

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

May 24, 2016

3:30 p.m.

Unity Park Fieldhouse

56 First Street

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Dennis Grader, Chairperson, Barbara Kuklewicz, Vice Chairperson, Albert Cummings, Secretary, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation, Jennifer Peterson, Clerk/Bookkeeper

Guests: Bruce Hunter, Franklin County Housing Rehab. Authority (FCHRA)

Meeting Being Taped

Agenda:

1. **Meeting Called to Order: 3:30 p.m.**

2. **Approval of April 27, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Jon wanted to make a correction on the minutes as there were two adjournment times. Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion of accepting the minutes once correction has been made; seconded by Albert Cummings.

3. **Establish Parks & Recreation Commission Positions**

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes a motion to have Dennis Grader as Chairperson, seconded by Albert Cummings.

Vote: 3-0

Motion: Dennis Grader makes a motion to have Barbara Kuklewicz as Vice Chairperson, seconded by Albert Cummings.

Vote: 3-0

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes a motion to have Albert Cummings as Secretary, seconded by Dennis Grader.

Vote: 3-0

Jon congratulated everyone on their positions, and welcomed Albert Cummings as a new Commission member. Jon wanted to thank Linda Ackerman for her years of service to this board.

4. **Lake Pleasant Park Project Update, Master Plan Design**

Bruce Hunter from the FCHRA spoke to the commission and informed them that back in March the town advertised for bids on this project. Fifteen firms were interested in the project; two attended the site visit and three firms' submitted proposals. Those three firms were Berkshire Design Group, GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc., and Marshall & Gray Landscape Architecture. Interviews were conducted with all three firms, involving a question & answer session, along with a presentation. Points were given in different categories with Marshall & Gray and Berkshire Design tied for second and GZA receiving the highest score. After discussing their options, the Committee unanimously recommended, through this Commission, GZA as the firm that will handle the Lake Pleasant Park project. Jon passed around part of GZA's presentation for the Commission to view. Barbara Kuklewicz spoke about what really interested her with this firm was their knowledge of the village and their plan for a nature trail, sensory garden and low impact development. Jon agreed, and felt they separated themselves from the other firms with their creativity. He is very confident in the decision to choose GZA. Bruce let the Commission know it needed to vote and then sign the recommendation forms.

Motion: Barbara Kuklewicz makes a motion to accept the recommendation to have GZA as the designer for the Lake Pleasant Park Project, seconded by Albert Cummings.

Vote: 3-0

5. Skate Park Project Update

The last of the small projects for the park are finishing up; last week trees were planted, the rules sign placed, bleachers will be installed in the next few weeks, and a memorial bench will also be arriving soon. The Skate Park Committee's goal is to install two granite benches; one of which will need to be on a concrete pad, all by the Park's grand opening on June 18. Currently, Jon is in the process of completing the second and final reimbursement packet to the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, who are the administrators of the PARC grant. There will be a slight reduction from the original amount of \$272,000. The project is slightly under budget by about \$4,700. The grant will now cover around \$263,000. There were costs incurred before the July, 2015 start date that could not be covered by the grant; approximately \$7300 was not covered. In regard to the grass around the park, Jon feels that about 75% will come in, but in the more heavy traffic areas will likely not see complete grass coverage. We may have to get creative if we want that area look better.

6. Winter Programs Profit/Loss Statements

●**Youth basketball** broke even, compared to recent years, as fees were increased by \$5. This program has to pay for gym usage, officials pay, and uniform costs. We had four travel teams this past season, which is typical. Three of our teams brought home trophies; 3 & 4 grade boys, 5 & 6 grade girls and our 3 & 4 grade girls won their championship!

●**Blue fish** took a hefty loss this season of \$1,800. One reason why may be due to the lower than usual (only one third) Swim-a-thon donations this season. The program is very expensive to run; pool usage is \$26/hour, and coaches are paid as well. Next season we may to consider raising fees, and other cost cutting measures not giving swimmer a t-shirt as part of their registration fee.

●**The Sawmill Rive Run** raised \$1700 toward our scholarship program; which is consistent with what we've done in the past. There were around 170 runners this year. Jon feels the comfortable with the registration fees with this event. We do however seem to be losing sponsors yearly, but are very fortunate to have such loyal sponsorship. The cost of the long sleeve t-shirts are a big expense ,although Valley Tees give us a great price, and he feels they are a big draw for the runners.

●**Open Swim** fees were increased this past year to help close the gap in lost revenue. Of all our programs this program percentage wise always takes on the biggest loss. The pool usage costs and lifeguard payroll is substantial. This was the first time during Jon's tenure that the fees have increased. Participation was up, almost by 100 people

●**Babysitting** had good numbers this past winter. It had been decided last year, because numbers had been continuously running low, that this program would only run once, not twice a year. This seems to have worked out as participation was strong.

●**Cookies & Canvas** was a first time program for us this winter. There were 25 participants and it was held at the Elke's Lodge. Jon felt the event went really well and hopes to run it again.

7. Summer Programs

The Fun Times Summer edition was included in the commission's packet. New programs that we will run this summer will be Adult Swim Clinic and Tuesday's in the Park. Tuesday's in the Park is a family program, with July being National Parks & Recreation month Jon would like to highlight this with events at Unity Park Tuesday evenings. The River Valley Ice Cream ride, a first time event, will take place in July. We will run an 8 week summer playground program this summer as well.

8. FY 17 Strategic Plan Draft

This is done annually and the commission will vote on the plan once the draft is completed. Jon told the commission if they have any recommendations to let him know. It will be voted on at the June meeting.

9. Directors Report

There were no questions.

10. Other Business

Dennis Graves wanted to welcome Albert Cummings to the commission board. He also wanted to acknowledge Linda Ackerman and her years of great service to the town.

11. Adjournment 4:30 p.m.