



Boylston Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes



Meeting Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, September 6, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m. in the Nicholas Ward Meeting Room

Place: Boylston Town Hall, 221 Main Street, Boylston, MA 01505

- I. Call to Order – 6:30pm by Chairperson, Eric Hoffses
 - a. Members Present: Eric Hoffses, Claudine Underwood, Alison LeBlanc, Steve Nason Jr., Arielle Strzelewicz
 - b. Coordinator: Pam Frechette
 - c. Public: Mark Anttila, Elaine Jones, Jeffrey Turgeon
- II. Disc Golf Update

About the Worcester Sports Foundation:

Jeffrey Turgeon, representing the Worcester Sports Foundation, returned to discuss next steps regarding a disc golf course installation at Hillside now that a determination has been made that it does not conflict with Town's Master Plan or the perceived future plan specific for the Hillside property. A discussion about the design of the proposed disc golf course, as well as concerns and benefits took place.

Jeffrey explained the mission of the Worcester Sports Foundation is to look for opportunities to expand different outdoor sports to get people out, moving, and enjoying nature. While the Foundation mostly concentrates on Rugby and Hurling, they are looking at Disc Golf, too. The Foundation handles all the fundraising and works with towns on installation and upkeep plans – at no cost to the town.

The Proposed Course (see PowerPoint attachment):

The Commissioners were presented with a Power Point packet showing a proposed 18-hole course that could be installed on the Hillside property. Jeffrey explained that whatever is put up can easily be dismantled and taken down if that was decided. The tee boxes and baskets are not permanent structures. He also indicated there is no sort of long-term commitment on the part of the town.

He explained that places like public parks and trail networks create unique courses and challenges for disc golf players. Golfers stand at a tee box and throw a disc to a basket; the challenge is to go through/around obstacles. He went on to explain the course proposed is designed to use the existing trail network which would continue to be used for walking, and would not interfere with roads, soccer activities (or other sports on the fields), or business in the town buildings. Players using the course would need look for walkers/hikers before throwing.

Details explaining where the course would begin and end – starting at the trail head outside of Town Hall near at the Food Pantry entrance/exit and then looping down the hill, back up, eventually ending up back at the start for the 18th hole. This can be seen by following the numbers on the graphic within the power point presentation in order. The Foundation is looking to utilize the grass and wooded areas, clearing out underbrush and invasive brambles, but not trees, while conserving open space.

Steve noted a stone bridge in the woods that belonged to the Gough House. Jeffrey acknowledged that the area has some neat features that would make the course interesting and also noted an area that was once cleared, now overgrown, that could be cleared again to use as a fairway.

The Worcester Sports Foundation would work with the town on all the specifics including layout, signage, and materials. A fundraising opportunity and source of revenue could be to use the sign at the tee-box that shows players where to proceed next. It could be a place for a sponsorship at each hole and the town seal could be added. Another potential idea could be to have a QR code for scanning to make donation.

General info – Build/Maintenance/Litter Control/Parking/Potties:

Jeffrey indicated that if the town has wood chips or stone dust available, it would be great if they could use some, then they would overlay tee-areas and baskets with rubber mats or paving stones. Steve Nason said the town owns a chipper and can make playground quality mulch. And there is a pile of it in the upper parking lot.

Jeffery indicated maintenance from the town should not be any more than typical mowing. The organization would take care of brush clean up on a regular basis and could help with events. It would be a standing amenity that anyone could use. When litter was brought up as a concern, Jeffrey noted that the number one complaint of Disc Golfers is not enough trash receptacles. Signage can include no glass containers and carry-in/carry-out. In addition, the Foundation can locate barrels at some holes and can retrieve trash.

Jeffrey said fall is a great time to begin brush cutting and then finish things up in the spring, with work done over the winter on the tee areas and signage. He asked for a point person to work on signage, materials, trash location points, etc. and if it should be called The Hillside Course or something different?

Discussion turned to parking when Alison asked if the first hole has a parking designation, noting that Hillside has a lot of parking, but a lot of it is in the upper lot. Jeffrey explained that the first hole and 18th hole are usually near each other, as Golfers typically park near the first hole, so parking was planned away from soccer. Mark raised concerns about spaces in front of Town Hall being used, as they are designated for town business only and pickleball players are asked to use the upper lot. Jeffrey indicated signage can be a possibility. Eric noted that we could add signs, but most people will probably use it when the Town Offices are closed on the weekends. Jeffrey agreed, saying that early evening on weekdays and weekends are when it's most likely to be used.

Claudine asked about porta-potties. Jeffrey indicated he could look into it, but most courses don't have them. It was noted there are porta-potties on site during soccer season.

Master Plan:

Eric indicated that because concerns were raised, Parks and Recreation got rough approval from Town before moving forward. Eric read a portion of an email from Town Planner, Paul Dell'Aquila (not in attendance):

'...We will be winding down our Town-wide Master Plan over the next couple of months. While a plan specific to Hillside will be an objective in the Master Plan, due to grant funding and Town Meeting cycles, we wouldn't have a "Hillside Master Plan" in place until mid-2024 at the earliest. That said, I don't think that using the existing trail network and adjacent spaces to include disc golf in the meantime would limit any future planning since a lot of that existing trail network is likely to stay intact as open space...'

Discs:

Alison mentioned the town librarian is thinking of doing 'library of things' and maybe we can buy and donate some discs for that, asking if people usually bring their own?. While Jeffrey said they do, buying ten discs and seeing how it goes could be a possibility. He said most people have their own, and put their names on them, so there's usually a lost and found area, too. Steve suggested having the Town Seal printed on the discs and explained there are different sizes and weights. Jeffrey said discs usually range from \$5 for beginner to \$10-\$15.

U-disc Application & Private Rental Notices:

Elaine asked if there was a plan to advertise. Jeffrey said most people find out about courses online and could be added to the town website. Golfers also use an application called U-disc to find information about courses. Specific notes about the course can be added, like upcoming events and information about taking trash out. It also tracks scores on the app.as well. Claudine asked about reserving it for birthday parties, and Jeffrey said he believes there's a way to put an alert that the course is closed for a tournament or private rental

Time Commitment/Next Steps:

Elaine asked if there's a time commitment that the Town needs agree to, asking also if there's a signed agreement for a period of time and what happens if it doesn't work? Eric indicated that the Parks and Recreation Commission would be in charge of that. Jeffrey reiterated that this is open-ended, understanding that the Master Plan is in the works. The Foundation is not requiring any length of time or limiting their commitment to make it happen. He acknowledged there may be bumps in the road and he will work with the Town as a partner, and appointed point persons to ensure proper approvals.

Eric indicated that the Town Planner, Paul Dell'Aquila, would be a point person for approvals, as he will know which other groups need to be engaged. And from the Parks and Recreation side Pam can help because she's in the office and can be in the loop. Eric will get an email thread going. Jeff was thanked by the Commissioners for the presentation.

Items were taken out of order, as Paul Dell'Aquila the Town Planner wasn't present to discuss Camp Harrington; as a courtesy. Eric moved discussion of the Boylston Community Preservation Act up on the agenda for Elaine Jones to present.

III. Boylston Community Preservation Act/Elaine Jones

Elaine wanted to touch base with the Parks and Recreation Commission because they supported the Boylston Community Preservation Act initiative getting on the ballot. She wants to attend Parks and Recreation at events so she can speak with people and disseminate about CPA before the election in November.

Steve mentioned that the Gough house was having an event. Elaine said it's an open house with mocktails on September 16th, and she will be there discussing CPA. She noted that historic preservation groups will benefit from the passing of CPA. Not everyone heard about the event. Claudine found the flyer online and shared it to the Parks and Recreation page

Elaine asked the Commissioners if CPA passed, what would the number one thing be they would want? Alison said work at Manor Park. Eric mentioned the gym floor. Steve mentioned the basketball hoops.

Alison asked if Elaine is aware of the Fall Festival on the Common on October 15th? Elaine said she plans to be there. Alison noted it should be a fairly big crowd and suggested we could possibly send an email blast out with the flyer. Arielle suggested posting to Boylstonhistory.org for people that will Google search.

Mark said the Master Plan Committee was going to check with Pam regarding the email blast list. Pam is hoping to do a newsletter – though the time frame and frequency is not worked out yet, but she can send information if Elaine wants to send her something. Elaine asked if she could list the Parks and Recreation Commission as a supporter of CPA, and Eric said yes. Pam mentioned a star gazing event on the 9/30 at 6:00pm and a Karate class on 9/25 at noon that Elaine is welcome to attend. Pam also said she's welcome to put information in the circular rack in the office. Elaine asked to be kept in the loop for any future activities.

IV. Camp Harrington Update

Name Change:

Mark posted to social media asking if we still wanted to call it Camp Harrington and didn't get many responses? Does 'Harrington' still have meaning in Boylston? Steve said it goes back to the 1800s, and it was private property, but overseen by the National Park Service. Claudine said it doesn't hurt to ask the town if they're looking to keep it or start fresh. Mark asked if there's going to be a Camp Harrington Committee? Arielle said they've asked for a Friends of Camp Harrington Committee, and no one has come forward. Arielle said she would like to integrate Harrington into the name due to the recognition. Alison suggested using Sewall as part of the name. Or Harrington Park at Sewall Street – bringing the Town into the name, but also keeping the Harrington part. Elaine asked if signage would have to be placed about how it was acquired. Eric said yes, by June of 2023. Alison said that Selectboard approval would be necessary for any name change. Steve said state and federal approval is necessary too. Steve said someone has to send a petition that they want it renamed – that would be a first step. Eric said he'll check with Paul the Town Planner on that. Steve suggested Sewall Pond at Harrington as a name.

Work and Grant Compliance:

Eric said that he, Steve, and Pam met with the Town Planner, Paul Dell'Aquila, after he received clarification from the state on the timeline and work that needs to be done to be compliant with the grant. The first phase needs to be completed by June 2023 – whether it's a small trail or signage. Paul's experience is to focus on a trail, with the amount of money and time we have. Steve said it would need to be surveyed as a first step.

Eric said he forwarded some information from Paul to all the commissioners via email. Paul has contacted some firms that do trail work. He's brought in two different trail companies that were recommended to him. They all said for \$1500-\$2000 they can come up with a design, which would leave some money to do the work. They could do both design and the work for the June 2023 completion time. Paul is talking with April about going out for bid. Eric said unless anyone has any objections, Paul will present the companies and quotes and the Commissioners will choose. This would be for design and work on trails, not the whole park concept. Eric said the state will reimburse for \$9,000 of the design and work on trails

Miscellaneous:

The Fire Department hasn't dismantled the house due to how dry it has been. Concerns were raised about cars driving onto the beach. Arielle said she will post signs. Steve said they can go right on the gate, but it's unlocked because it's broken. Arielle will check on the lock when she posts the signs and reach out to Steve if she needs assistance with the lock.

V. Approval of Meeting Minutes – July 6, 2022

Vote: Claudine made a motion to accept the minutes from July 6, 2022. Arielle seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.

VI. Coordinator Update

The balance scale was delivered the morning of the meeting. A plan was made for Alison to install the balance scale and Eric to get a group together to install the Gaga pit. Installation directions for the Gaga pit were given to Eric.

The office closet was emptied and inventoried. A list of contents will be compiled into one document and a map of the closet posted showing what is where.

A new vendor that was quoted has started service at the soccer field after a Boylston reference was favorable. They are a smaller, local business versus the current vendor. A price comparison of three vendors using a 'typical' scenario shows cost savings with the new vendor over the course of the year as long as there are no additional fees.

A solution to the amount of cash handling for \$3 sessions has been devised for Pickleball. Pam worked with Mark Anttila and Andrea Burns on a program to be implemented on October 1st. We will charge \$5 for a single session, or \$3 for multiple sessions purchased in advance online. Players will receive a non-transferable punch card. Pam needs to check the ability to accept checks in the office due to the difference of a product versus an activity in myRec.com. Mark suggested lowering the price for anyone buying a single session due to the user fees when paying online – which can be up to \$3.95 for a debit card transaction. Pam said there may be a solution for that. She needs to speak with the Treasurer again before implementation. Steve mentioned this will eliminate being able to play a session on the spur of the moment. It will create a digital waiver with myRec.com. The intent was to go live October 1st if everything is in order. Pam said we can see how it goes and make tweaks.

The Selectboard approved the donation from Keep Boylston Beautiful.

Binder filing systems have already been created and now one has been started for keeping track of instructor information like CORIs, liability insurance, contact information, evaluations, etc. Packets for instructors have been created to be emailed that includes the CORI form, waiver form, class questionnaire and emergency contact procedures.

Budget receipts and expenses are being tracked in a ledger.

Pam has joined the Mass Recreation and Parks Association. Met with Allison Lane, the Northborough Recreation Director (via phone). She shared some great information. She has reached out to schools and PTO leaders. Once school settles in, she's hoping to set up some meetings. And information about Greater Worcester Grant Foundations has been received.

Programs:

Drop-in card making to benefit COA – Low turnout, but have some cards to turnover to COA

9/24 – Town Yard Sale – 13 registrations

9/12 – Sewing lessons

9/25 – Intro to Karate – free

9/30 – Star gazing at Hillside with the Aldrich Society – 6:30 talk following by viewing through telescopes

Scarecrow Decorating – TBD

10/20 – Card making workshop

10/25 – Hillside Trick or Treat for under 6 – 11:00am

11/3 – Antiques Appraisal show with Mark of Watermark Antiques in West Boylston

12/1 – Claytime at the Town House

8/7 – Week of Best Soccer Clinics – ages 5-12 (age range to be confirmed)

Movie night was held back due to cost of licensing. Will reevaluate in spring. A suggestion was made to check with West Boylston Cinemas.

Wilde came to check the irrigation system at Hillside.

VII. Fall Fest/Daffodil Plant-a-thon

Eric asked to make an announcement related to Center Court Park. An anonymous citizen thought it would be great to get some more ADA compliant equipment at Center Court and went and got donations from different groups around town (the full list was not available at the time of the meeting) and hired an excavation company to install the pieces. Eric shared a picture of the equipment. Claudine got permission to share that the anonymous citizen was Steve Merro. The Commissioners are extremely appreciative.

Eric also said that Football League and the Parks and Recreation Commissioners will meet with the Selectboard to clarify questions regarding ownership of the Rte. 140/70 Football Field.

Before Eric left, he said a future meeting, the Town Basketball League would like to come to make a donation to the Commissioners for upgrading the basketball courts. Eric will get Pam the contact information.

(Eric had to leave and Claudine took over running the meeting)

Alison wanted to ask if she can do the Plant-a-thon without permission from the board? A garden designer helped to mark off some spaces that can be planted during Fall Festival and she said it will help improve the health of the existing trees. It was decided that

VIII. Basketball Camp Recap

Eric organized a great camp which made some revenue for Parks and Recreation.

IX. Budget Update

Pam asked how much detail the Commissioners need regarding the budget. Claudine said mostly just changes from the previous information. Pam shared expenses/receipts from July 1-Sept. 1.

X. Citizens' Comments

(Except in unforeseen or emergency circumstances, any matter presented for consideration of the Commission by a member of the public shall neither be acted upon, nor a decision made the night of the presentation. A scheduled time on a future agenda may be necessary, at the Commission's discretion.)

None

XI. Future Agenda Items (topics to be proposed for discussion at future meetings)

Town Basketball League presenting donation (see above)

XII. Adjournment

Steve made a motion to adjourn. Arielle seconded. Meeting adjourned 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted: Pamela Frechette, Parks and Recreation Coordinator