

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Minutes of Meeting April 13, 2020

PRESENT: Christopher J. Gerstel, Cynthia J. Chaston, Michelle S. Geddes, Matthew M. Toolan
Stacey Mulroy, Angela O'Connor, Kristen Wright

Mr. Gerstel called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM remotely using Zoom.

Mr. Gerstel thanked everyone for joining the meeting and stated that he would like to continue to hold regular Park and Recreation meetings with the only exception being that they will be held remotely using Zoom instead of in person.

1. Director's Report

The Commission reviewed the written report. Ms. Mulroy discussed that the team continues to work remotely. *Attachment A.*

Ms. Mulroy stated that she spoke with Parks and Forestry Superintendent Edward Olsen and that a plan to start having the Parks and Forestry staff work on regular spring field maintenance is being completed. Mr. Gerstel acknowledged the work that the Parks and Forestry staff has done and appreciated the effort to ensure that the Town fields get the maintenance they need so once they can be used, they are ready. Ms. Mulroy stated that there will probably be an increase of people trying to access the fields once they see the Parks and Forestry staff on the fields. Mr. Toolan asked if there was an update from MIAA regarding a spring sports season. Ms. Mulroy stated that there is not an update about the High School spring season, and if they do resume on May 4th, then maintenance to the fields typically used by the spring groups will be prioritized. Ms. Mulroy further stated that until that time, the Department will continue to push out the message of the fields being closed and will ask the Athletics department and other youth sports leagues in Town to echo the message to their players. Mr. Toolan asked that this message should also be addressed to the spring sport Captains. Mr. Toolan asked to also keep the other fields in mind as the youth user groups will want to get on as soon as possible as well. Mr. Gerstel provided an update from the youth user groups and their thoughts for the spring seasons. The Commission discussed users and having a future discussion regarding different sports groups. Ms. Geddes asked if consideration had been given to have more meetings to discuss updated plans as they progress.

Mr. Gerstel asked if the dredging project is still on time. Ms. Mulroy shared from the Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick that the project is scheduled to end on time, May 1st. Mr. Toolan asked if they could prioritize restoration of the beach area.

2. Program Report

The Commission reviewed the written report. *Attachment B.*

Mr. Toolan applauded the creativity of the team with all the virtual programming that has been completed. Mr. Toolan asked with campaigns that are run online that analytics on the

interaction from the public to show the success of the program. Mr. Toolan shared ideas for other programming that could be offered while we are still virtual including calisthenics with the Resource Officers and field safety with Eddie.

3. Discussion Items

A. Pools : Bid Updates

Mr. Gerstel stated that he remotely watched the bid openings with Ms. Mulroy, Ms. O'Connor and Ms. Wright. Ms. Mulroy stated that the Pool Start-Up bid was considerably higher than anticipated. Ms. Mulroy stated that there is a follow-up meeting with members of Town staff to discuss the bid result further. Ms. Chaston asked why the number is significantly higher than expected. Ms. Mulroy stated that each piece seemed reasonable so there is no really identified area that is responsible for the increase. Mr. Toolan suggested a discussion with all parties to determine why this number is so high and what estimate was missed. The Commission discussed the upcoming closing costs. Mr. Toolan would like to determine if a designated Maintenance staff to handle some of these tasks going forward. Ms. O'Connor stated that the beach has also contributed to the added expense of start-up as the filtration system needs to be completely cleaned out, which is not typical for a new filtration system. The Commission and Department discussed different key dates to discuss opening of the Pools.

Mr. Gerstel stated that the pool opening was discussed at the Select Board meeting and it started the conversation in the community. Ms. Chaston stated that it needs to be shared with them that there is at least a 6-week turnaround time from when the guidance is received to opening the pools.

Mr. Gerstel discussed the Pool Chemical bid. Ms. Mulroy stated that it was in line with our expected cost. Ms. Chaston asked if any other Town's have indicated that they will be opening for the summer.

B. Summer Programs

Briefly discussed by the Commission and Department.

C. Project Updates

None discussed.

4. Issues Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair within 48 Hours

Mr. Gerstel asked each member of the Commission to share any final thoughts.

Mr. Toolan did not have anything additional to discuss.

Ms. Geddes did not have anything additional to discuss.

Ms. Chaston expressed gratitude for the Staff that has been working remotely and remains present in the community on social media and as we move forward. Mr. Gerstel noted the staff's social media post and challenges the Commission to produce something better for the next holiday.

Mr. Toolan asked about filling the vacant seat on the Commission. Mr. Gerstel will investigate the options.

5. Topics for Future Agendas
None presented

6. Adjournment of Business Meeting

Mr. Toolan moved to adjourn the April 13, 2020 Park and Recreation Commission meeting at 8:26pm. Ms. Chaston seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Wright
Administrative Specialist