

# AYER PARKS DEPARTMENT

Town Hall ♦ One Main Street ♦ Ayer, MA 01432  
978-772-8217 ♦ 978-772-8222 (fax)

---

RECEIVED  
MAY 25 2023

TOWN OF AYER  
TOWN CLERK



## **Minutes of July 1, 2020 - Ayer Parks Commission**

Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Ayer Town Hall

**Members Present:** Jason Mayo, Chairman, Ms. Sarah Gibbons, Mr. Jason Leone, (arrived late) Mr. Gerald Amenta, (arrived late) and Mr. Scott Copeland (all participating remotely)

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

**At 5:00 PM Ms. Sarah Gibbons made a motion to open the meeting.**

**Chairman Mayo went over the items on the agenda and asked if there where 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.**

### **Elected Officers**

Chairman Mayo went over the officers needed for the Commission for the new Commission Members

**Chairman – Ms. Sarah Gibbons nominated Mr. Jason Mayo to stay as Chairman for the 2020-2021 year. Mr. Gerald Amenta seconded. Vote: Ms. Sarah Gibbons, yea, Mr. Gerald Amenta, yea, Mr. Scott Copeland yea, and Mr. Jason Leone, yea.**

**Vice-Chairman – Chairman Jason Mayo nominated Ms. Sarah Gibbons as Vice-Chairman for the 2020-2021 year. Mr. Jason Leone seconded. Vote: Mr. Gerald Amenta, yea, Mr. Scott Copeland yea, Mr. Jason Leone, yea and Chairman Mayo, yea.**

**Clerk – Chairman Mayo nominated Mr. Scott Copeland as Clerk for the 2020-2021 year. Mr. Jason Leone seconded. Vote: Mr. Gerald Amenta, yea, Mr. Jason Leone, yea, Ms. Sarah Gibbons yea, and Chairman Jason Mayo, yea.**

### **Sub-Committee**

**CPC- Chairman Mayo stated that he would stay on as a committee member for the CPC.**

**Mr. Jason Leone nominated Chairman Mayo for the CPC committee member for the year 2020-2021. Mr. Gerald Amenta seconded. Vote: Mr. Gerald Amenta, yea, Ms. Sarah Gibbons yea, Mr. Scott Copeland yea, and Mr. Jason Leone, yea,**

Chairman Mayo suggested that the Commission wait on committee elections for the Sign Committee and the July 4<sup>th</sup> Committee.

## **150 Year Committee**

Mr. Jeff Thomas gave the Commission a brief description of the 150 Year Committee that is being created to help plan the Town of Ayer's 150-year celebration which occurs next year.

Chairman Mayo suggested that the Commission have a member on this sub-committee and asked for a volunteer.

**Mr. Gerald Amenta nominated Chairman Jason Mayo for the 150-Year Committee for the 2020-2021 year. Mr. Jason Leone seconded. Vote: Mr. Jason Leone, yea, Mr. Scott Copeland yea, Ms. Sarah Gibbons yea, and Mr. Gerald Amenta, yea.**

## **Beach Liaison**

Mr. Thomas gave brief background of what the Beach Liaison does for the Commission.

Chairman Mayo asked Ms. Sarah Gibbon if she would like to stay as Beach Liaison.

Ms. Gibbons agreed to keep her position as the Beach Liaison.

Chairman Mayo nominated Ms. Sarah Gibbons for the Beach Liaison. Mr. Gerald Amenta seconded. Vote: **Mr. Scott Copeland yea, Mr. Gerald Amenta, yea Mr. Jason Leone, yea, and Chairman Mayo, yea.**

## **Ayer Youth Basketball**

Mr. Thomas gave a brief description of the Chairman and representative position for both the Ayer youth basketball and Soccer commission.

Chairman Mayo asked about the chairman position

Mr. Thomas stated that there is a Chairman from each town, Ayer and Shirley, and review most of the decisions for the youth basketball / soccer programs. Since the Commission has many new members Mr. Thomas volunteered to help the whoever becomes the chairman.

Mr. Leone stated that he is willing to stay on the basketball board but may not have the time to fulfill the needs of the Chairman.

Chairman Mayo mentioned that they commission does not need to decide this evening and will revisit the topic later.

Chairman Mayo asked if Mr. Jeff Testa requested to be on both basketball and soccer.

Ms. Gibbons stated that she was not sure about soccer as she has not talked to him about staying on the Board but will ask him.

Mr. Thomas stated Shirley has been requesting items and asked the Commission to pick at least an interim Chairman till one can be decided on.

**Chairman Mayo made a motion to have Mr. Jeff Thomas be the interim Chairman to the Ayer Youth Basketball Board. Mr. Amenta seconded. Vote: Mr. Gerald Amenta, yea, Mr. Scott Copeland yea, Mr. Jason Leone, yea, Ms. Sarah Gibbons yea, and Chairman Mayo, yea.**

#### **Ayer Youth Soccer**

Chairman Mayo nominated Ms. Sarah Gibbons as Chairman for Ayer Youth Soccer. Ms. Gibbons asked if Mr. Gerald Amenta to co-chair with her. Mr. Amenta agreed.

**Chairman Mayo nominated Ms. Sarah Gibbons and Mr. Gerald Amenta as co-chairs of the Ayer Youth Soccer. Mr. Jason Leone seconded. Vote: Mr. Jason Leone, yea, Mr. Scott Copeland yea, and Chairman Mayo, yea.**

#### **COVID-19 Concerns**

##### **Beach**

Chairman Mayo stated that swimming at the beach will not happen this year. The chairman of the Ayer Board of Health submitted a memo stating the reasoning of not issuing a permit for the year and not allowing for a reapplication for the permit as well. Chairman Mayo mentioned that the Commission submitted a plan for review and suggestions on the plan in hopes for resubmitted beach permit. The Board of Health stated in an email that they will not issue a permit to allow swimming due to COVID still being present. Chairman Mayo asked the Board of Health how other towns in the Nashoba Board of Health could open. He received the answer that the one issue with Sandy Pond Beach is due to the size.

Chairman Mayo thanked both Mr. Thomas and Ms. Heidi Januskiewicz for their time for developing a plan for the opening of the beach.

Ms. Gibbons asked if there is an appeal to the Board of Health's decision.

Mr. Thomas stated that the Select Board can not override the Board of Health, his understanding is that there is no appeal process to the Board of Health's decision.

Mr. Amenta asked how Mirror Lake at Devens could open stating concerns with that beach.

Ms. Januskiewicz stated that when drafted the plan for reopening Sandy Pond she followed what other area towns including Mirror Lake have done.

Area resident that worked at the pond kids that worked there as well. Surprised and worried about the safety concerns with the beach not being open. She stated that she has seen kids using the surrounding beaches at the pond and not following safety rules.

Chairman Mayo thanked her for her comments and suggested that people go to the Board of Health with their concerns about the beach not opening since the Commission has no authority to open the beach or change the Boards of Health decision.

Ms. Januskiewicz stated her frustration with the Board of Health not meeting with the Commission about the proposed reopening plan, would have appreciated a meeting with them.

### **Bathroom Protocol**

Mr. Thomas stated that the State is moving to Phase 3 on the reopening plan on Monday. Part of Phase 3 reopening plan is to allow for public use of restrooms. We have a recommendation from the State on how to reopen restrooms with techniques for cleaning and sterilization. Mr. Thomas has been speaking with Mr. Chuck Schultz, Facilities Manager about how he has been cleaning the restrooms at the Police Station, Fire Station and Town Hall. Looking to just have the restrooms open at Pirone park only for specific planned events that have put in for field requests or have them open from a set time each day and then cleaned each day. The state will allow to restrooms to reopen on July 6<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Thomas suggested that the Commission hold off on reopening them till later in the week.

Chairman Mayo mentioned that he liked the option to keep the bathrooms closed and only open them for events at the park through the month of July.

Mr. Leone agreed with Chairman Mayo, mentioning that having the bathrooms open daily would require a lot of cleaning for little use.

Mr. Thomas stated that the State requires that if the restrooms are open, they would need to be cleaned at least once a day and deep cleaned once a week.

Mr. Amenta agreed to only open when there are planned events and it would be easier to measure use as well.

Chairman Mayo stated that if the State requires once a day, if they are open, they would need to check the restrooms several times through out the day. The Commission would have more control if for now if they are only open during events.

Ms. Gibbons stated that it should be open for events and then monitor how busy the park is and open the restrooms if the park gets busy.

### **Picnic Tables**

Mr. Thomas stated the other use for the park is to see if the Commission will allow the use of the picnic tables which are currently taped off. The Commission needs to decide if they want them used, the State does not give guidelines on the use of picnic tables.

Chairman Mayo stated that tables would have to be cleaned daily if they allow use of them.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that having to clean the tables would have limit the number of tables due to staff.

Ms. Gibbons asked if there are guidelines regarding the cleaning of the benches and other structures at the park, thinking that the picnic tables would follow those rules.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that the reopening plan for phase 3 has not come out yet, so he is not sure what it will state for the tables. The picnic tables are made of wood so may be harder to clean, but they have been painted recently.

Mr. Leone asked if it would make sense to wait till the guidelines for Phase 3 were released by the State before deciding on the tables.

Mr. Thomas stated that the provision put out for reopening can be vague or double speak and doesn't always give best information possibly to allow for groups to make the decision. Suggest that a Commission member work with him on how to allow for picnic tables and possibly start out with a few and move on from there.

Chairman Mayo suggested the Commission waits to see if the guidelines come out and make the decision from there.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that around this time the park gets requests for parties at the park, would be nice to allow for the tables to be used.

Chairman Mayo stated that requests for the park are different and to allow for the tables to be used same as the bathroom on a as requested basis.

The rest of the Commission agreed.

### **Summer Programs**

Mr. Thomas mentioned that if allowed in Phase 3 he would like to see the Commission offer summer program for basketball, baseball, softball, and soccer if he can get the volunteers. Not sure if Shirley has allowed Ayer residents to allow to join their programs. Wanted to see if there can be a night for a program if there can be enough volunteers and work out with the Commission members to make it happen and work out a plan. Would like to reach out to some volunteers to see if this is something if allowed in Phase 3 could make happen. Wanted to see if the Commission would allow to move forward.

Mr. Leone stated that this is something he would like to see the Commission try and do.

Mr. Amenta agreed and stated that he liked the idea as things improve that getting something together would be good.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that he would normally ask for a vote for a budget but does not feel this is necessary for this.

Chairman Mayo stated that the Commission has all the equipment and would not charge for it.

Mr. Thomas stated that businesses in the area have also been asking to use the park to all for free services, but the Commission may need to address this soon.

Chairman Mayo asked if the Town Manager's Office has commented on the issue.

Mr. Thomas stated that they have not but did ask the Assistant Town Manager to help with the questions on the use of the park.

Chairman Mayo stated that he would like to wait till the Commission hears from the Town Manager's Office and may need to set up a call with them to address the requests.

### **Project Updates**

#### **New Parks Building**

Mr. Thomas stated that the new building did not pass the final inspection but for minor items that are already fixed and should be able to start moving items in at the end of next week.

#### **Beach projects**

Several projects have been completed there by the gate attendants and other beach workers. The building has been painted and landscaping has been done in several areas.

#### **Pirone Park**

Bathrooms have been repainted.

#### **Sign Committee**

Field 3 to set up pads and dugouts there is a little issue to get that going but there is another project that can be done. Replacement of the field 6 back stop, all others have already been replaced except field 6. Wanted to make sure the Commission was ok with the change in the plans to do the field 6 backstop rather than the field 3 dugout.

The Commission is fine with the change.

#### **New Sidewalk**

The DPW will be replacing the sidewalk from the courthouse to the park and will be building a rain garden to catch all the rain water runoff that runs down school street.

#### **Mural Design**

Mr. Thomas stated that one of the lifeguards submitted drawings to paint a mural on the newly painted bath house at the beach. Mr. Thomas mentioned that there was one on the bath house before.

**Mr. Jason Leone made a motion have the proposed drawings painted on the bath house with a cost to not exceed \$100 to be paid for from the revolving account. Ms. Sarah Gibbons seconded. Vote: Ms. Sarah Gibbons yea, Mr. Jason Leone, yea, Mr. Scott Copeland yea, Mr. Gerald Amenta, yea, and Chairman Mayo, yea**

### **Finance – FY 2020**

Mr. Thomas stated that the Commission is under budget partial due to the beach not opening and other programs not running. The revolving account as about \$35,000 currently and the Commission is in good financial shape.

#### **Next Meeting**

Chairman Mayo mentioned that he would like to get back to the regular schedule of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month.

Mr. Thomas stated that he was concerned about waiting that long for a meeting but stated that the Commission can hold emergency meeting if needed but all meetings are subject to the one hour limit and availability.

Chairman Mayo stated that they will aim to hold the next meeting the week of August 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjourn**

**At 6:03 PM Mr. Jason Leone made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gerald Amenta seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve.**