

Dartmouth – Dog Advisory Work Group
Tuesday – September 22, 2015 – Minutes

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DARTMOUTH TOWN CLERK

I. Call to order

President Rick Oliveira called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm with the following members present: Nancy Mahoney, Jenn Mello, Karen Harb, Diane Camacho, LeeAnn Quint, Rick Rodrigues, and Jo-Anne Gallant. Visitors included Mark LaValley and John Nelson. Also in attendance were two Parks and Recreation Board members; Tim Lancaster and Jim Vieira.

II. Parks and Recreation Report

A motion was made to suspend the usual order of business and allow Tim Lancaster and Jim Vieira to update us on the progress of the dog park. The motion was seconded and passed. Tim indicated that Deborah Wender and David Cressman handled the bid process, but reported that both the first and second round of bids were not acceptable. The first round was unsuccessful as the timeframe we set was when most contractors were already booked. A new timeframe was established and the bids were reopened. The second time the lowest bid was \$100,000 over budget. Because the general contractor has the responsibility of not only the rough construction and grading, but also the walkways, fencing, utilities, and finish work, he would have to hire numerous subcontractors. As a result the costs to the town are higher. The town can complete the project and stay within the budget if it acts as the general contractor and uses town workers to complete some of the projects. The idea was pitched to a Stanton Foundation representative, a retired general contractor from Western Massachusetts. Representatives from the town met with the lowest bidder to get a price on just the rough construction, which includes clearing, grubbing, and grading the area for the dog park. The town would then take over and complete the fencing, signage, electrical work and water installation. The Project Consultant, after reviewing projects the town has done in the past, was convinced the town, with its resources, could complete the dog park. However, when the Stanton Foundation Board met, they were not convinced for several reasons. First of all, the grant is not a reimbursement grant where upon receiving receipts, money is released. The entire project would need to be completed before any monies are released. They are not sure the town would have the funds on hand to complete the project. A general contractor is bonded where the town is not. If there are problems with the general contractor, the Stanton Foundation can file a lawsuit to ensure completion of the park. They are uncertain as to the recourse they would have if the town fails in its responsibility to complete the park, despite assurances from the town that the park would assume complete liability for completion. However, the foundation still wants to work with us to complete the park. Tim was unsure of the next step, as David Cressman and Deborah Wender have not had the opportunity to meet since the Stanton Foundation decision. One possibility was to rebid, and another to bid out portions of the project to different bonded contractors. The town, as a show of good faith, even offered to take the \$47,000 needed for the electrical work out of the Stanton budget and pay for it out of its own Capital Improvement budget. Tim assured the board that despite the setbacks, the town Parks and Recreation Department is willing to do everything possible to construct the dog park. Rick O. thanked both Tim and Jim for their efforts.

III. Reports - Jo-Anne and Rick R.

The minutes from May were approved. There were no minutes for the summer months due to lack of a quorum. Treasurer Rick R. presented his report, which was approved unanimously. After unsuccessfully approaching Bank of America about reducing its fees, Rick indicated that he opened a new account with Citizen's Bank. Citizen's does not charge fees to non-profit organizations. Once the checks and deposit slips come in, he will close the Bank of America account. Our present balance is \$4361.04. Diane indicated she had two checks from Dr. Pietsch, who continues to generously support the park. The board also acknowledged Karen Harb for her donation of \$92 from Paint Night.

IV. New business

A. Meeting date change – Rick O.

The Executive Committee met and decided to suggest we change the day of the week for our meeting. Several board members had conflicts with Tuesday. After discussion, a motion was made to move our meetings to the second Wednesday of the month. The motion was seconded and passed. October 14th

will be our next meeting. In November, due to the Veteran's Day holiday, we will meet on November 4th. Our December meeting will revert to the second Wednesday, December 9th. The meeting change will be posted to our Facebook pages and the website. Hopefully, the new day will enable others to join us.

B. Executive Board Structuring – Rick O.

According to our bylaws, we can have both voting and nonvoting board members. As we have had several meetings without a quorum, the Executive Committee discussed restructuring the board to enable those in support of the dog park but unable to attend regularly to continue as nonvoting members. Nonvoting members, referred to as Advisory Members, may attend when they are able and participate in any events we may have. The Board could then be expanded to include others who are able to be more actively involved. Prior to our next election, each board member will receive a letter explaining the changes. In November, when we need to prepare the Slate of Officers to present in December, board members will be able to decide in which capacity they wish to serve, and if voting board positions open, we will seek new board members.

C. Executive Board Election – Rick O.

As per the changes to our bylaws voted in the spring, we will hold elections in January, 2016. The Slate of Officers and Board Members will be finalized at the December meeting and posted prior to the January meeting.

D. Other

1. It's All About the Animals - Diane

On October 18th, It's All About the Animals is holding an Open House and are soliciting vendors. As it is a first time event, there is no fee. Jenn will be there representing J.C. Wagmore. Diane submitted an application, and she and Jo-Anne will attend. Karen and LeeAnn also are free and will help. It is Sunday the 18th from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. As we've done in the past at similar events, we will have information about the park, sell peanut butter bones, and put together a basket to award those who visit the booth.

2. Agawam Dog Park – Diane

Diane reported on the Agawam Dog park opening. The park, also funded by the Stanton Foundation, was quite large, with a large and small dog area. However, it was a flat area with water already accessible and no need for electricity. In speaking with the Park designer, he indicated our park is limited due to the wetlands and elevation. Agawam is selling a 2016 dog calendar for \$15.00 as a fund raiser. Individuals submit photos at \$15 apiece, and sponsors are included on each page at \$100 per ad.

3. Humane Society-Forever Paws- Warren Animal Shelter Fundraiser – Karen

Karen recently attended a fundraiser at Coastal Winery and indicated that there was a \$10 fee to enter. You get a sampling of wines and a description of what foods might go well with the wine. The winery is in South Dartmouth off of Pardon Hill Road. Karen spoke to the owner and they will do a fundraiser for us. She will look into it.

4. Upcoming events

Rick mentioned there is a Great Pumpkin Road Race and Dog Walk on October 25th. He asked if we could share the information on the Facebook pages and website. Mark just liked a wine tasting at a local winery that allowed you to bring the dog. It is a fundraiser for the Portsmouth Dog Park and is also on October 25th. Diane will share on the information on our Facebook pages.

V. Old business

A. Macy's fundraiser – Diane

We sold 85 tickets and raised \$425 for the park by selling the Macy's passes.

B. Splash event – Jenn

Everyone who attended had a great time. By filling the class, we raised \$464 and added an additional \$185 from the raffle. Thank you to Karen for donating back the money she won. After adding in the JC

Wagmore peanut butter cookie sales, we raised a total of \$639 in just 3 hours. We did leave a \$20 tip for the leader from the money we raised. This fundraiser was easy to put together, especially as it was all advertised online. It breaks down to \$220 an hour! We did have others interested in attending who could not attend on that night. It was suggested that perhaps next time we could do a wine goblet. If we did it in early February, the goblet could be filled with candy and given as a Valentine's gift.

C. Vote – DCTV Dog Program – Rick

Cindy Marlin presented a case for a DCTV program on dogs airing once a month at the last meeting. While it would be a great way to advertise the park and get more volunteers, we are not in a position to host such a program at this time. Diane moved that we table the DCTV Dog program at this time. The motion was seconded and passed.

D. Status on Comedy Show – Diane

Diane investigated and found a professional promoter would cost between \$1300 and \$1500. The promoter brings in all the acts, but we would need to secure a venue able to hold at least 300 people. We would also have to sell tickets at \$20 each to fill the venue. Diane felt that we are not ready to host such a big event. Karen indicated she attended a comedy night and there were between 400 and 500 people there. Tickets sold were \$30 each and there was an Auction as well. John noted that it is a risk, especially since the upfront costs are so high. Generally the board felt we should stay with the smaller fundraisers at this time.

E. Other

While we need to plan another fundraiser, it is hard at this time of the year. We had one in September, and November and December tends to be charity season. Perhaps it is time for another restaurant fundraiser. We could consider another spaghetti dinner. Karen suggested Yankee Candle, as candles make great gifts for the upcoming holidays. Her Girl Scout troop of just 10 scouts raised \$350, and the sales were directly with Yankee Candle online, and candles are shipped directly to the purchaser. The board liked the idea and asked Karen to set it up by the next meeting.

VI. Next meeting

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, October 14th at 8:00 pm.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Gallant