, 2024 5:00pm. Brian Edmonds will take notes and the meeting will be recorded, as Katie Berry will be away.

Brian Edmonds moved to adjourn at 6:42pm, Brenden Mahoney seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Minutes by Katie Berry, Interdepartmental Administrative Assistant.

APPROVED: 11/12/24
