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AYER PARKS DEPARTMENT

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Minutes of October 22, 2020 - Ayer Parks Commission

Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Ayer Town Hall

Members Present: Jason Mayo, Chairman, Ms. Sarah Gibbons, and Mr. Scott Copeland (all participating remotely)

Also Present: Jeff Thomas, Ayer Parks Director

Absent: Mr. Jason Leone and Mr. Gerald Amenta

At 5:34 PM Chairman Mayo read aloud the COVID-19 Emergency Order from Governor Baker allowing for remote participation meetings.

Chairman Mayo went over the agenda.

COVID-19 Concerns **Programs**

Mr. Thomas stated that there have been some scouting activities at the park along with some softball teams using the fields for practice and the varsity baseball team as well. There has been some activity though limited. The perimeter path is being used often.

Chairman Mayo asked if there has been any issue with people using the path.

Mr. Thomas stated there has not been any using brought to him but noticed that many people are not wearing masks. We could get signage asking people to wear masks if the Commission wants.

Chairman Mayo stated that he would like to wait till the Board of Health makes a requirement to stay open before making the decision to have masks.

Activates

Mr. Thomas stated with Trick or Treating being called off in town there is consideration with doing something in the park. Mr. Thomas stated that he spoke to the Town Managers office regarding any kind of activity and with the increase in cases they will get back to him with their decision. Wanted to see what the Commission wanted to do.

Ms. Sarah Gibbons stated maybe families could decorate some scarecrows to place around the path or outside their homes and have judges and prizes.

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Chairman Mayo mentioned something like the egg hunt.

Ms. Gibbons agreed.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that the Town Managers office stated they are waiting to hear from the elementary school on a possibility of the school doing something with the town.

Ms. Gibbons stated that the school is in contact with other town departments regarding the literacy now program and doing a live event.

Chairman Mayo suggested that Ms. Gibbons and Mr. Thomas work on this together and allow for some money to be set aside just in case something can be put together in time.

At 5:45 PM Ms. Sarah Gibbons made a motion to set a \$300 budget to put towards a fall/Halloween event for the town. Mr. Scott Copeland seconded. Vote to approve: Ms. Sarah Gibbons, aye; Mr. Scott Copeland, aye; and Chairman Mayo, aye.

Chairman Mayo asked Mr. Scott Kurtland from APAC if there was a movie night or anything planned.

Mr. Scott Kurtland stated that with COVID they can not do a movie night but are having a digital film festival for ages 8-18. People are encouraged to create and upload their own movies. Information is on the APAC's Facebook Page and website.

Projects Updates

Mr. Thomas stated that the back stop was finished at the ball fields. This was the biggest of the five that have been completed. The cost was over \$25,000 monies came from the sign fund.

Mr. Thomas stated that for the fall they will be continuing to edge the fields and hope to get some seeding completed and will finish in the spring. This spring with the work completed spring sports should be able to start as soon as possible. There has also been quite a bit of clean up due to recent storms.

Ice Rink

Mr. Thomas stated they have been scouting out areas looking to a location for an ice rink. Trying to get a sink installed at the new building that will aid in the rink installation and maintenance. Working on getting that installed now with the facility director. Mr. Thomas informed the Commission that there is still time before they need to purchase anything for a rink but new linear and other materials. Would need to purchase by the next meeting and will send an email to the Commission with estimates somewhere around \$1,000 and the materials should last a few years.

Chairman Mayo suggested that if the rink should go on the basketball court that there may be people on it if it is not frozen and cause damage. Suggested that the rink be placed on the grass with boards around them. Chairman Mayo mentioned that the Commission has spoke about doing a more permanent in the future with a deck hockey / ice rink. The plan for now should be to do something less expensive and more temporary.

Mr. Thomas stated that there are plans for future town projects in the area and it would be best to wait to be something more permanent is best till then.

Ms. Sarah Gibbons suggested that the rink should be placed somewhere near a water source.

Mr. Thomas mentioned Chairman Mayo's suggestion for the rinks location this would be near the new park building.

At 5:55 PM Ms. Sarah Gibbons made a motion to allow for up to \$1,000 from the revolving account to place an ice rink down at the town park. Mr. Scott Copeland seconded. Vote to approve: Ms. Sarah Gibbons, aye; Mr. Scott Copeland, aye; and Chairman Mayo, aye.

Other Projects

Mr. Thomas mentioned that the DPW will be installing a new sidewalk along School Street that will end at Pirone Park. As part of the plan a new path will be installed as well down to the perimeter path that will be ADA accessible. There will be a new rain garden placed at the monument on Bligh Street.

Personal Matters

Mr. Thomas informed the Commission that two long term workers are reaching the end of their service and should be done by the end of the fall. They have been working with the Commission since 2013 and wanted to acknowledge them for their hard work.

Mr. Thomas stated that he will be working with the Chairman for any new hires and would like to wait till the spring.

Mr. Thomas stated that Ms. Heidi Januskiewicz reached out to him mentioning that there was never any kind of end of year celebration for the season that did not occur. Mr. Thomas is looking for thoughts from the Commission on the item.

Chairman Mayo asked if it would be at the beach.

Mr. Thomas stated that he would clear it with the Town Managers office but would like to have it at the beach with some pizza and drinks to discuss the past year and upcoming year and would like to hand out some sweatshirts to the staff as well.

FY2022 Planning

Mr. Thomas stated that the town is in the middle of planning the Fiscal Year 2022 budget as well as Capital Planning. Mr. Thomas mentioned that capital spending plans are not due till December so it can be discussed further at the next meeting but wants the Commission to be thinking about items that may need to be in the Capital plan.

Town Meeting

Mr. Thomas mentioned that Fall Town Meeting is in a few days, the Commission does not have anything on the agenda but stated that it is good to have departmental representation at the meeting.

Incidents

Mr. Thomas stated that the Commission discussed an incident that took place at Pirone Park at the last meeting the involved several youths. The Commission put together a plan at that meeting to contact the parents. He has left messages for them and have not heard back but did contact the school for further information on the individuals involved. Mr. Thomas stated that he would like to continue to work on getting in touch with those involved to work out a solution rather than issuing an order of no trespass.

Chairman Mayo stated that since we are going into colder months does not have an issue with waiting until contact can be made.

Soccer

Ms. Sarah Gibbons stated that soccer is going well they are still doing U6 and U8 in town on Saturdays. Masks have been worn and players, coaches and parents have been very good about distances and other protocols. The Ayer/Shirley league since there was no Nashoba travel team, has been going well and the kids have enjoyed being able to play.

Chairman Mayo asked about the spring season, and registration for that yet.

Ms. Gibbons stated that they are waiting to see how the winter goes it is easy to open registration through Unipay.

Basketball

Mr. Thomas stated that they are still on hold with making any plans. The Central Mass league sent out a notice stating that they have secured some gym space in Westford at a cost of \$50 per game. It is up the town basketball commission to make the decision to play or not with the restrictions that are in place. Mr. Thomas stated that the Commission requested that he hold off on asking the school about possible use of the gym. Mr. Thomas asked the Commission to allow him to make that request now that school is in session to see if there is a possibility of use of the gym for basketball.

Chairman Mayo asked if basketball is allowed by the state.

Mr. Thomas stated that he not sure but wanted to have all items in place just in case. The commission does not need to decide right now just looking for recommendations at this time to bring to the basketball committee.

The Commission stated that they do not have any comments at this time regarding basketball.

Next Meeting

Chairman Mayo mentioned that the third Thursday in November is the 19th and asked to see if we can have the meeting later so more Commission members can be present.

Adjourn

At 6:23 PM Ms. Sarah Gibbons made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Scott Copeland seconded.