

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD**  
**Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**January 3, 2018**

**Call to Order**

6:05 pm: Chairman Shute called the meeting to order

**Present:** Jeff Shute, Chairman; Dwight Barnes, Nate Brown, Julie DeCosta, Bryan Giard, Amy Harrington, and Melissa Robertson Members

**Excused:** Ernie Roberts, Member

**Also Present:** Nick Lawrence, Director, Kevin Hill, Assistant Director

**Minutes - December 2017**

**Motion:** M. Robertson moves the minutes as written

**Second:** B. Giard

**Vote:** Yea 7, Nay 0, Abstained 0 - Motion Carries

**Citizens Comments**

Derrick Hopkins, Raymond Rd, introduced himself as a parent who has coached at many levels of play over the past years. He has advocated for a travel program in the past and feels it would be strongest if done collaboratively with Parks & Recreation. Mr. Hopkins shared his experience last year with the Majors Baseball team and the struggle to form a full team, Deerfield's merger with the Candia baseball teams worked well. Mr. Hopkins has researched neighboring programs, including that of the Candia Youth Athletic Association ("CYAA") and has recommendations for how Deerfield can shift its approach. N. Lawrence confirmed that the Department is open to travel programs, but that increased parental support will be imperative to sustainability. Chairman Shute asked Mr. Hopkins how he would recommend getting more people involved. Mr. Hopkins presented a one-page summary of his research and recommendations, he expressed his optimism that there are enough individuals in the Community willing to be involved.

D. Barnes asked Mr. Hopkins to describe what the "Volunteer Director of Baseball" on Mr. Hopkins proposal would do for Deerfield Baseball that is not being done today? Mr. Hopkins responded that having one person devoted solely to baseball, organizing teams, uniforms, etc. and finding the right team fit for each athlete would allow the program to grow and be more successful over time. He said it's not that things aren't being done, but that there is an opportunity for them to be done better with more sport-specific effort.

Jeff D'Agostino voiced his observation that Volunteers at the 4th and 5th grade level seem to have become disengaged, but that there seems to be a strong pool at the Kindergarten and 1st grade levels.

The Commission thanked Mr. Hopkins for sharing his thoughts and asked for time to consider the recommendations and feedback further.

**Assistant Director Update**

N. Lawrence announced the hiring of Kevin Hill as Assistant Director and welcomed him to the Department. Kevin is a 2010 graduate from Thomas College in Maine and brings a well rounded background in event planning and sports. The Commission welcomed Kevin aboard.

**Hartford Brook Update**

The fencing installation on the softball side is complete and work will now be on hold throughout the Winter. Representatives from the State of NH will be coming in to analyze the field and the work done thus far. Work on the building will resume in the Spring.

Mr. Hopkins asked what the long term use plan for the field is, Chairman Shute answered that it will be for baseball, softball and soccer up to an 8v8 field size. It was confirmed that, with the dugouts in place, the field will be ready for full use, including at the Majors baseball level, this season.

### **Bicentennial Update**

E. Roberts will be replacing a bad motion sensor at the field once weather permits.

### **Winter Carnival**

Winter Carnival will be held February 17th and there are plans for a Fireman's Dinner to be held the evening of February 16th. A list of events was proposed beginning at 11:30 a on the 17th. Nick asked that members email him with availability so that he can fill in the volunteer slots for the various events. It was suggested that the length of the day's activities be shortened by moving up the bonfire start time. Also, the offering of concessions, i.e. hot chocolate, throughout the day was recommended.

### **Hoops Classic**

N. Lawrence confirmed that the Tournament will run March 24 - April 10. Ten teams have already reached out to register with no advertising. He will look to get the flyer and registration forms available by Friday. The Commission agreed the \$200 registration fee should be waived for Deerfield teams who provide volunteers to cover shifts.

### **10 Year Capital Improvement Plan**

N. Lawrence raised a number of suggestions for the Commission's consideration including 1) Completion of the Hartford Brook fields; 2) Purchase of a handicap accessible van for transport, particularly of Seniors; 3) Replacement of the red van; 4) Increase in time spent pursuing grant funds. D. Barnes asked about the use of the red van. It is primarily used to transport equipment and supplies or to pull the Department's trailer. Chairman Shute asked about the condition of other equipment, for example the lawn mowers, and N. Lawrence felt everything was in strong condition. M. Robertson asked that Members think about what improvements might be needed at Bicentennial, for example updating the dugouts/benches. D. Barnes said that in the past a higher netting on the first base side of the Baseball field had been discussed as added protection.

### **Holiday Lighting Contest Recap**

The contest was a success, Parks & Recreation was able to fill the passenger van with Seniors from the Community, primarily from Sherburn Woods. Winners were awarded gift cards from the Blue Bowl, Yannis and The Country Munch. J. DeCosta suggested that next year as participants sign up, they are asked in advance for permission to share their address as the event is promoted.

### **Travel Soccer**

Jeff D'Agostino and Erica Menard were present to continue the Travel Soccer Gap Analysis discussion started at the December meeting. Mr. D'Agostino confirmed there are approximately eight parents who have said they are willing to be involved in the process. He spoke of the importance of having a clear and transparent process, noting that when parents are involved and have taken ownership, they will become the biggest advocates. A proposed process for identifying gaps in the current soccer program was presented, Mr. D'Agostino talked about not going into the exercise with any preset ideas or definitions, the group will need to first define the gaps before they look to start solving perceived problems. Chairman Shute asked how long the group expected the process to take, Mr. D'Agostino estimated three months for phase 1 of developing the community survey, gathering responses, and organizing the feedback provided. He noted that the School Board is in the process of identifying future students and suggested that Parks and Recreation might look to obtain and use some of that information.

**Motion:** D. Barnes moves to accept the Gap Analysis process as proposed and to give a green light to the group of volunteers/sub-committee to begin their work

**Second:** B. Giard

**Vote:** Yea 7, Nay 0, Abstained 0 - Motion Carries

N. Lawrence will relay the responses from the Soccer survey done last Fall to the volunteers and the volunteers will plan to provide the Commission with status updates at the next meeting.

**Other Items**

D. Barnes asked about the status of the signage in front of the George B. White Building, N. Lawrence responded that \$1,000 had been included in the proposed Parks & Recreation budget for 2018, but that amount was removed by the Municipal Budget Committee. He would still look to fund the project from the revolving account and has identified several events throughout the year to be promoted on the sign. John Harrington has provided a contact to assist with design.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** N. Brown moves to adjourn the January 2018 meeting

**Second:** M. Robertson

**Vote:** Yea 7, Nay 0, Abstained 0 - Motion Carries

**Next Meeting Wednesday, February 7th @ 6:00pm**

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

*Pending Approval by the Parks & Recreation Commission*