

TOWN OF DEERFIELD
Parks & Recreation Commission
January 5, 2015
MINUTES

Call to Order

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

Present: Jeff Shute, Chairman; Julie DeCosta, Ken Heckman, Jack Hutchinson, Ernie Robert, and Melissa Robertson Members

Excused: Amy Harrington & Brian Layton Members

Also Present: Joe Manzi, Parks & Recreation Director

Minutes of December 1, 2015

Motion: M. Robertson moves the minutes as written

Second: E. Robert

Vote to approve: Yea 5*, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

**Member Jack Hutchinson was not yet present at the time of this vote*

Phil McPherson - Eagle Scout Project

Phil McPherson, an employee of the Parks & Recreation Department, approached the Commission with the idea that he would like to build an Outdoor Classroom as his Eagle Scout Project. He feels the project would benefit both the Parks & Recreation Department and the Town and noted that all labor and fundraising costs associated with the work would be handled by the Troop under his leadership. J. DeCosta asked what an outdoor classroom was, P. McPherson responded that it would be a half circle with raised seating, similar to an amphitheater. He has spoke with Joe Manzi and looked at the corner near the tennis courts or between the basketball court and playground. The Commission agreed that it was a great idea and voiced a preference for locating the classroom in the rear corner near the tennis courts.

Motion: E. Robert moves to support the Eagle Scout Project as presented

Second: K. Heckman

Vote: Yea 6, Nay 0, Abstained 0 - Motion Carries

Derrick Hopkins - November 2015 Meeting Follow Up

Derrick Hopkins voiced that he did not feel much was gained from the November meeting. He noted that J. Hutchinson had supported the Travel Basketball group at the School Board Meeting, which was helpful, but that there seemed to be too much old baggage surrounding the sports programs to make strides forward. Mr. Hopkins had expected to be greeted by the Commission openly and he felt that he was greeted with disrespect, bordering on contempt, and asked for an apology. J. Hutchinson countered that he had been insulted at the November meeting in the way the issue was presented, he was disappointed that community members came to the meeting with complaints as opposed to asking "how can I help", and felt that there was a general lack of understanding of the way Deerfield works. Mr. Hopkins spoke that he sees a disconnect between the Commission and the community and feels it is an ongoing challenge to get both groups on the same page. He and his wife are trying to help and to participate in the process.

J. Manzi spoke that, part of what he took from the November meeting, was that there is a belief that "...for 10 years, nothing has been done on the fields," and he feels that the Community does not understand the lack of funds and that the Commission and Department are doing the best they can with the money available. Mr. Hopkins responded that, after reviewing the 2015 revolving budget, he sees \$8,000 in revenue from baseball and basketball and the fund running with a \$30,000 surplus each year. Chairman Shute noted that the \$30,000 surplus has been kept as a reserve for unanticipated costs such as a van repair or purchasing a new furnace for the George

B. White Building. Mr. Hopkins voiced his belief that the money is there to better manage and chip away at projects over time.

Mr. Hopkins asked whether the Commission had taken anything away from the November meeting with items to address. J. Manzi offered the history of how the Town's sports came to fall under the Parks & Recreation Department's oversight first with basketball and then soccer and baseball/softball to follow. A lack of continuity among the volunteer base was the primary reason the community looked to the Department to take over the running of the programs. J. Hutchinson spoke that he feels there were two clear outcomes from the November meeting, to separate out Travel Basketball and for the Commission to offer its support of the new group. Mr. Hopkins updated that the Travel Basketball group has secured insurance and have an formed an organization, but have not yet started to practice. He asked that J. Manzi provide them with email lists for the Parks & Recreation players, J. Manzi agreed adding that he has been forwarding all tournament information that comes to the Town to Scott Shimer.

Mr. Hopkins spoke that his general vision is to make sure that all kids are supported in Deerfield, and finds that with the more advanced athletes that support is lacking. J. Hutchinson reasserted that there is nothing prohibiting the group from forming an elite club based out of Deerfield. J. DeCosta spoke that area club-based programs have always been around. She personally participates in the Parks & Recreation Adult Softball Program, but understands that if she wanted to play on a more competitive all-women's league, she would travel to Manchester to do so. Mr. Hopkins spoke that he would like to see all sports, recreation and competitive, for all seasons, turned over to this new independent entity.

In closing, the Commission agreed that it is open to hearing any specific proposal Mr. Hopkins and the club have for assuming direction of sports in Deerfield, but that the decision would ultimately be up to the Community.

Hartford Brook Update

J. Hutchinson updated that he has been over the building plans with the Building Inspection to make some structural adjustments. Once the septic design is approved the building permit will follow. He has a check for the State permitting fee ready to be delivered today and is hopeful for a quick turnaround with the other permits. Dave Drapeau updated that the foundation and backfill are complete. J. Hutchinson will get the specifications for vinyl, corner boards and the roof and have them approved by Jeff White. J. Hutchinson also presented the final draft of the Warrant Article and spoke that they will need to collect 25 signatures by February 9th. Chairman Shute will bring the Article before the Select Board at its Monday meeting to allow them the opportunity to express support.

Motion: J. Hutchinson moves to put forward the Warrant Article as presented

Second: J. DeCosta

Vote: Yea 6, Nay 0, Abstained 0 - Motion Carries

J. Manzi asked what the Spring usability would look like for the field surface? Mr. Drapeau responded that, so long as there are not momentous amounts or late arriving snow, he believes it will be ready for us. It was agreed that the Commission and Volunteers need to put together a punch list of phase two items to keep momentum for the project rolling. Items would include backstops, dugouts, fencing, signage, soil maintenance, etc.

Deerfield 250th Anniversary Celebration

J. Hutchinson provided a schedule of programming for the January 9th event at the Church and Town Hall. Dinner at the Church will begin at 5:30. The Church will provide chicken, lemonade and ice cream sundaes and attendees are asked to bring a vegetable or other side dish to share. The presentation at the Town Hall will follow at 7p. There are opportunities for volunteers to help with parking of cars at the Church.

Other Program Updates

J. Manzi updated that the Hoop Classic Tournament will be March 18 - 30. The base of volunteers may be down a bit with the potential loss of the travel basketball families, help will likely be needed at the admission door. He asked whether the Commission wanted to pass the food concessions off to a local fundraising effort, the

Commission agreed to see if the 8th Grade Class would be interested in assuming that responsibility.

J. Manzi would like to begin a “Volunteer of the Month” initiative to recognize some of the great volunteers that help among the programs. He suggested it would be a good way to engage the community and would like to make presentations at the Commission’s monthly meeting. There were no objections.

There will be a Valentine’s Dance coming up and the Department is also working on a Jam Session for local musicians as well as introducing a Wrestling Program led by some local community members with expertise in the sport. M. Robertson asked about the Red Sox trips and J. Manzi responded that he is in talks with the organization, but that the process has been frustrating. The Red Sox offer no group discounting and are looking to sell packages only to less desirable games on less desirable days. He noted that the last three years the trips have resulted in a loss, but that it is still under review.

K. Heckman asked when the Spring programs would begin as the 8th Grade will be hosting another metal drive and they don’t want to conflict with Field Clean up day, he said that the group is currently looking at April 16th as a potential date. J. Hutchinson noted that April 16th is also the Town Wide clean up day and the conclusion of the beard growing competition.

J. Hutchinson spoke that he is continuing to push on the idea of having a Corn Hole Tournament at the 250th Anniversary. The interest on social media has been high and his daughter has volunteered to coordinate the tournament. They are looking to have 32 teams each day with a double elimination format and a set of Corn Hole boards as the prize.

J. Manzi updated that the Holiday Lighting contest went very well and will be a great addition to the Department’s annual events moving forward.

Adjournment

Motion: K. Heckman moves to adjourn the meeting of January 2016

Second: E. Robert

All in Favor – Motion Carries – Meeting Adjourned at 7:35p

Next Meeting Tuesday, February 2nd @ 6:00pm

The Minutes were Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katherine A. Libby, Recording Secretary.

Pending Approval by the Parks & Recreation Commission