

Parks and Recreation meeting 10/11

In attendance :

John Macken
Alix Korpan
Mark McAndrews
George Schmidt
Andrew Maria (zoom)
Steve Pierce
Nick Gemelli
JR Sherman
Lynne Vanderslice
Frank Smeriglio

1. Meeting called to order 7:32 PM

2. Minutes approved

3. Correspondence:

JOHN - Chandra Ring, Tom Viggiano, Kevin Ring, all sent emails; essentially theme was while thinking about lighting Guy Whitten Field should we consider lighting baseball / softball fields to provide a more diverse group of residence lit fields. As Frank speaks we can hear more about the scope and size and cost.

GEORGE - spoke with Mark Mangino re next steps on ice rink. Mark will talk to P and Z next
*John suggested we speak about this later when we go through update

4. Possible revision to banner program at fields

Lynne: Informational piece re banner program. 2017 Dave Clune on BOS along with JR Sherman came up with idea to sell banners at stadium, and then Lilly, to raise funds; BOS was talking about plans for another turf field. BOF was frustrated that BOS had promised to create a sinking fund which did not happen. Lynne suggested banner sales be approved, and the program has led to WARF and has been successful. After town meeting voted down the turf, there has been confusion about the future of fields; in addition the state legislature proposed bill to ban turf. ARPA funds and surplus from COVID years have allowed town to spend some money on fields and other improvements, however this money used for infrastructure over recent years is not going to be available with some tough budget cycles ahead of us. SO - should we continue to put revenue from turf and banner into a turf fund or should we make money available for other options. Some interest from BOS to use for overall field use and not specifically for turf. Could see proposal for this going forward.

JOHN - makes motion to move public comment to now. Alix second, approved

Amal Shirma (sp?). Wilton resident representing a local cricket league, trying to see how they can find a place for them to play. Currently using JV Softball field. Mr Shirma is attending the meeting to understand the process to get a more dedicated cricket field. JOHN - make a presentation and make to the group. STEVE - group looking for a place. Mr Sirma - 35 people in group. Lynne - how budget process works - P and R has separate line item in budget. 5 years of projects in pipe.

Nick Gemelli: representing WARF. Excited about the opportunity to achieve a goal. main goals - increase access and usability of fields, improving quality of fields. 2 of the agenda items are on priority list

5. Action / discussion

** possible use of ARPA funds FRANK SMERIGLIO: When ARPA funds were first allocated, MB field drainage at top of the list, although without a design. At first thought, most bang for the buck. However, with rain at MB still high probability of field closure even with improved drainage. JOHN: which fields at MB? Frank: closer to school, higher fields, better drainage, Nick Maderas is on wetlands - if we try to grade it, overtime will still get sinking areas within the fields. If we add drains, drying out wetland area and still might get some low lying areas of water. If we spend 500K on drainage and it will still be closed if it rains, is that a good use of the money? When MB was discussed at first it was as a comparison to other drainage area, however now we need to rethink how best to use those funds. STEVE: 2 fields in town that always close when baseball fields are closed - Nick Maderas and Comstock (maderas issue explained above; Comstock there is ledge 18 inches below grass.)

FRANK - shared screen of MB field info. (Will be added to public record) If we did MB, would go 1 field at a time and see the cost, but rain would still postpone games. JOHN - if we had money for 1 field, we would be lucky. Softball and baseball fields would be closed regardless if it rains because of impact of rain on infield clay. MB Football could use some irrigation as well. This process is still in early stages, and would need to have a design done, engineering studies etc. Vote would be concept of drainage at MB or concept of improving Guy Whitten. If we vote on MB, the project has to go to BOS to hire an engineer and then come up with plan and then send to bid. ANDREW: if we do go with MB project, rain closes fields, how much would the window shrink for closure ? What is the benefit of spending this money on drainage? STEVE: moderate rainfall will allow fields to be usable, or makes things dry out faster. FRANK: don't have a quantifiable answer.

**Lights at Guy: FRANK: Hired land tech to do aerial view and talk to lighting company to get scope of project. Estimate lighting and electrical 450K engineering design 25K field repair 15K. Carrying 20 % contingency but has not sent out to bid. 4 lights around field and light at crosswalk to get to tennis courts. Frank asked engineer if we could add 1-2 lights and engineer said maybe. Could show an "add alternate" on the proposal for crosswalk lights, as well as baseball fields, although the latter would not be able to be accomplished . STEVE: According to consultant can't add to existing poles because of wind, etc. LYNNE: irrigation not included. FRANK - would have to be part of drainage project. Irrigation cost was an additional 180K. Field irrigation is not dead. JOHN: Can we use warf funds to help? LYNNE: decide what project we care about. Prioritize. JOHN - lights at Guy add way more value than drainage at MB. GEORGE: agrees. Baseball fields still close in the rain ANDREW: fully in scope to add drainage, STEVE - project for drainage is to increase pipe from stadium and take it to pond. ANDREW: concern about lighting a field that might flood FRANK: review of the drainage from brook after major flood from hurricane in 2021. The current system can only handle 3 inches of rain before it backed up and flooded / damaged turf. New pipe would handle over 8 inches of rain. Funded by US Gov't 1.4MM. Also, Guy has better drainage than other fields,

Mark motions to vote on lights at Guy. Alix seconds. Vote - unanimous. Lynne has ideas how we can fund the difference. If BOS cant come up with it do we want to move to put MB next? ALIX - can we ask Warf? LYNNE - on my list, as well as other ideas. LYNNE - do you want to have MB next ? Board hesitates, asks to see how things go before we decide if we need a plan B

GEORGE: should we consider lights elsewhere, like baseball / softball fields ? LYNNE - would have to look into costs. It is not happening as 1 project (meaning mixed with Guy.) We are out

of money. Each light is approx 100K. STEVE: Typical baseball field has 6-8 lights, we do not have the money. FRANK leaves

6. Updates

** Playground update. Document review completed, about to be signed by playground company and then sent back to us to be signed by Lynne and then move forward. Hope to have it installed prior to next season.

** Ice rink proposal. George spoke with Mark who was going to touch base with P and Z. LYNNE - word of caution. He presented a plan that had not been vetted. Mark has been told to speak with land use and wetlands about the land. 1/3 of the area proposed for rink is in flood plain including where he wanted to put chillers. There are a lot of issues that he has been made aware of. Lynne suggests we take it off the agenda until it has been further vetted.

7. Staff reports - after school program up 33 %, basketball registration up and running and fully on line. Parks and grounds - renovated Comstock baseball field, will be doing same to MD and MB fields. Sodding helps the loss of clay. Getting ready for fall clean ups. Tourney for youth softball coming up. Scarecrows coming out next week, HOCO this weekend, busy time of year.

Budget - fiscal year July 1 - June 30. Budget planning coming soon. If we had any suggestions or thoughts or comments plus share. Operating budget is for building and staff, capital projects and bonded capital for larger projects.

8. Member comment - JOHN - last time Lynne will be on meeting. Thank her for all the work she has done for the town. Tireless worker. Town will miss her. Also JOHN - pickleball. We have a study done, Steve is working on budget and working with land use. Prepped for next meeting. ANDREW: does it have to go through P and R budget or should it be bonded. LYNNE: to be bonded it has to be 10 years and 250K. LYNNE engaged a study for schools is over 100MM for 10 years. Also waiting for municipal building info. We have received 30 MM in grants over last few years but that's not coming in the future. Might be safer to be bonded since older demo more likely to vote.

ANDREW: Shencks island playground update? STEVE: need a design group and most groups not interested, too challenging LYNNE originally on other side, moved it to road to be more visible. Should we go back to original site? STEVE: design groups are working with specifics regarding to site, and then find a PG company to build to those specs. ANDREW: winter coming, can we use Comstock for pickleball and other activities? STEVE - we have pickleball court in gym, 5 days a week in morning and evenings. Comstock always being used. Indoor space at a premium and fully booked.

9. No public comment

Alix moves to adjourn George seconds unanimous vote