



Boylston Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes



Tuesday, April 18, 2023

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

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

I. Call to Order by Eric Hoffses at 6:34pm

- a. Commissioners Present: Eric Hoffses, Claudine Underwood, Alison Leblanc, Arielle Strzelewicz
- b. Commissioners Absent: Steve Nason
- c. Coordinator: Present (Pam Frechette)
- d. Public Present: Mark Anttila, Elaine Jones, Jeff Turgeon, Dawn Porter, Sue Sleczkowski, Sue Hudson

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes from 03/07/2023

Vote: *Claudine made a motion to approve meeting minutes from 3/7/2023. Arielle seconded. Eric, Claudine, Alison and Arielle all voted in favor. Motion carried.*

III. Town Clerk – Program Proposal

Town Clerk, Dawn Porter, attended the meeting to present a Gnome Walk on the Hillside Trails. She said if it went well, it might be something to do annually. She's seen fairy walks, but gnomes are popular now. She's willing to purchase materials and put gnomes along the trail, having some sort of scavenger hunt card/flyer to look for the gnomes. She'll walk the trail about once a week to check for damage, and she and Pam can both advertise the event. It's something that should be easy to do and not expensive, and it would get young kids outside on the trails. Alison said she may have access to a story walk, and metal spokes to adhere signs to put on the trails to match with the gnomes.

Dawn said her idea was to keep it simple and see how it goes. If it works well, it can be made into something bigger down the road, but if we try to do too much this year it may not happen. Alison suggested tying in a hashtag (#boylstongnomes) to get people to post pictures, noting the Top Dog program was so successful. Elaine Jones suggested borrowing some gnomes from Tower Hill. Dawn said it might be worth a call. Dawn said for a little money it can get up and running. Pam mentioned the journaling event and color-run happening on May 6 and 7 respectively. Dawn will wait until the color run is over indicating sometime after May 13 would work. The name is undecided, but Dawn said if Alison can get the story walk books maybe it can be called a fairytale walk or something. Dawn will work with Pam.

Vote: *Claudine made a motion to approve the program Dawn proposed. Arielle seconded. Eric, Claudine, Alison and Arielle all voted in favor. Motion carried.*

IV. List for Keep Boylston Beautiful Day (item taken out of order after the Disc Golf Update)

- a. Manor Park – Wish list above and beyond general trash pick up
 - i. Gaga pit
 - ii. Mulch

- iii. Install balance scale
- iv. Small children's play area needs to be painted.
- v. Retaining wall/landscape timbers
- vi. Tree trimming

Alison said she can't imagine we'll have volunteers that can help with the retaining wall, so we'll probably have to hire someone. The Boy Scouts in the past did the area near the sand and children's play area. We no longer need a fall zone near the gaga pit because the 10 spin is gone. Alison said she's worried about the swing area. Pam should check it. She also said there's some hanging limbs, but Dave Kane will take care of it.

Alison said the baseball group is good about keeping the park clean, so if Sonia can send people that can work on bigger projects to the park that would be good. She usually sets up at the football field and assigns people areas. Claudine said there are three groups of kids that could help with service hours. Elaine asked if a professional would be needed. Eric said balls might be needed for the gaga pit. Arielle said it's just a kick ball that's needed and Eric said there might be some in the gym closet and Pam said she thinks there's some in the office. Alison said she could meet Pam up at Manor during the week and they can take a look at the timbers. Alison said sand toys are needed and Pam said there's some in the office that were ordered last spring. Center Court is clean. Eric said it looks beautiful with all the daffodils.

V. Sunscreen Update (item taken out of order after Disc Golf)

Pam referred to an email update from Sarah Barrette. She was going to attend a Grange meeting; a friend was going to the Lion's Club to ask about donations. For three dispensers without poles it would be \$2059.00, so about \$687.00 each. They're still working on donations.

Ann Marie the Town Nurse came to the office and introduced herself to Pam. She will also attend the Grange night on 5/02 with sunscreen samples and pamphlets and the Memorial Day festivities. Alison asked if there's a list of upcoming programs that could be shared at the Grange night. Pam said she will set up a table before the Parks & Recreation meeting and after the meeting go back for the meet and greet.

VI. Disc Golf Update (item taken out of order before Keep Boylston Beautiful and Sunscreen Discussion)

Jeff Turgeon came forward for the disc golf update. They've been making good progress on the course and have a good volunteer group including people from Boylston. He acknowledged that Arielle has attended a couple meetings. One of the volunteers lives in Boylston, is a USDA Forestry worker and licensed arborist; he volunteered to remove dead trees along the course. Steve Mero, the Tree Warden, inspected to make sure they were okay to remove. They also met with Steve Mero and Bob Bourassa about the course layout and maintenance. They made small tweaks as a result.

Word has spread and more people have reached out about getting involved, including people that have more experience with disc golf and have helped with other courses. On the April 28th, Dave Kane's (the arborist) office has an arbor day project they're to choose and work on for the day, this year's recipient is the disc golf course. Then disc golf volunteers are doing a community day on the 29th to get as many volunteers as possible out helping, even with yard waste.

They've been coordinating with equipment makers and course leaders to look at the build out, programming, and how to work within the existing framework. There was a Northeast Disc Golf Expo in Boxborough and Jeff had the opportunity to network with potential sponsors and donors. They are excited to have another 18-hole course in the area, which hopefully will lead to strong financial support. Preliminary work has been done to set up an online donation campaign to accept PayPal or credit/debit cards that will go through WSF to buy supplies for the course. They've gotten some 'in kind' donations. Connor Sign & Graphics in West Boylston donated some temporary signs and volunteered to do graphic work for the permanent signs. They also received some artificial turf from a football renovation for tee-pads from another organization. To buy it used would be a couple grand, and this is being donated. One guy has a truck and trailer, but they'll need the Highway Department crew to help unload so they're working on that. Mark mentioned there's some golf mats in the gym that can be used. Jeff said they would work for the youth and family tees, having a portable mat would be great for testing the holes, too.

A trail grant for about \$28,000.00 was submitted to help renovate the exiting trail network, buy rubber, signage, and an industrial mower. Another smaller grant for \$1500.00 was put in for the New England Flying Disc Organization.

They are working with Steve Mero on some brush cutting. There's a leach field area that the disc golfers were going to clear, but Steve said they must clear it anyway so his crew would take care of it. Dig safe was contacted and everything was marked out and flagged. The course is not in danger of hitting any of those areas.

There was a chance to meet with the Historical Commission since Jeff last attended and the idea of a history walk will be a phase II of the project.

Alison asked if there was a timeline for construction. Jeff said by the end of June they're hoping to get major parts up. Steve said he'll have his crew help get some areas done they can help with, so it's when they're available to help, too.

Volunteers are available at all different times, so they set up a document of what needs to be done for those that can help outside of project hours. Pam added that the arborist that is working on the disc golf course is the same man that offered to help remove dead trees and branches at Manor Park, and that connection was made through the disc golf project.

Elaine asked if the town had to come up with the 20% of the trail grant. Jeff said he used the volunteer effort at the standard hourly rate allowed to meet the 20% threshold and it calculated out to be about 28%. He figured the number of hours, number of volunteers, and the allowable rate. Elaine asked if that was volunteer hours after you get the grant because a lot was done before. Jeff said there will be plenty of volunteer hours after and he thinks volunteer hours were underestimated. Some of the purchases will wait until the grant determination is made. Jeff said he's been going to the MA Trails quarterly meetings and a lot of what they work on are the connecting trails. This is a stand-alone project, so it's a bit different. Temporary signs are going up and not all the tree markings mean trees are coming down.

Pam added that Jeff met her at the YMCA that morning and they looked at Board of Directors minutes and went through a bunch of records.

VII. Camp Harrington Updates

Project Status and Sign Vendor Selection

Eric said there will be an article at Town Meeting asking the Town to appropriate \$36,025.00 from free cash to complete Phase II of the grant requirements. Of that \$9,400.00 will be reimbursed to the Town when completed. This phase is required to keep the \$90,000.00 that was already received for the acquisition of the land. Phase II includes removal of the building, signs, and the trail. Town Meeting is set for May 01, 2023, at 7:00pm.

Mark asked how much money Parks and Recreation will return to the Town at the end of the year? If there's money left over, maybe Parks and Recreation can explain that the money for the project will be returned to free cash from the revolving account if not spent by Parks and Recreation. He said that might be more appetizing for residents. Eric said that having the state take \$90,000.00 back from us is probably a bigger thing.

Alison said a flyer could probably be put together. And if we had a big drawing of the plan that will help. Alison offered to stand and talk to people.

Sue S. asked if anyone has volunteered to start a 'Friends of Camp Harrington' group. Alison said the Parks and Recreation group cannot lead a friends group, but they can help get one started.

Pam gave an update on the trail portion of the project. Each Commissioner was given a drawing of the plan change since the last meeting. The entrance is an easement, so the start of the path was moved to the left to Town property as you enter, and then meets up with the existing road further down where it becomes Town property. In the future, it could be considered to move the entry to the other side and use the same parking area and trail. Alison pointed out that Walker mentioned moving it will make for a nicer path. He also said plantings could eventually be added to the other side near bordering residents to provide some privacy down the road. Elaine asked if there would be a way to keep people from driving on it. Emergency vehicles could still drive down and signage would be added to prevent others. When/if a boardwalk is built on the wetter areas, it would leave access for trucks. Pam said the new plan was sent to the state and we were told it looks good. Walker was asked if he could make the holes for the signs that need to be installed since he will have the equipment there and he said he could. The parking area will remain where it is, there will be about six spots. The debris will be removed from the property and construction will begin May 8th.

Pam did a walk through with a state botanist and gave the Commissioners a copy of her notes. Natives, invasives, birds and evidence of other animals were identified. Two things were notable – Sewall Pond is a Great Pond, which means it needs public access. If the property is the only public access, it could help with grants. Arielle thought there might be access on Mill Street. Alison said it depends if it counts as the same pond. Elaine said that means people can put boats in the water. The frog pond is a vernal pool. There was a lot of silt noted in the waterways on the walk to the vernal pool. The second item was that we could look into having the frog pond certified as a vernal pool. Alison said Walker pointed out that we should seed with natives soon before the knot weed takes over the barren area. Pam said the botanist checked it and verified it's knot weed that's coming up. Alison suggested putting the information online.

Sue H. said they have mallards nesting on the other side of the pond. Pam said that the botanist found starwort and said it was indicative of healthy water. Some of the plants down by the mulch pile were natives. Arielle said that the purple pitcher plant isn't on the list but can be found beyond the mulch pile to the left toward the water. Arielle said garlic mustard is edible and Alison said knotweed is as well. The quality of soil in the area we want to plant with natives should be okay to support them.

Signage:

Six sign companies were contacted. The three on the bottom of the quote sheet weren't added to the cost comparison because they were outside of the scope of the \$2500.00 budget. The three noted on the price comparison are Connor Sign and Graphics, Signorama, and Ready2Run. Connor Signs is working with Disc Golf and did signs for us in the past. Tower Hill and DCR each recommended one of the other two. Ready2Run is on the higher side. Connor Graphics and Signorama have similar pricing. Pam noted the Connor Graphics is charging three artwork charges for the interpretive signs and Signorama is quoting one. The signs are going to need graphic work, since we don't have a graphic artist, so she's unsure if that will increase since we will probably need more help than one pass. Elaine asked if there is a specific requirement for the number of signs. Pam said there is not. Pam said Connor Signs quoted a four week lead time, but when she talked to them, they said it's really about a two weeks. Pam showed an example of how big the 16x16 and 20x20 signs would be. She also noted that a matte finish can be put on the more expensive of the two grades of metal signs to prevent glare. She also noted Signorama and Ready2Run signs have 50% upfront deposit and Connor signs didn't put terms on their quote, but never asked for money up front on past projects.

Eric said Ready2Run is too high considering how they have to choose bids, so the Commissioners will have to choose between Signorama and Connor signs. Eric went around the table to see which vendor would be each Commissioners' choice. All present Commissioners chose Connor signs.

Vote: *Arielle made a motion to pick Connor signs to provide the signage needed for Phase II of the project up to \$2500.00. Claudine seconded. Eric, Alison, Claudine, and Arielle all voted in favor.*

For the future, public members suggested Sunshine Signs or a Vocational school like Assabet or Worcester Tech.

VIII. Commission Members attendance expectations/absence concerns

Claudine said that a Commissioner has not been heard from in five months and she has emailed and has not received a response. She said with all the projects coming up, a full Commission is necessary. Arielle added especially in the event of a tie vote. Claudine said when a situation like this happened previously, a letter was sent asking for a resignation. She offered to send a letter if the Commission is okay with it. Alison said in the bylaws there's no attendance standard. Claudine said it's not fair to the other Commissioners or the Town. Eric asked if it would be certified mail.

Vote: *Arielle made a motion for Claudine to send a letter to Mr. Nason. Eric seconded. Arielle, Claudine and Eric voted in favor. Alison abstained. Motion carried.*

IX. Coordinator Report

- Fans delivered – Mark put together
- Skate rink down thanks to Matt Davidian
- Participated in Town’s ALICE training
- Community Garden contract was updated and sent to past renters. One sign-up so far. – Arielle asked if there was a mechanism if someone cannot afford the \$10 fee. Alison said yes, we can advertise it that way and Pam can waive it.
- Still working on porta potty issue – escalated because of account hold – that has been rectified. Still waiting on their invoicing issues.
- Potties to Manor, BES, Hillside – ordered for Center Court after other three locations.
- Reached out to PD and they will not have tall locking cabinets available as previously thought.
- Checking on donate now button. Does have “become a sponsor” on our page, but doesn’t link to anything. Seeing if we can link QR code to the myrec.com account.
- Hardwood vendor reached out and will be sending quote shortly.
- PA has added full days through September
- Irrigation opening scheduled for May 1st – Scott at WD called about leak. Eric said baseball at Manor would look into it. Will advise.
- Trail Reservation booked May 7th – Tahanto PTO Color Run
- Trail Reservation booked July 28th – color/paint gun event for the library

Programming:

- Yoga – cancelled – only 5 enrollments
- Spring Egg Hunt – reached out the Library and COA to line up volunteers. Set to advertise and saw Congregational Church advertised a community egg hunt. Decided not to. Alison said the Church had a huge number of volunteers and they had two bounce houses and ski ball. It was huge.
- April 14th at Town House 6pm dinosaur event with Animal Adventures (grant) -VERY well attended.
- April 21st Earth Day Event with Library here at Hillside (Ray LaChance)
- May 6th Hillside Guided Walk with DCR – Make your own nature journal, free
- Memorial Day – Bounce House – popcorn sales approved
- June 17th - Babysitter Prep CPR Class with Fiske’s Emergency Training
- June 8 – 6-8pm Adult CPR with Boylston Fire - tentative
- July 10-14 Two Classes - Morning Circuit Makers – Grades 1-3 and App Inventors – Grades 4-7
- July 28th at Town House – The Science of Superheroes (grant)
- Aug 7-11 – Best Soccer Clinic – 9-noon – ages:
- Stay at Home readiness class pending, nurse retiring
- Off to college self-defense and free karate class with Arteca in works
- Oct 8th Stargazing (grant)
- Oct 21st – Birds of Prey Program (grant)
- Pam took pictures of the fire department burn at Camp Harrington
- Pickleball cards started and there have been 84 pick ups

X. Budget Report

Hand out. No discussion.

XI. 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.)

Mark Anttila wanted to update about Pickleball. He was looking at the courts at Manor and they are level and may be able to be resurfaced. He's going to start getting quotes to understand what it would cost. He could easily get six courts in there with the tennis courts.

He's looking for some place to store the paddles. He wanted to know if he could move the basketball rims. Eric said he'll look into it. Mark also said a decision needs to be made about the stuff that's stored outside. Alison said there's a process that it has to be declared a surplus before it can be disposed of.

Mark asked Eric if he had a chance to look into the revolving account. Eric said he hasn't yet. Mark said that some other towns are holding onto more than \$10,000.00, but to hold onto it you have to go through the warrant at Town Meeting.

Eric asked if quote for the floor came in. Pam said nothing has been received yet. Pam said if a contract is signed, money can be kept if it's committed according to Ninotchka. Mark said he'll look into getting another quote.

Mark wanted to know if he should plan to host a clinic at Memorial Day. Pam will work with him on that.

Alison said there should be fencing that was taken down, she remembered they tried to salvage it, so it might be stored somewhere and can be put back up for the courts. Follow up with Steve Mero.

Arielle mentioned the pine trees at Camp Harrington have been thinned out into a straight line and that a tree fell into someone's yard. She's concerned about what will happen in the future. She's not sure what can be done, but wanted the Commissioners know that it could be an issue. Pam said she mentioned it to April and Steve Mero does check on them.

Elaine provided a sheet about CPA and Eric asked everyone to read the handout that was sent. Claudine asked if it can be shared. Pam will post it if Elaine can send an electronic copy.

XII. Future Agenda Items (topics to be proposed for discussion at future meetings)
No discussion

XIII. Adjournment
Vote: *Arielle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:07pm. Claudine seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.*

Meeting Materials:

Agenda	On File in the Parks and Recreation Office
Minutes	On File in the Parks and Recreation Office
Public Attendance Sheet	On File in the Parks and Recreation Office
Board of Health Email	On File in the Parks and Recreation Office
Budget Sheet	On File in the Parks and Recreation Office
Revised Drawing Plan for Camp Harrington	On File in the Parks and Recreation Office
Notes from Walk with Botanist at Camp Harrington	On File in the Parks and Recreation Office
Cost Comparison Camp Harrington Signs	On File in the Parks and Recreation Office

Respectfully submitted by: Pamela Frechette, Parks and Recreation Coordinator