



## Boylston Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes



### Meeting Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission

**Tuesday, June 7, 2022**

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

**Boylston Town Hall, 221 Main Street, Boylston, MA 01505**

#### **I. Call to Order – 6:33 by Chairperson, Eric Hoffses**

- a. Members Present: Eric Hoffses, Steve Nason, Claudine Underwood, Arielle Strzelewicz, Alison LeBlanc (entered late)
- b. Public: Elaine Jones, other members not identified.

#### **II. Coordinator Position Update**

Eric stated that he and Jeff from Human Resources interviewed a candidate. Her resume has been emailed to the board. Eric said it was a positive interview and she has experience as an office manager, along with running events as a volunteer. Eric thinks she's a good fit. There were no questions from the board.

*Vote: Arielle made a motion to hire Pamela Frechette as the Parks and Recreation Coordinator. Claudine seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.*

#### **III. Camp Harrington**

Eric said the long-awaited good news is the conditions were all met and signed off by conservation and the selectmen. It's time for step two with the Town Planner. Eric will invite him to a meeting in the future to brief the Commission on the timeline and what kind of grants are available. Claudine thanked Eric for his work on the project.

Elaine Jones asked if there's been thought to the name of the new park. Arielle said she'd like to keep Harrington as part of the name. Business sponsors was briefly discussed. Elaine said maybe commercial vendors, like LEI since they do plantings and such. Someone else from the public suggested gardens and fruit trees to help with food shortages. A public member asked what is step two going to be – looking for grants to do what work? Eric answered that the commission has talked about walking trails. Arielle said the quickest way to get people out there and using it is to make trails. In terms of

budget she said there will have to be bridge projects, perhaps a project with scouts? It would involve getting Conservation Commission permissions, but they generally like these projects because it gets people out there, but keeps things protected. She said perhaps the projects should be divided as short-term, mid-term and long-term projects. Things that you don't typically think of, like lights and garbage removal should be part of a project.

Another public question is if there's been discussion about forming a Camp Harrington Committee. Claudine asked for fundraisings? Because as far as decisions, she said that would be up to the Commission. The person stated that they can foresee the Commission being bombarded by ideas. Arielle said they are limited what can be done because it has to be 'passive recreation' based on the open space survey results. The same member of the public said there's people in that neighborhood that would advocate spending the money to build a town beach, stating that there are a lot of differing opinions and most of the usage, 80% or more, maybe 70% or 60% of users of that will use that property are in the neighborhood.

Claudine asked what the difference is in the Commissioners handling Camp Harrington versus other parks like Center Court? Why is does there need to be a committee? The person clarified the Commission is capable, but they have a lot on their plate, and it's important to get it right for the neighborhood. Arielle agrees that usage might come from the neighborhood, but the money is coming from the Town as a whole. Claudine said there's a bylaw that excludes people from living close to a park property from working on it officially (former Parks Commissioner). Claudine said she thinks the Commission can handle the work.

Eric said so far, the board listened to the neighbors, since one plan to build a field and they decided not to proceed. He said they also looked at the numbers, too, and it didn't really make sense. Claudine added that there wasn't much interest either. Eric said he heard the neighbors when they expressed concerns for traffic and parking. The person said they thought the idea of a committee would be useful. Claudine reiterated that a fundraising committee would be helpful. Arielle said since the Commission can't fundraise, that's a big limitation. And she doesn't foresee a beach because it's such a big undertaking. Claudine said she loves the idea of a beach, but there was a lot of push back about traffic when talking about lacrosse fields, and a beach would cause a lot of traffic. Eric reiterated that the small budget the Commission has is very limiting. He would encourage people to run for the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Arielle said Camp Harrington will also be on the agenda when it's going to be discussed, no one will ever be blind-sided by a conversation. Claudine said the Commission shares agendas because they welcome feedback and Associate Members, though they don't have

voting privileges, can help plan. Arielle said she doesn't want to be making unilateral decisions. She would like to share the burden across town and everyone to have a say in it. Eric agreed. He said a lot of it has to come from the Town Planner and what grants are out there to help. Arielle said there's a lot of projects that won't require a ton of money, it's important to be thoughtful about the plan. Eric stated that without the Open Space Plan, the Commission couldn't even apply for grants, so he thanked the public members present for their work on it and acknowledged members not present, too.

Elaine Jones asked if the fire department is going to burn the building on site. Eric said yes, but he'll have to check on that because they were going to use it as a training opportunity. Claudine said they were probably waiting until the Town had ownership.

Elaine said they have designated parking that's been blocked off. Someone said there was a couch dumped in the pond. Another person said there were kids in the building. Elaine asked if there needs to be no trespassing signs. Claudine said yes, for sure. Arielle questioned if ownership transferred. Eric said it did. Arielle asked if they should vote on putting signage up. Eric said he'd talk to Steve Mero about getting signs. Arielle said she could go to Lowes if that didn't work out. Claudine suggested maybe Amazon, too. Arielle said she would take care of posting the signs. Eric said a vote would not be necessary.

Elaine said there are telephone poles with about four parking places and something across the road part. Someone asked if no trespassing signs means they can't walk there. Discussion ensued over what the signs should say. Steve suggested no trespassing on the building, no dumping, and enter at your own risk. No loitering was also suggested. Arielle asked where the line is for asking the Highway Department for help with putting sign poles in.

Concerns about people hanging out on the property was brought up. Eric said the Police Department has been monitoring by driving by, but if there are people hanging out there, they should call them. Concern was expressed about people trying to enter the pond. The 'Manny's Boxes' was brought up as a group to contact. Someone said that may encourage more people to go down there.

Arielle clarified the two action items are: to confirm with the fire department about the building and also buying signage. Eric agreed. Elaine said Camp Harrington was discussed at the last Selectboard Meeting. Someone asked if there's a deadline for grants. The answer was yes. Elaine said she thinks the trail grant opens in November. Elaine also asked if it's \$9,000.00 we get on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Elaine suggested using the money for a design and what's possible and not possible. Eric said it's definitely the next step. Claudine asked if that's something Paul (Town Planner) does. Eric said Paul would probably hire it out.

#### **IV. Budget Update**

Alison LeBlanc entered just as discussion was to begin on the revolving budget. Alison did research on pricing for toys and equipment for Manor Park. She said that 'Keep Boylston Beautiful' donated money for a bench, so now the Commission doesn't need to choose between a bench and gaga pit. Claudine thanked Tina and Sonia. That money will go into the gift account and can be held until it's ready to use.

Claudine asked if a motion up to a certain amount was needed to allow Alison to make the purchases. Steve asked if balls needed to be ordered for the gaga pit. Eric said there are two bags in the office that can be used. Arielle asked if the Commission wanted to coordinate a 'mulch' day for when all the equipment came in? Alison suggested combining it with an ice cream day in July. It wasn't clear if the gaga pit would be in on time. Claudine suggested holding off on the ice cream day until the gaga pit came in. Alison said she'll think about the timing and discuss it at the next meeting when they know when everything will come in.

Arielle asked if they need to make a motion to spend the money. Eric confirmed they do. Steve commented that they don't want to use the steel buckets. Alison said she they will be attached (to the balance scale), and she thought plastic wouldn't hold up to the weight of the rocks, but they could try plastic if everyone thought that was the way to go. She's only ever seen it used with the metal ones. Arielle said if they are affixed, she agrees to go with the metal. Arielle tallied the cost of items.

*Note: Alison made a motion to expend an amount not to exceed \$2400.00 on equipment for Manor Park. Claudine seconded the motion. Eric, Alison, Claudine, and Arielle voted in favor. Motion carried.*

#### **V. General Discussion about Inclusiveness**

Steve said state after state is being sued for not allowing smoking in parks. He said if the Town picks one of the open spaces and shows they are working on allowing smoking in one of the parks, they can have paperwork to show in case they are sued. Steve said the laws of inclusiveness means that there must be a space for smokers. Arielle asked if there's specific documentation about it stating parameters, and where does it exist so they can write to it? Alison asked if Steve has a copy of the law. Claudine suggested talking to April because they need to know more. Eric agreed that counsel would best answer that. Steve said you have to allow drinking, too, and gave the examples of a couple celebrating an anniversary in the park. Alison said if he could bring the law to the next meeting, they would review it. Arielle said she's happy to draft a document, but she needs the parameters. Eric told Steve to send it along or email it and he'll give it to Town Counsel to look over. A member of the public sought clarification, stating that there are

communities in the state that have full bans on smoking and drinking in public places. Eric said he does not believe Boylston has that ban. Arielle asked if they are suing with success? Steve said they are winning. Claudine questioned if Boylston even banned smoking in parks.

**VI. Discussion and vote to have town counsel draft documents to define that there is no monetary compensation for members of the Commission of Parks and Recreation**

Claudine clarified a topic from a previous meeting, stating that there would be a document (affidavit) drafted by Town Counsel that everyone would sign stating that there is no compensation for Commissioners of the Parks and Recreation Commission. It will clarify there is no pay for the positions and is meant to make sure there is no question whatsoever that a Commissioner is not a paid position. Town Counsel will draft it, and the Commissioners will proof/review it and approve it or not.

*Vote: Arielle made a motion to ask Mr. Madaus (Town Counsel) to draft an affidavit. Claudine seconded the motion. Eric, Claudine, Alison, and Arielle in favor. Steve opposed. Motion carried.*

**VII. Citizen Commentary**

(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.)

Alison said she would like to add that she had a meeting with New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill and they are offering two trees. She said she'll have to speak with the Highway Department to make sure it won't interfere with mowing. She said it would be in between the playground and basketball court, they will be native, and tolerate wet conditions. Everything was measured by a Tower Hill representative so it wouldn't grow into the light pole or play equipment as it matures. Alison mentioned that gator bags can be purchased to keep it watered for the next couple years. She said her contact at NEBGTH was very enthusiastic and added the day they met the park looked beautifully maintained. Claudine said she appreciates the kids on the basketball courts picking up after themselves. Arielle acknowledged there is a lot of foot traffic there. Alison said they mentioned other grants that can be used for the community gardens for ADA and Food Pantry purposes that the Commission can look into.

Alison also said that they need to figure out how to water the trees. Each tree will require 5 gallons of water once a week. The easiest way is to hook a spicket to the old water fountain there and she'll have to contact someone about it. A member of the public said for his neighborhood, he contacted the Worcester Tree Initiative, and they gave them six

trees, so they could be a source for more trees in the future. He said the Fire Department used the smaller truck with a little water tank on it to come and fill up the bags. Steve said there's also a way to connect a garden hose to a fire hydrant. Alison said it would be nice to have the drinking fountain back, but for now it would be nice just to have a water source there. They can try that and use the Fire Department as back up. Elaine said part of the Worcester Tree Initiative might be because of the Asian Long Horned Beetle project. Alison said that all the older trees at Center Court were all of the same variety and Park Planner said to make sure you have a lot of variety.

Arielle mentioned that there was a truck driving through the woods on a trail at New Linden St. It was pointed out that it's not Town property, therefore not a Parks and Recreation issue. Claudine suggested calling the Police Department non-emergency line.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

*Vote: Arielle made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Claudine. All in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.*

Respectfully submitted by: Pamela Frechette, Parks and Recreation Coordinator using the meeting recording.