

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
Parks & Recreation Commission
April 7, 2015**

MINUTES

Call to Order

6:00pm: Chairman Shute called the meeting to order

Present: Jeff Shute, Chairman; Julie DeCosta, Amy Harrington, Ken Heckman, Jack Hutchinson, Brian Layton, and Ernie Robert Members

Excused: Melissa Robertson, Member

Also Present: Joe Manzi, Parks & Recreation Director

Minutes of February 2015

Motion: E. Robert moves the minutes as written

Second: Chairman Shute

Discussion: J. Manzi clarified the votes from the February Minutes of 8 in favor did not count him in the tally as he does not vote. The 8 affirmative represented the seven members present and the Chair.

Vote to approve: Yea 6, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

(Member Ken Heckman was absent at the time of this vote)

Citizens Comments None

Outstanding Business

Chairman Shute noted Member Julie DeCosta's expiring term and asked whether she was interested in serving another term. She agreed and will see Kevin Barry to complete the necessary paperwork.

Program Updates

E. Robert asked for an update on the After School Program and concerned parents. J. Hutchinson recapped that, following the Commission's February meeting, he met with two parents who had expressed a concern with the After School Program. There was concern specifically with the 4:00 quiet hour/study time and the structure of that time was seen by the parents as a negative. J. Hutchinson spoke that he has since visited the Program several times and feels good about the way things are being run. He found kids to be engaged and felt the atmosphere to be relaxed. One of the concerned parents wanted the emphasis of the program to be more active, as an extension of their at-home style, but J. Hutchinson was discussed with them how that format may not always be expandable to a group of sixty kids. Following the conversation with the parents, Commission Members and J. Manzi, one of the children is no longer attending the Program, but overall it was felt that the structure of the program follows as the paperwork advertises.

Deerfield Bulldogs - Introduction

Four representatives from the newly established youth football program, the Deerfield Bulldogs, visited to speak with the Commission. In attendance were Brain Gaudreau, President; Joe Brown, Vice President; Aileen Jones, Treasurer; and Cheryl Brown, Secretary. Ms. Jones opened the conversation by giving an introduction of the Program. The goal for the team is to be an instructional focused football program for children in grades three through eight. The Bulldogs will be a member of the Seacost Junior League ("SJL") and hope to prepare players of Deerfield and the surrounding towns so that they might seamlessly transition into the Concord High School Program.

Ms. Jones spoke that the group is looking for a home base for its team and would ask that the Commission work with the Bulldogs to look at a five year field development and maintenance program. J. DeCosta asked where the kids are currently playing and the group responded that they come from a various leagues, namely Raymond and Hooksett. Mr. Gaudreau spoke that the format of the SJL allows for flexibility between level of play based on both a player's size and skill. He emphasized that having one constant program from level to level, including plays and philosophy, better prepares the players and allows them to advance at a faster pace.

The Bulldogs are working on completing their 501(3)c application. The 3rd and 4th grade teams will play 8 players on the field and ideally have 11-12 kids on the team, grades 5 through 8 play with 11 on the field and would ideally have 17-18 kids on the roster. J. Manzi asked whether the fields involved goalposts, Mr. Brown answered no, that they can at the older levels, but that it was not a requirement. The exact dimensions of the fields were not immediately available. J. Hutchinson asked when the season runs and Mr. Gaudreau answered late August through November for playoffs. A. Harrington, whose son plays football in the CHS program, spoke that her son did start later in the sport than most others as he began as a Freshman at CHS. She asked what the source of funding for the program was, Ms. Jones spoke that they plan to fund through fundraising and out of pocket. She noted that they have received amazing support in various forms from SJL.

J. Hutchinson spoke that, at this point, the Parks and Recreation Department does not have the field space to allocate to the Bulldogs at the level they would need. Most Recreation teams are typically getting one practice a week, sometimes with shared field space. The Commission has plans to re-sod the Hartford Brook fields and there is a strong need to develop the fields, but right now he does not believe there is a capacity. It was suggested the Bulldogs speak with the School. Ms. Jones confirmed that they had been in contact with Cindy Hanson and the School and are looking at a space down behind the playground as a potential practice location. They will be going before the School Board in the coming weeks to ask permission.

Epping has OK'd the use of its field as a home field for the Bulldogs in year one, and the team does have the option to be the constant travelling team which may buy a few year's time. The ability to develop Hartford Brook in the 3 to 5 year timeframe was touched on. J. Hutchinson spoke in support of the program and stressed how important it would be for the Bulldogs to have a consistent set of values as is integrated into all Deerfield Recreation. He welcomed the enthusiasm and energy of the group. E. Robert asked the Bulldogs to provide further information to the Commission so that they can be informed as the buzz in town begins. Ms. Brown circulated business cards and encouraged everyone to visit www.deerfieldbulldogs.com to learn more, flyers will be going home to students in Epsom, Northwood and Deerfield in the coming weeks. The group thanked the Commission for its time.

Deerfield Hoop Classic

J. Manzi updated the Commission that the Deerfield Hoop Classic had been another great success and thanked especially E. Robert for the help with cleaning up each night after the games. There had been some concern with the School Custodian at the state the facilities were left in following the first night of the Tournament, but the issue was quickly resolved. K. Heckman shared that he was at a tournament in Marshood wearing his Deerfield t-shirt and was approached by someone there speaking highly of the tournament. J. Manzi spoke that there was one instance of poor fan behavior that was addressed and put a stop to immediately.

J. Manzi asked that the Commission think about the relationship between the Parks and Recreation Department and Travel Teams going forward. Overall he feels that the focus of the two programs differs slightly, with the Travel teams placing a larger emphasis on competition, and he feels that maintaining a healthy balance between the two groups is important. There were some struggles during the tournament with a particular Travel Team, the coach failed to sub all players into the game and the players on the team were stressed causing for an uncomfortable situation all around. K. Heckman expressed that he feels it is important for the athletes to have exposure to the sport at the Travel level. At the start of the season for the team he coached his players had a bit of culture shock, but as the season progressed they learned how to compete and he feels that has value. He also echoed the comments of the Bulldogs in the need to have consistency as the kids move through the programs from grades 3 through 8 so that they can be more efficient and have more time in the season to fine tune their developmental skills rather than spending time learning a new program. K. Heckman agreed that there needs to be a healthy balance between playing time and the priority to win. J. Manzi spoke that Deerfield, for its size, is competing successfully against year-round sport and larger communities. During the basketball season Joe saw concern from parents with Recreational practices being scheduled around Travel schedules and he feels there needs to be better clarity around what the teams are.

GBW Playground Update

J. Manzi has plans to meet with the individuals from Ultiplay on April 26th to discuss the GBW Playground assembly.

The hope is to have the structure in place in June before the start of the Summer Program.

Budget Updates

J. Manzi reminded the Commission that, with the failure of the Town Budget, there will be no extra funds available for the Gazebo field or Old Home Day fireworks. He will approach the Fair Association to see whether they will again sponsor a portion of the \$4,000 cost of the Fireworks.

Bicentennial Field Updates

J. Manzi updated that the repair work to the batting cages will be started shortly. He will be meeting with the Girl Scouts next week to look at projects they may be willing to take on. The tentative date for the Spring Field day is April 25th, but that date may adjust based on the baseball teams and a late start to their season.

Joe Stone Scholarship

J. DeCosta updated that all scholarship information is on the website. The Commission will use the May meeting to review applications and make a decision.

Hartford Brook Development

The Commission agreed that, especially following the Bulldogs conversation, that there is a need to move forward with making the space as usable as possible. Regarding the use of limited space, J. Hutchinson suggested having the Baseball/Softball coaches go to watch how a College practice is run, he felt they may find some fresh ideas and be inspired to restructure the approach to practices. He spoke of the need to identify a local resource who is familiar with field development and knows the business. J. DeCosta asked whether Members would be opposed to fully closing Hartford Brook for a year and using the Fairgrounds. The conversation will continue in meetings to come.

250th Anniversary

E. Robert asked for input from Members on the goal for a communal meal during the 250th Anniversary. The Anniversary Committee members have been brainstorming and he wanted to get a feel from the Commission before committing member or funds to an event. There was some talk of doing a dinner or ball in January. J. Manzi suggested maybe working a First Night event into the line-up as a kickoff to the Anniversary Year. J. Hutchinson added that, while vendors may be on site for the main event, there has been talk of having some sort of communal meal during the July festivities. Perhaps one where different groups are designated different items, for example the Fire Department providing baked beans, and Parks and Recreation providing chicken. The item will be revisited at a later date.

Adjournment

Motion: J. DeCosta moves to adjourn the meeting of April 2015

Second: J. Hutchinson

All in Favor – Motion Carries – Meeting Adjourns at 8:20p

Next Meeting Tuesday, May 5th @ 6:00pm

*The Minutes were Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katherine A. Libby, Recording Secretary.
Pending Approval by the Parks & Recreation Commission*