



Town of Acton Recreation Commission



MINUTES

DATE: SEPTEMBER 8, 2008

7:00 PM

ROOM 126, ACTON TOWN HALL

ATTENDEES	Recreation Commission members present were Mr. Ron Schlegel, Mr. Frank Calore, Ms. Karen Jarsky. Also present was Ms. Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director, and Ms. Cheryl Getsick, Secretary.
NOTE TAKER	Ms. Cheryl Getsick

AGENDA TOPICS

Meeting called to order at: 7:04pm

Citizens Concerns:

DISCUSSION	<p>Jones Field – Ms. Fochtman received a letter from a citizen regarding the pebbles scattered on the walkway and a question about higher netting vs. lower netting between the playground and ball field. Ms. Karen Jarsky also noted a concern with lower netting, "Would this create a hazard with children and teenagers climbing the nets?" Ms. Jarsky also confirmed pebbles on the walkway path due cause children to slip and fall. Cleanup at Jones Field is also an issue as items such as discarded toys and trash are scattered and left at the park.</p> <p>Colonial Baseball – Ms. Fochtman noted a child was hurt while attending the Colonial Baseball program. While the child ate lunch, the gate was left open. The child hit his face on the entry gate to the field. The injury was a sheared tooth. At the parent's request, Ms. Fochtman met the parent at the field. The parent expressed her concern about the gate and stated the top of the posts were unsafe. Though the top of the fence is rounded, the parent felt something else should have been placed on top of the gate.</p>
CONCLUSIONS	<p>Jones Field – Ms. Cathy Fochtman will locate a funding source for lower netting installation while also obtaining cost estimates for netting.</p> <p>Colonial Baseball – The parent of the child is pursuing an insurance claim against the town. The parent is not sure about the potential long term damage which might occur to the child's tooth.</p>

CONSENT AGENDA

DISCUSSION	July 2008 Minutes
CONCLUSIONS	July 2008 Minutes were accepted, 3-0

TOPIC – SIDEWALK COMMITTEE

DISCUSSION	Ms. Fochtman received a meeting request from the Sidewalk Committee members. Mr. Schlegel noted though we are in favor of sidewalks, the Recreation Commission does not have a great deal of input to offer to support this initiative.
CONCLUSIONS	Ms. Fochtman will contact the sidewalk committee regarding shortening their presentation and to summarize what the committee is requesting of the Recreation Commissioners. A meeting of fifteen (15) minutes for the presentation and questions is acceptable. A convenient date for both the Recreation Commissioners and the committee within the month of November would be acceptable.

TOPIC – ICE HOUSE POND

DISCUSSION	Ms. Fochtman stated currently the Recreation Department does not charge to use Ice House Pond for recreational use. Eastern Mountain Sports, (EMS) currently utilizes Ice House Pond for their demonstrations. Mr. Frank Calore asked if there are other groups utilizing the pond in organized use? Ms. Fochtman stated the only other request which Recreation received to use the pond was by a Rabbi for a funeral service. EMS sponsored the Camp Acton event along with the land stewards as part of the Conservation Commission. Ms. Jarsky noted the future development of Morrison farm might allow for more use of the pond. Ms. Jarsky inquired about the correlation between charging for use of the pond and any liability which the recreation department could be responsible. Ms.
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	Fochtman noted accepting funds for the use of the facility does change the liability upon the recreation department.
CONCLUSIONS	At this time, the Town of Acton Recreation Department will not charge for the use of Ice House Pond.

TOPIC – NARA SUMMER CONCERTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

DISCUSSION	Ms. Fochtman noted moderate attendance at most of the events while a few events were unfortunately rained out. Family night will be rescheduled and Acton Family Day will occur on September 13 th along with Dog Day Jubilee scheduled for September 20, 2008. The location of the concerts has been moved over to the playground area along with a portable stage. Bands performing are "Hot like Fire" and "LCR". "LCR" also performed last Thursday with approximately 150 people in attendance.
CONCLUSIONS	The concerts were well received. Danny's Place has been great in working along with the Recreation Department for contacts. The Recreation Department attempts to help leverage youth participation whenever possible.

TOPIC – FIELD FEE DISCUSSION WITH LEAGUES, JULY 16, 2008

DISCUSSION	Ms. Fochtman and Mr. Schlegel met with league representatives and discussed various questions which arose. Mr. Schlegel reminded the attendees the Town of Acton Selectmen have previously chosen this direction and route. Ms. Fochtman noted some of the monies are used for mowing as Natural Resources currently perform this duty. The leagues expressed their desire to be more involved in developing this initiative. Ms. Fochtman also noted ABYB would like to revisit the process and the final outcome of this initiative again. Mr. Schlegel noted ABYB commented about their inability to control what is being put on the field. Ms. Fochtman noted not a single league has provided any funds to date. Mr. Schlegel asked if Recreation has received any rosters to date. Ms. Fochtman informed all that she has not received funds from any league to date. Additionally, she offered to walk the fields with the league representatives to determine the extent of any specific concerns. Ms. Fochtman distributed a document which she is planning to review with the Acton Town Manager which discusses charging for recreational use, picnic areas, field usage and how fees are being implemented. Ms. Fochtman noted a topic for the October agenda would be the "Fee Structure 2009". The numbers from last year are available to compare to this current year.
CONCLUSIONS	Ms. Fochtman will be meeting with Mr. Andy McGee, Acton Town Manager, Mr. Shawn O'Malley and Mr. Tom Tidman. Ms. Fochtman will send out a reminder requesting a roster (roster), requesting the number of children currently utilizing the fields along with the payments.

RECREATION EVENTS - ACTON DAY

DISCUSSION	Ms. Fochtman distributed a flyer listing all the events planned for that day. Many vendors and entertainers are scheduled to appear. The event is very similar to last year's event. Recreation will charge for use of the various moon bounces.
CONCLUSIONS	Mr. Calore will check availability to see if he is able to participate.

RECREATION EVENTS - DOG DAY JUBILEE

DISCUSSION	Dog Day Jubilee is scheduled for the following weekend. Inquiries regarding the type of advertisement and notification requiring dogs to be on leashes was expressed.
CONCLUSIONS	Ms. Fochtman will look into additional advertisement.

REPORTS

DISCUSSION	<p>Elm Street – Ms. Fochtman met with Mr. O'Malley and the Acton Adult Softball League (AASL). Ruts at the field have been filled in during this past spring and appears to have improved the situation. Pop Warner is scheduled to begin there this week.</p> <p>Morrison Farm – Ms. Fochtman reports the gardens look great! A social group exchange emails and newsletter. The gardeners are looking into placing fruit trees and bushes.</p> <p>CPC – No report at this time</p> <p>School Street – The legislature voted to grant Acton a ten (10) year lease. It has not yet been signed but is foreseeable. A soccer group approached Ms. Fochtman requesting the ability to make School Street field their "home" base. The group is willing to bring in a contractor to disperse compost and renovate the fields. Mr. Schlegel recalled speaking about this and being somewhat reluctant about granting a club or a team preference because they are contributing a financial interest. The soccer group was very clear on what their intentions and expectations were with this request. Ms. Jarsky asked if this is a group that currently rents the fields. Ms. Fochtman stated, yes. The group is there a fair amount of time. Mr. Schlegel asked if Recreation agrees to make an</p>
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	investment with this private contractor then to whom do we need to make accommodations if ABYS is also interested in playing on the same fields. It appears we could be promising public resources to a club team. Ms. Schlegel asked if the fields are in good shape and they are being privately funded, how much time will the group ask for each year; possibly increasing each year. Ms. Jarsky noted the field becomes more like their private location; private field. Ms. Fochtman would like to speak further to the group. Mr. Schlegel welcomes their input but it is almost impossible to provide a promise guaranteeing the availability the field would be solely available for the group so many nights per week. Ms. Jarsky commented there is already a shortage of fields and if this group is being provided access before the local teams, it might be a tough sell.
CONCLUSIONS	<p>Morrison Farm - Mr. Tidman is working hard requesting the Town Manager to look into investing monies into the farm house in order to move the Recreation Department into the farmhouse. Currently handicap accessibility in the building is a concern. The farmhouse has previously been used for meetings</p> <p>School Street- Ms. Fochtman noted she is in discussion with the Town Manager regarding a contract with this group. Mr. Tidman will be speaking an architectural firm, Woodward and Curran, to develop an irrigation system for School Street.</p>

PLAYGROUND UPDATE

DISCUSSION	The Recreation Department has obtained a quote from Game Time. Ms. Jarsky and Ms. Fochtman will meet to review a quote for a traditional type of playground but accessible with ramps for wheelchair. Game Time is currently offering a discount. CPC funds are available because this playground is geared towards preschooler and toddler age children. Ms. Jarsky asked if there is anything in the budget to provide and distribute some mailings. Ms. Fochtman noted, "Yes we are able to perform mailings".
CONCLUSIONS	Ms. Jarsky would like to revise a letter to invite people to look at the plan and possibly have some input and maybe some connections.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN – No report at this time.

NARA PARK IMPROVEMENTS

DISCUSSION	NARA Park Improvements include updates to the front of the stage, excavating and new sod. A bid package for the new picnic pavilion and a changing room/storage room located behind the amphitheater will be released shortly, with construction to be completed next spring. A permanent fence around the beach which stays up all year has been installed. There was a ten (10) day closure this year at NARA Park Beach due to a high bacteria count. There were many contributing factors (i.e. geese, rain water runoff). This also impacted swim lessons which required refunds to the registrants. The department is looking into various tools and choices which could address this problem, which is statewide.
CONCLUSIONS	Recreation is looking into an aeration system within next year's budget. There should be aeration devices.

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION	There are multiple positions open on the Recreation Commission.
CONCLUSIONS	Ms. Fochtman has contacted the Volunteer Coordination Committee to inquire about advertisements for Commissioner positions currently available.
DISCUSSION	October Recreation Commission meeting date.
CONCLUSIONS	The October 7, 2008 Recreation Commission meeting will be conducted on October 14, 2008. Notification to the Town Clerk along with confirmation will be sent to the Commissioners.
MEETING ADJOURNED TIME:	Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm