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AYER PARKS DEPARTMENT

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Minutes of August 12, 2020 - Ayer Parks Commission

Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Ayer Town Hall

Members Present: Jason Mayo, Chairman, Ms. Sarah Gibbons, and Mr. Gerald Amenta

Also Present: Jeff Thomas, Ayer Parks Director and Heidi Januskiewicz, Beach Manager.

At 6:03 PM Mr. Gerald Amenta made a motion to open the meeting. Ms. Sarah Gibbons seconded.

Chairman Mayo went over the items on the agenda and asked if there were any items to add.

Mr. Thomas stated that there are 3 sets of meeting minutes to approve but would ask that they wait till the next meeting.

COVID-19 Concerns

Fall Programs

Mr. Thomas stated a few quick items with the fall programs usually do volleyball in the fall not sure if they will be able to since it is usually indoors. Mr. Thomas would like to speak to the coordinator and possibly hold a recreational program outdoors and asked the Commission for their opinion.

Chairman Mayo stated that they would have to check the guidelines but does not see any issue if there is any interest with having a volleyball at the beach.

Mr. Thomas stated that they would do a group at the beach and use the smaller net that the commission has and use it at the Page Hilltop School. He will talk to the coordinator to see if it is something, she is interested in doing.

All the Commission members agreed to try to get a program together if it can meet all the guidelines and there is interest.

Gibson Award

Mr. Thomas stated that another fall item for the Commission is the Gibson Award. The Commission will want to discuss if they want to award the Gibson Award at this time or wait till the spring. Mr. Thomas recommended waiting till the spring.

Chairman Mayo asked that if they waited till spring that it would still be the 2020 award.

Mr. Thomas stated that it would, and the Commission would award another person in 2021.

Chairman Mayo mentioned that since they are not doing a volunteer cookout that the Commission members should think about who they would like to nominate and bring them to the next meeting.

Park and Beach Maintenance

Mr. Thomas mentioned that they set up a soccer field today when there will be any fall use. There was a request from a coach to use the field for some practice and received approval from the Chair and Vice Chair to allow that.

Mr. Thomas stated that there has been a proposal by the Town Manager to have a meeting with the Board of Health, Selectman, and the Parks Commission to opening the Beach in the 2021 season. The discussion is to have a plan in place early to not be in a situation like this year where the decision to not open the beach was late.

Mr. Thomas messages to the public for parents for soccer and basketball once those decision have occurred and to just reach out. Mr. Thomas asked the Commission if there was anything specific, they wanted to send to the public regarding programs. There was none and Mr. Thomas stated that he will send all notices that go out to the public to the Commission as well.

Projects

New Building

Mr. Thomas mentioned that the new building will be opening soon and sent out the new building opening plan that has been reviewed by the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manger to ensure all COIVD guidelines are met as well as insurance and other items have been taken care of. Once those items are all set, we can start moving items in. There will be restrictions on what can be done in the building including no meetings and other protocols, but the Commission members can come and inspect the building.

Chairman Mayo stated that we can have an opening celebration in the Spring. Are there any punch list items that are left to be completed?

Mr. Thomas stated that Chuck Shultz, Facility Maintenance Director, had a plumber come in and check things, have not heard yet. Once we get the ok to move in, we can look and see what is needed for furniture and other items. Look to move in the next week.

Capital Plan items

Mr. Thomas stated that he sent a list of the capital plan items that were approved including a new truck and have received prices from 3 different dealers. Looking at a Ford F250 with a dump bed and plow and will be able to handle all the items the Parks Department needs. Additionally, as part of the capital plan a new trailer has been ordered and will be coming soon.

Rehab fields

Mr. Thomas stated a large project scheduled for this fall will be to rehab the town fields which will include cutting away from of the sod which will be done with a sob cutter. The work will be done the out field as well as some in the infield. The work is labor intensive and may have to be completed in the spring if it cannot be completed this fall. Mr. Thomas stated that he will be looking for volunteers for the work. Field 2 at abuts the soccer field will be done.

Chairman Mayo asked where the volunteers will come from, coaches? Parents?

Mr. Thomas stated that he has a list of volunteers that he regularly uses and has permission from the Town Manager's office to use them with proper COVID protocols. Commission members do not count they are considered a town employee.

Town Beach Bath House Mural

Mr. Thomas stated that the mural at the beach house has been completed. It was painted by lifeguard, Kate Blood. There is an open surface at the back of the building, and another employee, Olivia Logan, has submitted a few designs for that space. Mr. Thomas asked if the Commission would be able to vote on one of the submitted designs this evening.

The Commission reviewed the proposed designs.

Ms. Sarah Gibbons stated that she liked one of the designs with the wave and would be nice since the area is near the shower.

Mr. Gerald Amenta stated that he likes the idea of another mural and the wave design is nice and asked if there was another wall that was blank on the beach house allowing for two new murals.

Mr. Thomas stated that there was another wall and there could be three murals total.

Chairman Mayo asked if this is something the Commission needs to vote on for expense.

Mr. Thomas stated yes, for the other mural the Commission granted funds around \$300 from the revolving account.

At 6:30 PM Ms. Sarah Gibbons made a motion to allow Parks Employee Olivia Logan to paint a mural back of the bath house with funds from the revolving account not to exceed \$300. Mr. Gerald Amenta seconded. Vote to approve: Mr. Gerald Amenta, aye; Ms. Sarah Gibbons, aye and Chairman Jason Mayo, aye.

Eagle Scout Project

Mr. Thomas stated that since the last meeting he has been approached by three different scouts. The first one is from Dawson Testa is looking to put a gaga pit at Pirone Park. The Commission has already allowed for one at the Beach. The location will be decided later. Would need approval to do so, there is no money to be funded will be done by the Eagle Scout.

At 6:32 PM Ms. Sarah Gibbons made a motion to allow eagle scout Dawson Testa to build a gaga pit at Pirone Park at a location to be determined later. Mr. Gerald Amenta seconded. Vote to approve: Mr. Gerald Amenta, aye; Ms. Sarah Gibbons, aye and Chairman Jason Mayo, aye.

Mr. Thomas asked the Commission for a Commission member to work with him to decide on the location for the gaga pit at the park.

Chairman Mayo stated that he can work with Mr. Thomas on the project location.

Mr. Thomas stated that another project that has been proposed is to place a little free library at the town beach that came in from Molly Snyder how is doing it as a Silver project for the girl scouts. Due to

COVID concerns would not be opened until after the COVID concerns are over, most likely in Spring for Summer of 2021.

Chairman Mayo asked where the little free library would be located at the beach.

Mr. Thomas stated that the location has not been determined yet, ideally would be on a post.

At 6:35 Mr. Gerald Amenta made a motion to allow Molly Snyder from the girl scouts to build a little free library at the town beach with a location to be determined. Ms. Sarah Gibbons seconded. Vote to approve: Mr. Gerald Amenta, aye; Ms. Sarah Gibbons, aye and Chairman Jason Mayo, aye.

Mr. Thomas stated that the last project is from Eagle Scout project, Jordan Higgins for another little free library at the park and have it dedicated to Richard Duran, former Parks Commissioner.

Chairman Mayo asked where it would be located.

Mr. Thomas stated it would most likely be on the perimeter path on a post.

At 6:37 PM Ms. Sarah Gibbons made a motion to allow an Eagle Scout to build a little free library at Pirone Park and dedicate it to former Commission member Richard Duran. Mr. Gerald Amenta seconded. Vote to approve: Mr. Gerald Amenta, aye; Ms. Sarah Gibbons, aye and Chairman Jason Mayo, aye.

Personal

Mr. Thomas stated that gate attendants are scheduled at the beach through next week due to discussions from previous meetings unless the Commission would like to extend. There has been little traffic coming to the beach.

Chairman Mayo stated that he has received requested to launch canoes and kayaks at the beach and wondered if we could allow since there are no swimmers but is concerned about taking down the silt fence blocking the beach.

Ms. Gibbons stated that there may be a liability concern if allowed.

Chairman Mayo asked Mr. Thomas to check with the Town Managers Office.

Mr. Thomas stated that this has been a request for many years the concern is for timing with allowing when swimming as been allowed there is also a concern with fishing taking place as well.

Chairman Mayo mentioned to check with the Town Manager for liability and can vote at the next meeting.

Maintenance Staff

Mr. Thomas wanted to thank the maintenance staff for all their hard work this summer.

Incidents

None

Finance – FY 2021

Mr. Thomas stated that we are starting our 2021 budget and we will need to keep an eye on the budget with the new building. There are some items that they did not plan for but there is money in the revolving account. For Fiscal 2022 they will have a better idea of what to ask for regarding the new building. Due to not opening the beach the Commission was able to save a lot in the budget which should help with the request for the next fiscal year budget.

Soccer

Ms. Sarah Gibbons stated that she would like to meet with the coaches in the next couple of weeks to discuss the fall season. Should be able to do with smaller teams and only playing in town would be limited exposure. With the older kids Nashoba Valley was sending out changes in play that other towns were voting on and they had postponed the meeting till this evening and has not heard what they have decided yet.

Chairman Mayo stated that Nashoba Valley is in a holding pattern and will not be sending out registrations at this time. Once they know that the league is opening, they will send them out and inform Sarah and Jeff.

Mr. Thomas stated that he will keep monitoring the State guidelines as well.

Basketball

Mr. Thomas stated that he was going to propose to choose a date to have a preseason meeting to go over what may be able to happen for this upcoming season. Not sure if they will be allowed to have a season due to needing gym space and the schools have not released the school plan at this time.

Chairman Mayo stated that the Commission at this time should not even ask about gym space since the schools are focused on opening at this point. Does not see getting gym space till school is open full time.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that he wants to send a notice out to parents to let them know that they are keeping an eye on the situation and will keep them informed.

Next Meeting

Chairman Mayo mentioned that for the next meeting can get back to the 3rd Thursday, so next meeting will be on September 17th.

Adjourn

At 6:55 PM Sarah Gibbons made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gerald Amenta seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve.