

**BEACON FALLS PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MONTHLY MEETING  
FEBRUARY 18, 2014**

**SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**

**CALL TO ORDER**

S. Ruhl called the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Beacon Falls Park and Recreation Commission to order at 7:05 PM.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: B. Egan, J. DeGennaro, S. Ruhl, M-E Fernandes, M. Zollo

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: A. Sirowich

OTHERS PRESENT: Beth Bucciferro from Brighten Your View, Joe Rodorigo, Joe Fitzpatrick

**MINUTES**

**B. Egan made a motion to approve the January, 2014 Special Meeting Minutes, as presented. J. DeGennaro seconded the motion. All ayes.**

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** - Tabled

**OLD BUSINESS**

A. **MATTHIES PARK** - Nothing happening at Matthies Park

B. **PENT ROAD** – Nothing currently happening at Pent Road

C. **RIVERBEND PARK**

1. B. Egan noted that the town is in the process of acquiring 17 & 19 Nancy Avenue and the sales of these properties are moving forward. Both properties have back taxes owed on them, so the town will forgive the back taxes in exchange for the deed to the land. The Board of Selectmen and Town Attorney are involved in the process and supportive of acquiring the properties.
2. The Riverbend committee is in the process of getting competitive prices for the different aspects of the park which are being planning.
3. DOT has given their permission on the acquisitions and the right of way access to the park.
4. Any monies leftover from the development of Riverbend will be used to fund improvements to the riverfront property behind the Firehouse which is town owned.

**S. Ruhl made a motion to move the agenda to take public comment. J. DeGennaro seconded the motion. All ayes.**

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**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

- A. J. Rodorigo entered the meeting to provide an update on Riverbend Park. He reiterated that the contracts for the Nancy Avenue properties are being delivered. Lisa Lowe is involved with the paperwork for the grant funds, as is the Land Use Attorney and the process is moving forward. \$3,000-\$4,000 will be used for legal fees for the deeding of the property. The town is looking to acquire one more piece of land, and they anticipate spending \$10,000 - \$12,000 on this property.
- B. M.E. Fernandes confirmed that the lots are vacant and there are no houses on the properties being acquired. S. Ruhl asked about DOT and their approval of access to the park. J. Rodorigo explained that Rich Minnick is working with them on fencing and guardrails. DEEP will need to approve clearing of property to the river's edge, the J hook in the water, and the design.
- C. Joe Fitzpatrick, of 502 Burton Road, Vice Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission entered the meeting to present the board with the 10 year plan of Conservation and Development, which includes a traffic conservation plan for a full interchange with entrance and exit ramps off of Route 8 at Lopus Road. There are provisions to widen Pent Road to Lancaster Drive and reconnect Lopus to Route 42. J. Fitzpatrick explained that Planning & Zoning is bringing this plan to all of the Town Boards to request their support moving forward.
- D. ME Fernandes asked if people's homes will be taken away and that this part of the plan be discussed with the public. J. Fitzpatrick admitted that homes may be claimed under eminent domain law and this was not something that P&Z is taking lightly. There will be difficult choices to be made and they will look for solutions to benefit the most people.
- E. S. Ruhl asked about the entrance to the Pent Road fields and J. Fitzpatrick explained that the plan involves an improved entrance to the park which will allow for better traffic flow and walking access to the bottom lot of the ball fields.
- F. S. Ruhl asked how the plan will affect small businesses in town and J. Fitzpatrick noted that the Lopus Road landscape would change. Businesses would need to know who their customers are to determine the impact and market to residents and commuters accordingly. The project would change the nature of the downtown area also, potentially making it a walking friendly setting.
- G. ME Fernandes asked if the plan takes away people's homes and hurts small businesses, how it helps the town. J. Rodorigo explained that the plan hopes to attract business into the industrial park to bring tax revenue into Beacon Falls and reduce the tax burden on the residents.
- H. S. Ruhl asked about the process and what happens first. J. Fitzpatrick explained that the plan will take many years and they are seeking federal and state monies to fund the project. The first steps are rallying support from the town boards, local business owners, State Representatives, etc. and a public hearing will be part of the process.

**D. SPORTS LEAGUES**

- 1. Basketball Leagues are winding down and ending in early March.

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2. The Harlem Globetrotters event with the Basketball League is Friday night, 2/21 at 7:00 PM at the Webster Bank arena and 135 tickets were sold. The children will have a chance to have their picture taken at half time with the team, a waiver is needed.
3. Baseball and Softball registrations are underway for spring.
4. Field Use applications for spring are due to the Board by the March meeting.

**E. PARK ACTIVITIES**

1. The Salmon program is still running through March and A. Sirowich is looking into programs for spring, such as bakery and art.
2. The K-5 Zumba class began on Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> and is close to reaching the 30 student maximum.
3. There was an ad in the Citizen's News for an adult Zumba class, which needs to be addressed, as Parks & Recreation was not sponsoring this class.
4. J. DeGennaro has a small group looking for Monster Jam tickets. She is also running discounted tickets to a Disney Junior performance.
5. J. DeGennaro plans to run a 1day American Red Cross Babysitting Class on Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> for ages 11 and up. The cost of the class will be approximately \$75.00 per student. Details to follow.
6. The tentative dates of the Summer Recreation Camp are July 7<sup>th</sup> through August 8<sup>th</sup>.
7. J. DeGennaro hopes to run Swim Lessons again this summer and she is looking into this program.
8. B. Egan rescheduled the concert he had planned for June 7<sup>th</sup> and is working on booking more summer bands.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The commission received a thank you card from former member, Stan Osowiecki.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Regarding the Parks & Recreation website, the site is up and running with 145+ people visiting it so far. Beth Bucciferro is tracking usage of the site. The commission needs to decide how to publicize it.
- B. The Paypal account has been approved and a second Checking Account is being set up by the town's financial person in order to receive payments for Special Activities. PayPal can be established as soon as this checking account is in order.
- C. The commission reviewed how the site currently looks. Currently, there is only 1 program open for registration on the site and it is the free Family Fishing Class. Beth would prefer to get PayPal up and running before we put online registrations into effect.
- D. Beth will be training J. DeGennaro on how to add and change content on the site.

**APPLICATIONS**

The deadline for spring Facilities applications will be March 15, 2014. The commission has received one application from Woodland High School for use of Pent Road for the spring.

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**GRANTS**

- A. The commission has submitted a grant for recycle bins through Dr. Pepsi/Snapple grant program.
- B. Under the Katharine Matthies grant, which was awarded last summer, the Foundation will not allow the pavilion to be moved from Pent Road to Tobey's Pond. J. Rodorigo is looking into possible locations for the pavilion at Pent Road. The monies need to be spent for the pavilion by this spring.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

No bills at this time.

**BUDGET**

- A. A draft of the proposed 2014-2015 Parks & Recreation budget was sent to all members for review and comments/questions. There may be one revision to the budget with regard to Summer Camp salaries, in the event that minimum wage for the Junior Counselors needs to be increased.
- B. The Commission must also review the 5 year Capital plan for Parks & Recreation, which should include equipment and machinery, major maintenance planned in the next 5 years and major projects at the parks.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Derek Palange should be notified of his appointment to the commission.

The commission wishes to change the date of the regular March meeting, which is currently scheduled for March 17<sup>th</sup>, St. Patrick's Day.

S. Ruhl will now be signing off on Parks & Recreation bills.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**B. Egan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM. J. DeGennaro seconded the motion. All ayes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Erin A. Schwarz  
Clerk, Parks & Recreation Commission