

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

November 15, 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

**Meeting Being Taped**

**Agenda:**

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

**2. Approval of October 25, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion of approving minutes; seconded by Al Cummings.

**3. Lake Pleasant Parks Update**

●**Rutter's Park Project Update:** The November project meeting was well attended by residents and the conversation lively. Some residents felt they were being left out of the process even though previous meetings had been advertised. The final master plans were discussed and there were issues relative to the placement of the playground area; such as visibility, and how the park will affect snow plowing the narrow streets. Jon felt it was good to hear those concerns now rather than later. Those in attendance at the meeting were reminded this was only the master plan portion of the project; an inventory, if you will, of what had been requested by residents at previous meetings. It is not the final design. The master plan process is different than the design and construction process. If we get approved for design and construction some of the items on this current plan may change depending on the project budget and further public input. Jon, Bruce Hunter and Lake Pleasant Committee members will be going in front of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) Monday, December 5 to propose the final Master Plan design. It must be accepted by the BOS to submit this as a project by the Community Development Block Grant funding, where it must also then be approval by the state. Therefore, this project has a few steps remaining.

●**Norma's Park Update:** Since the news that the Montague did own the playground area of this park, Walter Ramsey (Town Planner) advised that the Town move forward and try to purchase the adjacent ballfield property. The Mass State Division of Fisheries and Wildlife is also interested in purchasing this area from Eversource. Jon provided a draft letter he wrote to Eversource stating how the Town of Montague is also interested in this property. The Commission would have to agree to move forward by approving the submittal of a letter making such request to Eversource. Jon believes the land is valued at \$55,500.

**Motion:** Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion to send the letter Jon wrote to Eversource regarding the town's interest in purchasing the land, seconded by Albert Cummings.

**Vote: 3-0**

#### 4. **FY18 Operating & Capital Budget**

●**Operating Budget:** We have not received any information on FY18 Operating budget yet; early December is when Jon anticipates this information to be submitted to all departments. The transitioning of the new Town Administrator at the end of November could possibly delay the information a few days.

●**Capital Projects:** There are items Jon recommends pursuing for FY18; Fieldhouse interior improvements, garage conversion to program space, and sustainability initiatives. In regard to the sustainability initiatives Jon has met with Eversource and Berkshire Gas and they have provided recommendations (commission will receive these recommendations for next meeting). The electricity update will not have to be approved by the commission as the DPW maintains and controls the budget of municipal buildings. As far as the heating updates, that may be collaboration with the DPW and would be a Capital project for FY18. This would be something the Commission would have to approve. Another item of the Capital Project future needs list would be addressing the playground walkways; it has been around five years since the completion of Phase I of the Unity Park Project when these areas were installed. Cracks have formed, and they need to be re-painting (in addition to the hopscotch areas). Jon is meeting with a representative from Vermont Tennis courts; they are the company that originally did the work. He does not have any cost estimates at this point, but Jon is hoping by the next commission meeting in December that information will be available. Also included with the future need list, is Rutter's Park Improvement Project and Montague Center Park improvements. We may be able to move up the master plan date for Montague Center Park, where Jon is thinking about contacting the Conway School of Landscape Design for assistance. Another FY18 item would be the installation of a fence at Highland Park in Millers Falls. Currently there is no defining element separating the park with the residents abutting the park. Jon recommends installing a chain link fence for a portion of the park (approximately 140 feet), and a more decorative element such as large rocks (possibly from the town landfill) to help define the park at the other area that needs proper definition. Jon is estimating the cost at about \$2500, as opposed to \$8500 if we were to use a decorative vinyl fence.

**Motion:** Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion to proceed with 140 foot chain link fencing at Highland Park; seconded by Albert Cummings.

**Vote: 3-0**

●**Open Space Recreation Plan:** Residents were asked to rate their needs based on outdoor recreation space. There were many comments relative to developing an outdoor swimming space in town. Jon feels very strongly that this issue be considered; and a feasibility study be implemented to find out the cost of such a facility. Concerns were expressed about not just the initial expense of building such a facility, but also the upkeep and insurance liability. It was however, agreed upon that it still needs to be considered.

**Motion:** Barbara Kuklewicz makes the motion to pursue the feasibility of constructing an outdoor swimming facility; seconded by Albert Cummings.

**Vote: 3-0**

#### 5 **2016 Master Plan**

This plan is strictly an inventory of the departmental resources from the programmatic, administrative, and physical park facility perspective. In 2022, Unity Park will have its 100 year anniversary; we should begin to think about how we want to celebrate.

**6 Special Events Proposal**

Jon spoke with Gretchen Tucker, coordinator of the Victory Dolls (WWII Homefront Re-enactment), in regard to her proposal to use Unity Park as a site for a future event. He likes the idea but thinks it may be something that should be run in conjunction with something else and not just a stand alone event. There was discussion about possibly having this event in conjunction with the Christmas in July Boat Club activity but the River Valley Ice Cream Ride is also scheduled for that day. Memorial Day was also discussed as a possible collaboration with 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World War II memorial.

**7. Directors Report**

There were no questions.

**8. Other Business**

- Winter edition of our Fun Times was given to the commission.
- Public Records and Open Meeting Law training session for elected officials on Tuesday, November 29, 5:30pm-7:30pm; not mandatory but highly recommended that elected officials attend.
- Sustainability information will hopefully be provided at the December meeting.
- Jon will be starting a new monthly article in the *Montague Reporter* promoting department programs.
- Jon requested and was granted vacation the week of Thanksgiving.

**Adjournment: 4:40 p.m. Vote: Unanimous**

X \_\_\_\_\_  
 Albert Cummings, Secretary \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

or

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print

Date: \_\_\_\_\_