



AYER PARKS DEPARTMENT

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Minutes of February 15th, 2024 - Ayer Parks Commission

Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

Members Present: Chris Tavares, Chairman, Gerry Amenta, Jason Mayo, Kevin Malantic, Sarah Gibbons (remote)

Also Present: Jeff Thomas, Ayer Parks Director, Sarah Ernst, Robert Pontbriand, Dan Van Schalkwyk

At 7:30 PM Mr. Mayo made a motion to open the meeting. Mr. Amenta seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (Mr. Tavares -yes, Mr. Amenta-yes, Mr. Mayo-yes, Mr. Malantic-yes, Mrs. Gibbons-yes)

Public Input

Heather Hampson of the Conservation Commission wanted to let the Park commission know that the Nashua River Watershed Association is looking for projects and to test the water in Grove Pond. The association wants to look at and clean up the invasive species, specifically knotweed, that are growing along the Pirone Park shore of the pond. The association understands that there will be activities happening around the park in the spring season and will handle their project with care, communicating with the Parks Department as they go about the project.

Mr. Mayo motioned to allow the Nashua Water River Shed Association to come in and work on their project as long as it doesn't interfere with the other activities at the park. Mr. Malantic seconded. (Mr. Tavares -yes, Mr. Amenta-yes, Mr. Mayo-yes, Mr. Malantic-yes, Mrs. Gibbons-yes)

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Mayo motioned to accept January's meeting minutes. Mr. Malantic seconded. (Mr. Tavares -yes, Mr. Amenta-yes, Mr. Mayo-yes, Mr. Malantic-yes, Mrs. Gibbons-yes)

Presentation on Proposal to Acquire 71 Sandy Pond Road

Robert Pontbriand, the Town Manager and Dan Van Schalkwyk, the Director of Public Works gave a presentation to the commission and the memorandum of Select Board about acquiring the land on 71 Sandy Pond Road. The land consists of 2.86 acres, and it is owned by a private developer and is diagonally across from the beach. The lot was going to cost about \$1 million before negotiations, and they were able to get the cost to be \$700,000 after negotiations. Mr. Pontbriand believes that they could get \$350,000 from urban action and the other \$350,000 could be from CPC. By acquiring this space, it would allow more open space for the community, and it would be specifically for Parks and Rec use and not for a senior center. There will be a public hearing on March 6th, if it is not approved by the Town

meeting, the developer will build a house and sell it. Mr. Pontbriand asked the commission if they would write a letter of support for acquiring the land.

Mr. Mayo motioned to write a letter of support to acquire 71 Sandy Pond to the town. Mr. Malantic seconded. (Mr. Tavares -yes, Mr. Amenta-yes, Mr. Mayo-yes, Mr. Malantic-yes, Mrs. Gibbons-yes)

Parks Department Transition

Jeff Thomas has announced that he will be retiring as the Parks Director on April 5th. Mr. Pontbriand told the commission that they will start advertising for the position on March 1st. They are looking to have 5 people be on the screening process for applications and interviews. They are hoping that the process will be more on the quicker side and only take about a month to hire a new director. In the meantime, Jeff will stay on and help with this transition period of working with the new director. Mr. Pontbriand mentioned that because of this transition period, they will wait until the fall Town meeting to put in the application for an Assistant Park Director.

Mr. Amenta and Mr. Tavares both agreed to serve on the screening committee for the position.

Projects

Playground

Mr. Thomas informed the commission that communication has reopened with O'Brien & Sons for the playground equipment. As of now, the shipment date is still March 7th. Mr. Van Schalkwyk and Mr. Thomas will coordinate the drop-off of the equipment and figure out the temporary fencing around the equipment for security purposes by Field 6.

Beach House

The commission decided to table this discussion for the next meeting.

Eagle Scout Project

Sohil Patel, the boy scout who put in a request to do his Eagle Scout project at the Park, would like to create signs for the new playground, and the nature playground.

Mr. Mayo motioned to approve the Eagle Scout project. Mr. Malantic seconded. (5-0-0, roll call).

Mr. Mayo made a motion to name the sign for the nature playground "Big Board Park". Mr. Malantic seconded. (Mr. Tavares -yes, Mr. Amenta-yes, Mr. Mayo-yes, Mr. Malantic-yes, Mrs. Gibbons-yes)

Incidents

Mr. Thomas reported that at a 3/4th grade scrimmage against the Shirley rec program, a parent had been making derogatory comments that resulted in 4 complaints about this individual. As a result, at the next session this parent was closely monitored and his behavior was acceptable and continued as such through the remainder of the season.

Facility Requests

Tabled until next meeting.

Volleyball

Mr. Tavares informed the group that Andrea will be returning to coordinate spring volleyball. Unlike the fall session this will be more advanced with game-like situations and not as much focus on skills and drills. Volleyball will be taking place at the Page Hilltop gym. The price also increased from \$10 last spring to \$20 for this season.

Soccer

AYS

Mr. Amenta shared that the board had their opening meeting, and that registration closes on April 8th. The season will be from April 27th to June 15th. They are still in need of volunteers at the U6-U8 level. Registrations are low on the U6 level and the U8 level is shaping up nicely. In all divisions they are pushing more parents to be coaches earlier this year to ensure that the program runs smoothly.

ASYS

Mrs. Gibbons shared that registrations have closed, and they have over 40 players at each level.

Basketball

AYB

Mr. Thomas shared that the year end celebration sessions for AYB levels will be on Saturday, 2/17. It was a great season, and at the boys 3rd/4th grade session they will be giving out the Gibson Award to Bill Effler.

ASYB

Mr. Tavares shared that the season has finished, and it was successful. The year end celebration sessions will be on Saturday, 2/17. Mr. Tavares also shared that this was his last season on the board, and the board would likely be losing 4 of the 6 members.

Next Meeting

March 20th, 2024, at 7:15 PM at Town Hall.

Adjourn

At 8:50 PM Mr. Mayo made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Amenta seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (Mr. Tavares -yes, Mr. Amenta-yes, Mr. Mayo-yes, Mr. Malantic-yes, Mrs. Gibbons-yes)

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Stephane