

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 22, 2013

3:15 pm

Unity Park Field House

56 1st Street

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Dennis Grader, Chairperson, Linda Ackerman, Vice Chairperson, Barbara Kuklweicz, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation.

Guest: Megan Thompson from Pyro Productions

Meeting Being Taped

Agenda:

1. **Meeting Called to Order:** 3:16 pm
2. **Approval of September 19, 2013 Minutes:** Barbara Kuklweicz makes the motion of accepting minutes; seconded by Linda Ackerman.

3. **Pyro Productions**

Jon introduced Megan Thompson from Pyro Productions. Ms. Thompson is requesting to use the Unity Park once or twice a month in the evenings to hold fire spinning practice. She does have permission from the Fire Department. They use safety equipment, and if the fire is in a field they use a fire safe blanket. A double bucket fuel system is used; a metal can with a lid inside a five gallon container also with a lid, keeping the fuel safe. Pending the confirmation of the insurance Jon will follow up with Town Counsel and The Turners Fall Fire Department. Pyro Production's Certificate of Liability will be sent to Frank. There was some discussion as to where this activity would work safely at the park. She said the amount of space they would need is approximately 20' x 15'. Jon felt talking long term that Unity Park ball fields would not work because those fields would be in use next summer by adult softball and soccer. Montague Center Park was discussed as an alternative. He went on to say that the Montague Fire Department would have to be contacted. If Ms. Thompson was flexible, possibly the area where the Skate Park is being planned could be a short term location, and when the Skate Park plans pick up she could use the Montague Center Park. Another location that was suggested was Peskeomskut Park, but she was advised to go to the Board of Selectman for that location. Jon stated that he will continue to work on the administrative and legal aspects of Ms. Thompson's request. He also gave Ms.Thompson the Park & Recreation Facilities/Fields Reservation Request form to fill out and return to the office.

Motion: Linda Ackerman made a motion, once the insurance is verified, to support Ms. Thompson using Unity Park on a temporary basis, and next spring/summer perhaps look for a permanent park location. Barb Kuklweicz seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0

4. Unity Park Improvement Project Update

Jon let the commission know that Phase II is coming to an end, and the last construction meeting is planned for tomorrow. There are some small items that need to be completed, and the town is prepared to sign off on Phase II. Today work is being done on the concrete bases and pitchers mound, and the last of the signs are being installed. There was some discussion if there will be an opening ceremony for the park. Jon felt that once the ball fields were ready perhaps then there could be a ceremony.

5. Lake Pleasant Park Improvement Update

The Lake Pleasant Village Association is having a meeting at 7:00 p.m. tomorrow at the Spiritualist Hall. Jon plans on attending the meeting to get information such as time lines and ideas. This is not a formal public hearing. At this meeting he would like to talk about when a formal public hearing can be planned. He would also like to get information for a survey. He feels there could be three public hearings; the initial hearing, followed by a joint hearing with the village association and the commission regarding survey findings, and the last for park design. Jon stressed to the commission the meeting tomorrow was strictly informational and needs assessment. There was discussion on the importance of the surveys and getting the survey results back to the department. Jon felt that perhaps the people in the village association could take a leadership role in that. Currently at the Rutter's Park there is a slide, small play structure, teeter-totter, a 3 bay swing set with four adult swings and two bucket swings. At Norma's Park there is one bench swing, a 3 bay swing set, and an older climbing structure. Barbara asked Jon which of the swings had been replaced, and he said at this point all swings had been replaced.

6. Summer Programs 2013 Profit Loss Statements

A revised summer Blue Fish statement was given to the commission. Jon spoke about the Adult Summer Softball possibly going up in fees. The season went well, games had to be moved to Greenfield because of the Phase II field work. The 2013 Summer Playground went well; the numbers for the seven week program were very similar to the 2012 program that had 8 weeks. This summer we had a site at Sheffield. The 5-8 year old program as always is our most popular. If the High School site didn't have a minimum of eight children then it was "shut down" and they went to the Sheffield site. When this occurred one staff member was laid off for that week. The numbers for that site have been down despite the use of the pool. Linda suggested maybe more advertising of the pool would increase numbers for that site. Jon let the commission know that the department does send out surveys at the end of the program. He did not have the result of the survey with him but he would provide the results at the November meeting. Linda discussed her observation of the staff this summer when she was present with the reading program. She felt that some of the staff was not engaging the children and they looked lazy. There was discussion about this summer's higher profit than what has occurred in the past. Jon felt the fees for the program were reasonable and not excessive. One possible explanation of the higher profit could be the lower than usual number of scholarship applications. Jon said he would review the expenses and discuss it again at the November meeting.

7. Montague Center Play Structure

The Montague Center school property was purchased, and the play structure that will become our property will have to be moved across the street to the park. Jon did not have a time line for when this will happen, but he believes this may be costly to move the structure. He will have to meet with the playground representative of this particular structure to discuss the cost of moving. He will also need to find out if the modified park will have to be ADA compliant. His concern is not with the structure or the playground but more with accessing the park itself. He went on to say that when ever a playground is modified or improved it has to be ADA compliant. Once the structure is moved some things like beams and posts may have to be replaced.

8. Skatepark Update

Jon was unable to meet with the skatepark committee members as of this date, but the committee has been doing some fundraising. There is an upcoming event on October 25 at Jake's Tavern. He plans on meeting with the committee to make sure everyone is on the same page as far as the park is concerned. Linda spoke about the email that she received from a committee member regarding the hurt feelings the skatepark committee had when they found out there was grant money left over from Phase II. She wondered if money could have gone to the skate park. Jon said that the CDBG money was not available for something like a skatepark which is defined as a single use entity. This is something Bruce Hunter has been saying from the beginning of the project. Jon said that he will continue to work towards getting the PARC grant through the states Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

9. KABOOM Playful City Grant

Motion: Linda Ackerman made a motion for the commission to proceed. Barbara Kuklweicz seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0

10. Applebee's Dining to Donate

Jon informed the commission he secured the night of November 7, 2013 from 4:00 p.m. to 9 p.m. for a "Dining to Donate" fundraiser at Applebee's. Proceed will go toward the department Revolving Account. It was seconded by Barbara Kuklweicz.

Vote: 3-0

11. Gill Montague School Committee Partnership

The partnership was not awarded funding for years 6-10 through the Drug Free Communities Grant. This provided funding for programs in town, it partially funded our CAP program, and it funding many great programs in town such as the Montague Catholic Social Ministries. The partnership will reapply for the grant.

12. Capital Improvements

Three window quote requests went out to Renaissance Builder, Brain Hobbs Remodeling, and Larry Jubb Home Improvement. Larry Jubb was the only company that submitted a quote. The price for the Field House windows was \$4725.00. The initial quote was for the office windows only, but with the lower price it would now allow for the windows in the Field House to be replaced. The only windows not being replaced would be those in the bathrooms. Jon spoke about how the Field House restrooms need updating. He didn't think there would be any grant

money for this so this would have to be a capital improvement project through Special or Annual Town Meeting. Jon would like this to be completed before the summer.

Motion: Barbara Kuklweicz makes a motion to pursue a restroom update.

Vote: 2-0

13. Director's Report

There were no questions.

14. Other Business

Wheelchair Swing: The wheelchair swing manufacturer is working on a design that is compliant to U.S. standards. The swing will be shipped from Australia. Friend to Friend has the money for the swing and the shipping. We anticipate another \$10,000 - \$15,000 in costs for the fencing and the installation of surfacing; which will be a combination of wood chips and pour-in-place.

2014 Rag Shag Parade:

Motion: Linda Ackerman made a motion to partnership with the 2014 Rag Shag Parade. Barbara Kuklweicz seconded the motion.

Vote; 3-0

Jon will be applying for the Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association Facility Award for the Unity Park Project.

Jon would like to request time off; October 28 and November 8 as vacation time, and the week of Thanksgiving. On Friday, November 15 he will have to take off as a personal day. Jen will be in the office those days.

15. Adjournment: 4:36 p.m.