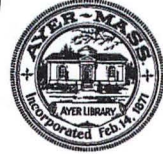


# AYER PARKS DEPARTMENT

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## Minutes of November 18, 2020 - Ayer Parks Commission

Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Ayer Town Hall

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

**Also Present:** Jeff Thomas, Ayer Parks Director

**At 7:03 PM Chairman Mayo read aloud the COVID-19 Emergency Order from Governor Baker allowing for remote participation meetings.**

**Chairman Mayo went over the agenda. Mr. Jeff Thomas added two items to the agenda.**

### Discussion – Timothy A. Nolan

Chairman Mayo mentioned that he had some sad news to share regarding the passing of Timothy A. Nolan who was a big part of the Parks Department family.

Mr. Thomas said a few words regarding all the work Mr. Timothy A. Nolan did throughout his years of service with the Parks Department.

Mr. Thomas asked the Commission to think about something that would be a proper tribute for the Parks Department to do to remember Mr. Nolan.

One item for the Commission to consider would be to have cutouts of snowmen to have the residents of Ayer decorate and place along the perimeter path and possibly do in memory of Mr. Nolan.

Chairman Mayo mentioned that the Commission would like to do the cutouts at the path and suggested that Commission members send along suggestions for items in remembrance of Mr. Nolan.

Mr. Thomas stated that the family would like to work with the Commission on setting up a scholarship fund in Mr. Nolan memory.

Chairman Mayo stated that the Commission could work with them on that.

### Projects

Mr. Thomas showed the Commission the proposed idea to have precut out snowmen and trees for people to decorate and then have them placed along the perimeter path. The Commission will charge a \$20 deposit that would cover the cost. The idea came from Commissioner member Sarah Gibbons as a fun family friendly item that is COVID friendly. The idea is people can keep and redo them next year or bring them back and get the \$20 deposit back and the cutout can be used next year. Overlooking to make around 50 of these would cost around \$500 and should come from the revolving account.

To follow up on the Halloween project voted on at the last meeting be Parks Department did help with the school activity but used very little on the money allocated for it as it was a small event.

Mr. Thomas wanted to ask the Commission for their thoughts on the idea of the cutouts.

Ms. Sarah Gibbons stated that she would like to include this project with a story walk. Ms. Gibbons stated that she has been in contact with the Ayer and Shirley Libraries to get information on how to do a story walk. The Librarian in Ayer has given her some stories that would work with them and would just need to get the signs which are \$4.00, and these could go along with the snowmen and trees.

Chairman Mayo stated that the story walk is something that the Commission could do with every season.

Ms. Gibbons agreed and would like to see an Eagle Scout project to make more permanent holders for the story walk pages.

Chairman Mayo asked for two motions from the Commission for both the snowmen and the story walk projects.

**At 7:30 PM Mr. Jason Leone made a motion to appropriate funds not to exceed \$600 from the revolving account for the tree and snowmen cutout project. Mr. Gerry Amenta seconded. No discussion. Roll call vote to approve, Mr. Gerry Amenta aye; Ms. Sarah Gibbons aye; Mr. Jason Leone aye; Mr. Scott Copeland aye; and Chairman Mayo aye.**

**At 7:32 PM Ms. Sarah Gibbons made a motion to appropriate up to \$200 from the revolving account to create a story walk at Pirone Park. Mr. Gerry Amenta seconded. No discussion. Roll call vote to approve, Mr. Gerry Amenta aye; Ms. Sarah Gibbons aye; Mr. Jason Leone aye; Mr. Scott Copeland aye; and Chairman Mayo aye.**

### **COVID-19 Concerns**

Mr. Thomas stated that as everyone is aware there are new concerns regarding COVID-19. Some of the new protocols that are in place from the Governor's office is requesting that people always wear masks inside or outside even if social distancing is possible. All employees are required to wear masks while working unless seated at their desks or while eating. The Town Manager has asked for additional signage at the parks stating that masks are required outdoors on town property. All town buildings are still closed to the public with no end date at this time.

### **Skating Rink**

Mr. Thomas informed the Commission members about the skating rink at Pirone Park that the Commission has put up over the last 15 years. The rink is up and the liner will be installed and will fill the rink once the temperature is closer to freezing. A new liner was purchased, and the Commission allowed for those funds at the last meeting.

Chairman Mayo mentioned that the Commission should get some small hockey nets for the rink. Chairman Mayo asked if the Commission should have a limited number of people on the rink at one time but masks will be required.

Mr. Thomas stated that in the past there have never been more than 10 people on the rink at one time but can have additional signage in place for capacity limits if needed.

### **Projects**

Mr. Thomas stated that there are 4 Eagle Scouts projects that have been done over the past few months. One was the gaga pit at the beach. Another gaga pit will be done at Pirone Park by another Eagle Scout, the location still needs to be worked out.

The Commission discussed the location at Pirone Park for the proposed Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Thomas stated that the other two Eagle Scout projects are two little free libraries, one at Sandy Pond Beach and the other will be on the perimeter path. The little libraries will be up only seasonally and will be placed in storage for the winter, also with COVID there are not able to be filled at this time.

Mr. Thomas went over other projects that Parks Department has been doing including field rehab work at the high school. Also, winterization of the buildings and irrigation systems.

### **FY2022**

#### **Capital Planning**

Mr. Thomas mentioned the directive from the Select Board and Town Managers office the budget is in a bit of a crisis for the next year which starts in July with possible budget cuts from the State and Federal Governments. The request came in to not allow capital spending for Fiscal Year 2022. This will require that the Commission adjust their 5-year capital plan. On the capital plan for this year was to rehab the Kiddie Junction playground. With the directive from the Town Managers office, Mr. Thomas suggested to bump all items on the 5-year capital plan a year to have no capital items this year.

Chairman Mayo stated that if there was something small, we may keep them on the plan for the year but the remediation for the playground was a big-ticket item. The Parks Department has received many capital items over the last few years including a new building and truck. Chairman Mayo stated that the Commission can revisit capital items if need in future meetings but for now looking to no request anything.

Mr. Thomas explained capital items spending to the newer Commission members.

Chairman Mayo stated that the fiscal effects of COVID will be seen in towns and state for at least the next year.

#### **Budget FY2022**

Mr. Thomas went over the proposed budget for FY2022 with the Commission which is requested by the Town Managers office to be level funded. Mr. Thomas went over the budget for this fiscal year which changed some to add additional costs to operate the new building. Mr. Thomas stated the for FY2022 he will be requesting \$3,000 more for services and removing the other expenses line to try to level out the proposed budget. Several other line items will be changed to include services for the new building and wage increases for employees.

Mr. Thomas stated that he will be submitting the budget and asked the Commission if they have any input on the proposed as explained.

Chairman Mayo suggested that the comments section of the budget be filled in to explain the line items to the Finance Committee.

**Incidents**

None

**Basketball**

Mr. Thomas mentioned that the Basketball committee met last month and will continue to meet with Ayer and Shirley as of now it looks like the season will not happen but will continue to meet on policies and other items.

**Soccer**

Ms. Gibbons stated the season has ended and the season went great. There has been no decision yet for Spring.

**Next Meeting**

Chairman Mayo stated that the Commission will look for the week for December 14th and keep the later time for the next meeting.

**Adjourn**

**At 8:08 PM Ms. Sarah Gibbons made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gerald Amenta seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve.**