



Parks and Recreation Commission

Community Notes

Monday July, 9 2018

Town Hall - O'Brien Meeting Room

Commissioners in Attendance:

- Jon Briggs
- Chuck Dello Iacono
- Tye Donahue
- Jim Maher

Commissioners not in attendance:

- Salvatore Ledda

Also in attendance:

- Robert Stanley, Recreation Director
- Tracey White, Administrative Assistant

Agenda

- Public Comment
- Permits if Necessary
- Smoking Policy
- Parks and Recreation Property Assessment Discussion
- Weekly Director and Asst. Director Reports
- Detailed program numbers
- Punch list Gonzales Field
- Directors Report
- Asst. Directors Report
- Old/New Business *

Meeting Notes

- Mr. Dello Iacono called the meeting to order at 7:03pm
- Mr. Dello Iacono asked for public comment
 - No residents were present for public comment
- Smoking policy
 - June 26 a complaint was received about smoking on park property

- Ms. White has provided the commissioners with a copy of the smoking policy for review
- The current smoking policy is not currently being policed
 - Mr. Dello Iacono mentioned that Dedham Police would be the department responsible for enforcing the policy
- This is the first complaint that the commission has received in Mr. Dello Iacono's time on the commission
- Mr. Maher asked if there is a fine associated with smoking
- There are currently no signs, so more signs could be placed
 - Mr. Maher expressed concern that people currently ignore other signs already posted
- Mr. Maher mentioned all fields that are on school property already covered by their no tobacco law
- Mr. Maher's suggestion is to notify the youth leagues that they will need to police themselves
 - Suggested placing a sign at Memorial Field where the complaint came from
- Mr. Dello Iacono asked Mr. Stanley to investigate the MA General Law before ordering signs, so that the law can be referenced on any signage
- Mr. Briggs suggested that commissioners could begin frequenting park spaces where there have been complaints, if notifying the youth groups and placing a sign at Memorial isn't effective
- Mr. Stanley mentioned that he already mentioned this to baseball
 - Mr. Maher mentioned the importance of notifying all youth leagues that the no smoking policy will be strictly enforced
- Mr. Briggs asked if the smoking policy is available on the website, Mr. Stanley isn't sure
 - Mr. Briggs also suggested adding a banner on the department's website reminding residents about the smoking policy
- Parks and Rec property assessment discussion
 - After the last meeting, Mr. Dello Iacono asked the commissioners to visit the parks and give a report of the state of the properties in their own opinion to report back to the commission
 - With the holiday, many commissioners did not have a chance to visit the sites
 - Mr. Dello Iacono will ask for the reports to be put on the next meeting agenda
 - This assessment is not trying to pick on the Parks Dept. staff, but rather to collect information if needing to ask the town manager for different staffing
 - Mr. Maher agreed that it is very helpful to put a fresh set of eyes on the spaces to make sure things are noticed
 - Oakdale Common broken post has been broken for a long time, Mr. Dello Iacono suggests that there isn't enough manpower to get these things fixed in a timely manner
 - Mr. Briggs mentioned that there were professional eyes on all of the park properties
 - Mr. Dello Iacono used Churchill as an example - mowing and getting the field ready for gameplay is done well, but need more manpower to do manicuring around the fields and other general property maintenance
- Weekly Director and Assistant Director reports
 - Mr. Maher emphasized how important it is for the commission to be informed on a weekly basis what's going on
 - New programs started last week that the commission doesn't have up to date information about enrollment, etc.
 - Would like the Director and Assistant Director reports to be mandatory on a weekly basis, since the commissioners will have to answer to the status of the programs around town
 - Mr. Dello Iacono told Mr. Stanley that more updates need to be put in front of the commission on a timely basis

- Mr. Stanley said that the reports take a long time, concerned that it would take a lot of time out of his day
 - Mr. Maher said that it took him one hour to get full enrollment information on all of the programs, suggests that the department could do the reports efficiently
- Mr. Maher concerned that some of the programs are not viable, mentioned several programs where there are 0 or 1 person enrolled
 - Mr. Stanley said that the programs are struggling because they are new, and likes to see the programs get tried out and see how they do, rather than not even try
- Mr. Dello Iacono concerned that there have been no reports to the commission, they have been asking for awhile
 - Suggested that after awhile the reports could become less frequent
 - Emphasized that the reports don't have to be incredibly detailed
- Mr. Briggs said he understands that the new programs may be slow, but concerned that without having information on the programs, the commission can't make decisions about which programs to prioritize
- Mr. Maher noticed that some of the longer established programs are struggling, too
- Mr. Stanley shared revenue updates from several programs, emphasizing that many of the programs are up in revenue
 - Mr. Briggs said that if those numbers had been shared with the commission in a report, they would greatly appreciate that
 - Mr. Stanley said the department has done a lot to increase numbers, including starting registration earlier
 - Mr. Stanley shared that the revenue is up almost 50% this year
 - Mr. Stanley mentioned that the Assistant Director should do a better job of communicating good news
- Mr. Briggs shared that he only saw 5 kids at the Riverdale Park today when driving around
 - Mr. Stanley said he is on vacation this week so he hasn't gotten this week's numbers
- Mr. Maher concerned about low enrollment in swim programs, but Mr. Stanley said that those different options are all factored into a total number for a program, so overall they're not down
- Mr. Briggs would like to know which programs aren't working, so that they can evaluate if programs need to be eliminated
 - He would like to have the information about which programs are breaking even
 - Mr. Stanley said that exact numbers are difficult to get with the new financial program, and calculating payroll is difficult, hard to break down by program
 - Mr. Briggs would like to look at the programs like a business
 - Mr. Stanley noticed a huge flaw in the wrestling program and fixed it this year
- Mr. Stanley said that some programs that are worth keeping don't always break even, like Pathfinders
- Mr. Stanley is overall happy with the program numbers, acknowledges that marketing could be better
- Mr. Dello Iacono concerned that marketing for programs is not coming out 3 months prior to the start date
 - Mr. Stanley did not know about the 3 months, Spring and Summer programs were up in January, but having fall program info out as summer programs were getting off the ground would be very difficult
- Mr. Dello Iacono concerned about glitches in the system for sign ups for flag football, and that the program started too late
 - Advertisement is key for the sign ups for flag football
 - Typically there is a program head for every program, Mr. Stanley suggested maybe that it needs to change

- Mr. Maher suggested adjusting the available slots for some programs to be more realistic for the program needs, so that the numbers don't look out of balance
 - Mr. Stanley would like to see the registration changed so that the public doesn't see how many slots are filled, because people may be deterred if they see low numbers
 - Believes that changing that on the registration system would be an easy fix
- Mr. Dello Iacono asked Mr. Stanley if he is happy with the registration numbers and how it balances with cost of running programs
 - Mr. Stanley said that he would need to see more numbers before definitively answering, but feels like the numbers have improved since 2017 even though not everything on the checklist were done
 - Happy that they held an open house and thinks it will be a successful event next year
 - Pleased that everything was up and running by an earlier date this year
 - Feels good about having a 50% increase in revenue
- Mr. Maher would like to see overall participation numbers compared over the last 3 years
 - Concerned that participation numbers may be stagnant and that cost of programs are going up
 - Mr. Stanley confident that the programs are not too expensive
- Mr. Donahue asked how to establish a baseline of what the program status is, so that future discussions aren't comparing participation numbers to revenue numbers but instead to a baseline
- Mr. Maher expressed that participation numbers are the best way to measure if programs are successful
- Mr. Stanley unable to break down staffing costs by program because the numbers from payroll aren't broken down that way, come to him as a lump sum
 - Would like to get onto the Munis system so that more accurate and detailed record keeping would be possible, would make it very easy to produce reports for the commission very often
 - Ultimate goal is to find time to work with finance and get it all updated so that Munis would work compatible with Sportsman system - both Munis and Sportsman people say that it can be done
 - Mr. Donahue asked what a realistic timeline would be to get the software changes up and running - Mr. Stanley said he needs a test copy to figure out how to make it work, his background in IT would help him be able to do it
 - Mr. Stanley needs to spend more time talking with the Sportsmen people to figure out what the interface can look like
- Punch list for Gonzales Field
 - Mr. Dello Iacono reached out to contractor with updated list, there is good progress on getting through it
 - There will be an attempt to put plantings in this week, Mr. Dello Iacono is concerned the plantings won't do well in the summer
 - Mr. Briggs said they know what they're doing for the plantings
 - Mr. Briggs asked if the warranty on the plantings is good from when replacement plants are put in, Mr. Dello Iacono said that the one year restarts if a plant needs to be replaced
 - Mr. Stanley said it might be a good opportunity to take care of netting since the field is slower during the summer
 - Mr. Stanley got a quote on granite work and its ready to go
 - Mr. Dello Iacono wants to have a rededication of the new field in the fall, with the youth groups and other town officials
 - Mr. Maher asked if lighting was under department control, Mr. Stanley said it is

- Mr. Dello Iacono shared that some areas around the field get dark, maybe more lighting needs to be added in areas close to Route 1
 - Maybe 2 additional lights from the original plan may be missing, he will follow up
 - Mr. Maher said that people like the misting station
 - Mr. Stanley said that there was a complaint about the “showers”, Ms. White talked to the gentleman and explained they are misting stations, not showers
- Assistant Director’s report
 - Report emailed to Mr. Stanley, who shared it
 - 7 summer camp programs are in session, swim and gym are especially popular
 - Playground was slow during the heat
 - Tween extreme started today with a hike, rafting next week
 - Tennis program has increased to offer classes for more ages from youth to adults
 - Summer Clippers has started their swim meets
 - The partnership with the Police Dept. has started, an officer will help with programs each Thursday
 - Trail Day will be held August 19, partnering with the conservation commission
 - Fall instructors will get back to dept. Soon
 - Dedham Day permits are being sold, Dedham Day will be Sept. 30
 - Mr. Stanley forwarding the AD report to all of the commissioners
 - Mr. Maher asked about the police partnership program
 - Ms. White shared that the police will send out information to the youth groups, will be advertising the program to get participation up soon
- Director’s report
 - There is a fence knocked down at Rustcraft Field
 - Confirmed today that the road race porta-potty guy caused the damage
 - Irrigation at Rustcraft needs to be reevaluated, wants to try to switch over to town water, damage is being caused by rust in the water in the well and the capacity of the well is too low
 - Thinks that the cost to water the field will be \$3000-\$5000 switching to town water, would be worth it
 - Doesn’t think that much digging will be necessary to make the switch
 - Would like to keep the well operational in case of a water ban
 - Will start researching it, no commissioners are opposed to him pursuing making the change
 - Will get a formal report by Friday
- Old/New business
 - Old business
 - Mr. Maher asked Mr. Stanley about the gates at Memorial Park, Mr. Stanley will check on it tomorrow
 - Mr. Maher would like Mr. Stanley to ask why the guys didn’t drag Paul Park, Mr. Stanley said he texted them about it
 - Mr. Briggs mentioned that the sub committees won’t meet much in the summer
 - Will check with School Committee about working on the MOU
 - Mr. Briggs asked about clearing out the entrance at the Dolan Center
 - Mr. Donahue followed up about Brian O’Connell’s permit that needed updated paperwork
 - Ms. White shared that they had updated paperwork and distributed a flier approved by Mr. Stanley
 - The program will run again tomorrow night at Gonzales
 - Mr. Dello Iacono would like to revamp the permit, add some language to the paperwork

- Smoking policy should be on the permit
- Dog policy should be on the permit, lots of people bringing dogs to the fields all of the time
- Games, practices, tournaments - type of activity should be indicated on the permit, so field use can be scheduled appropriately
 - Baseball had a tournament that the commission didn't know about
 - Need to know about tournament so they can address parking and trash needs
 - Mr. Stanley shared that he got an email today about staffing overtime for a tournament next weekend
 - Mr. Maher concerned that they're just finding out about it now, emphasized that youth baseball will have to pay for the parks staff
- Mr. Maher agreed it's important to know what's happening on the field, remembers in the past that a league presented information about hosting a tournament six months in advance
- Mr. Briggs and Mr. Donahue agreed that the language on the type of activity should be added
- Mr. Dello Iacono asked Mr. Stanley to put together a new permit and bring it to the next meeting
- Mr. Dello Iacono mentioned that no notice was given to summer employees, would like to see a policy established to reinstate a written process in addition to the existing phone calls for summer employees
 - Mr. Stanley shared that there is a notice sent out and employees need to respond by a certain date to secure their jobs
 - Wants to remove the excuse that a phone call was made and not returned, wants to see a paper trail instead of phone call
 - Mr. Maher would be alright with the notifications coming via email, doesn't want applicants to never hear back from anyone because it's discouraging
 - Wants there to be documentation of an email being sent
 - Mr. Stanley will talk to the program directors about it
- New business
 - Mr. Maher wants to make sure that there is communication within the department so that there is management coverage when employees are on vacation - wants to avoid a situation where no management employees are around at a given time
 - He asked Mr. Stanley to write an internal policy about coverage for vacation time
 - Mr. Stanley asked clarification about if he and the assistant director are being asked to never be out on the same day
 - Mr. Maher clarified that a plan needs to be made in advance, so that clear if programming needs can accommodate vacation days
 - No other commissioners had new business
- Mr. Donahue made a motion to adjourn at 8:42, Mr. Briggs seconded, commission unanimously approved

Community notes taken by [Molly Uppenkamp](#)
 Reviewed by [Heather Springer](#)

Keywords: Smoking policy, park permits, recreation programs