

AYER PARKS DEPARTMENT

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Minutes of May 20, 2020 - Ayer Parks Commission

Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Ayer Town Hall

Members Present: Jason Mayo, Chairman, Kevin Williams, Sarah Gibbons and Jeff Testa (all participating remotely)

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

Absent: Richard Duran

At 5:02 PM Mr. Kevin Williams made a motion to open the meeting. Mr. Jeff Testa seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (4-0-0)

Chairman Mayo went over the items on the agenda and stated that with an hour limit to the meeting he would like to focus on the items that need a decision and anything for reopening and all discussions can get in an email.

COVID-19 Concerns

Spring Programs

Chairman Mayo gave a brief update on baseball, which is meeting next Tuesday. Hoping to have the reopening to have open by June 29th, which is the allowed opening date by the state, in the reopening plan in Phase 2. Chairman Mayo stated that in Phase 1 limited capacity sports could start but felt that Phase 2 was the best to start.

Mr. Thomas stated that he read it as practices in Phase 1 that states on June 9th and games in Phase 2 but there is no clarification in the plan.

Chairman Mayo stated that they should wait a couple of weeks will there is more direction. He asked what would be needed to get the program started.

Mr. Thomas stated that is a good question, as far as soccer is concerned the u10 and above has been cancelled. The U4 and U8 is still an option, at the last meeting there was a split of people wanted a refund and some waiting.

Ms. Gibbons stated that the younger age, U4 requested more refunds and the older, U6 are willing to wait to see if there is a season. They would be able to do so with smaller teams and smaller seasons if the state allows

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Chairman Mayo stated that looking to start after the July 4th holiday. Mentioning that the older age would not really need to practice. Would there be a full 7 to 8-week session or would it be a shorter season

Ms. Gibbons stated that if they started in July, they could do a 6 to 7-week session and still be done before school starts.

Mr. Thomas stated that he would recommend that a decision be made on that on or around June 7th so that they could send a notice out parents about the season. Understands that all dates as fluid and things change daily but feel that early June is the last chance to get everything together to have a soccer or baseball season.

Chairman Mayo stated that he felt that it should just be cancelled, do not feel it is safe enough, but it is up to the Commission to make the vote and decision. Wait till June 9th to make final decision. Will not have another meeting before then and will leave the soccer board to make the call for the season.

Swim Lessons and Summer Camps

Mr. Thomas stated that he spoke to Ms. Januskiewicz and due to the personal contact does not feel it is going to be visible to have Swim lessons. Ms. Januskiewicz wants to hear other people's opinions on holding swim lessons before making a final decision.

Mr. Thomas stated that summer camps is reaching a very difficult point. There are volunteers working closely with kids. There is a lot that will need to change before they can move forward along with registration. Feel that waiting for the June 9th date again to decide on summer camps. Camps are a Phase 3 activity and make an announcement to the public on June 9th. Mr. Thomas stated that he would like to have a Commission member work with him on the summer camps, so they are not waiting for a meeting to decide.

Chairman Mayo stated at the chair he will work with Mr. Thomas on the dates and possibility of summer camps.

Pirone reopening.

Mr. Thomas went over the items he sent out to the Commission members to review. With the Mass reopening plan May 25th, Tuesday is the day they are allowing beaches and parks with a limited basis. His recommendation is to go with that date. Unlock the beach for the park part and allow for Pirone Park to open, Selectman Houde is present and asked him for his opinion.

Mr. Scott Houde stated that the Selectman discussed the reopening and felt it best to leave up to the Parks Commission. The Selectman will go with whatever the Commission decides.

Mr. Williams the basketball court will remain closed.

Mr. Thomas stated that there are no games allowed but can open courts with social distancing allowed no actual games. Up to the Commission to decide but feel that the basketball courts and volleyball court to open as well.

Mr. Williams asked how policies will be enforced.

Mr. Thomas stated that there are signs that can be put in place and unless they zip tie the nets, which he does not recommend, he would like to see them open for people to use for individual use.

Chairman Mayo stated that we should open the courts with the signage but agrees with Mr. Williams that enforcing the social distancing at the courts.

Mr. Thomas stated that enforcing the social distancing is something that he and Ms. Januskiewicz need to discuss about how enforcement will happen.

Chairman Mayo stated that if enforcement becomes an issue then we can tie the nets.

Mr. Thomas opening bathrooms at Sandy Pond and how to maintain them, bath attendant or just have open. May want to have a gate attendant on hand before the beach opens to inform people about the social distancing and rules. Mr. Thomas stated that his main question is for how to operate the bathrooms. The bathrooms at Sandy Pond are old and not updated have several issues that makes social distancing an issue. Recommendation for Sandy Pond bathrooms be locked with the gate attendant have a key to have it used one person at a time. The bathrooms at Pirone Park are much easier for social distancing and with baseball not occurring should not be an issue at Pirone Park. Mr. Thomas stated that Chairman Mayo has some concerns with safely cleaning the bathrooms. MR. Thomas stated that the cleaning of them is something that the staff can do, the state is requesting them to be cleaned once a day.

Chairman Mayo stated that the gate attendant at Sandy Pond is a good idea and get that going. With the Sandy Pond Beach, they attendant will need to have gloves and wipes to clean the keys and bathroom between each use.

Mr. Thomas stated that he is looking at the Commission for recommendations for what to do with opening the bathrooms.

Mr. Williams stated that the date for the opening is June 12th.

Mr. Thomas stated yes, the June 12th would be the bathroom opening date, they typically do not open them till the swim season.

Chairman Mayo stated that we could leave the door open and post a sign stating one person at a time and hope that people would do the right thing.

Mr. Thomas stated that there may be issues with knowing if there is someone in the bathroom, but we can work on what will be done as the idea of using a key is not a welcomed idea. If the Commission wants one at a time we will figure a way to do that.

Chairman Mayo asked about the cleaning, making sure that staff has the proper PPE and know how to use the chemicals to clean them.

Mr. Thomas stated that they will ensure that everyone will have their own PPE equipment and that he is working on getting the chemicals for cleaning. He is hoping to get individual kits for each staff person. Ms. Januskiewicz will be doing a training on proper PPE with the lifeguard staff.

Chairman Mayo asked if the Commission would get any guidance from the town, in the terms if someone gets sick at one of the parks.

Mr. Thomas stated that he feels we have capability to do and is something that he will have to think about.

Mr. Williams stated that there is a lot that they will have to get together. The date is June 12th if all the items are not figured out, don't think anyone will be upset if we don't have all the items lined up, we push the opening date out.

Mr. Thomas stated that he and Ms. Januskiewicz are working on and have been looking at what other towns have been doing. Some have closed completely and some have done a swim at your own risk. Mr. Thomas stated that he is not a fan of that option but there may be some other options the Commission needs to look at.

Chairman Mayo agreed with Mr. Williams about moving the date if all items are not completed and the Commission does not feel comfortable opening.

Mr. Williams asked who does the beach open to, residents or all.

Mr. Thomas stated that he has asked Mr. Pontbriand about the question about only residents. Ms. Januskiewicz and himself have been working on a limit to the number of people to around 50 to 75. The biggest concern with allowing non-residents is that there are several beaches not opening so the number of non-residents may be higher. Before moving forward with not allowing non-residents he wanted to ask the Commission their opinion.

Chairman Mayo asked how many people go to the beach on a busy day.

Mr. Thomas stated that they can have up to 250 people throughout the day.

Chairman Mayo at anytime at max.

Mr. Thomas stated that the number of people varies. Limiting the number of people to around 50.

Chairman Mayo asked 50 families or people.

Mr. Thomas stated that ACP will be coming in July and they typically have 50 people come every year to give the Commission an idea of the number of people.

Mr. Williams stated that the Commission will have to decide if they will allow ACP to come in if the Commission is limiting the number of people.

Chairman Mayo stated that if ACP is allowed to operate possibly the Commission could allow them to come before they open to accodante both.

Mr. Williams stated that there is a lot that needs to be worked out with signage, cleaning and numbers before they can think about the June 12th date.

Mr. Thomas stated that he will work out all the details he can and if they can not work out all the items, they can always move the date.

Chairman Mayo stated that maybe the Commission can meet on June 10th to discuss the items before the June 12th date, stating it does not need to be a full parks meeting.

Mr. Williams stated that the meeting can be for the discussion of opening baseball, soccer and the beach.

Chairman Mayo stated that he would like to meet after the state releases new data on Phase 2 and before the June 12th opening date.

Mr. Williams stated that he is fine with the opening being pushed back if all the items are not worked out by June 10th meeting or the June 12th opening.

Ms. Gibbons stated that there be a notice as an earliest can be open date as June 12th but can change.

Mr. Thomas stated they will update all the websites and will put together a plan to send to the public with information about opening Sandy Pond Park and Pirone Park. He will also send out an update about the possible opening of the beach and will work with Ms. Januskiewicz on the beach notice.

Chairman Mayo asked Mr. Thomas to check with Ms. Januskiewicz about the meeting in June.

PPE

Mr. Thomas stated that the town is working on getting PPE for all town departments.

Updates on Agenda Items.

Chairman Mayo asked if Mr. Thomas is ok with sending all other agenda item updates to the SCommission as an email.

Mr. Thomas stated that was fine.

Next Meeting

Chairman Mayo stated that they will hold the beach reopening meeting on June 9th or 10th and hold a full Parks meeting after that.

Mr. Thomas suggested that the second meeting date in June be decided on at the June 9th or 10th meeting.

Commission Member

Mr. Thomas thanked those members, Mr. Kevin Williams. Mr. Jeff Testa and Mr. Rich Duran for their time on the Commission.

Adjourn

At 5:57 PM Mr. Kevin Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Jeff Testa seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve.