

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD**  
**Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**September 13, 2018**

**Call to Order**

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

**Present:** Jeff Shute, Chairman; Dwight Barnes, Nate Brown, Tom Buffington, Terry Crotty, Jeff D'Agostino, Tom DuBois, Brian Fisher, Amy Harrington, and Ernie Robert, Members

**Absent:** Bryan Giard, Member

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

Chairman Shute called the meeting to order.

**Minutes - August 2018 Meeting**

**Motion:** E. Robert moves the minutes as written

**Second:** N. Brown

**Vote:** Yea 9\*, Nay 0, Abstained 0 - Motion Carries

*\*J. D'Agostino was not present at the time of this vote*

**Citizens Comments**

Katie Libby asked that the Commission include Citizens Comments again at the end of the Agenda so that if items come up during the meeting Citizens can comment the same evening while it is fresh. She also suggested that the Commission work into its meeting Agenda to do a recurring review of the Revolving Fund and the Accounts Payable/Receivable flowing through the account. She felt it would give greater transparency to the Department and the way the monies are spent. Katie also asked about the Staffing Compensation Steps approved during a previous meeting. She was not sure whether she heard correctly that two additional full time Supervisor positions were going to be included in the Departments staffing roster. N. Lawrence clarified that no, there would be no additional Full Time positions.

**Old Home Day Wrap Up**

Chairman Shute recapped that the event went well, everyone agreed that the scheduling change from Saturday to Sunday was the best choice. N. Lawrence is putting together a survey in order to gather feedback from participants. Chairman Shute spoke that the Chicken Dinner serving process needs to be improved, A. Harrington agreed, noting that the limited number of side dishes that were contributed led to the need for a single line. It was suggested that next year the Department look at supplying more side dishes with an increased ticket cost, perhaps asking individuals to just bring dessert items.

T. Crotty expressed that he felt the day went very well and that the fireworks were a great display. N. Brown suggested that the Cornhole and Adult Baseball be spread out next year as the two activities seem to have the same target audience. He also communicated that more supplies are needed next year for the Ice Cream social. This year cherries and whip cream ran out quickly and the ice cream almost ran out. T. Buffington suggested utilizing checklists and more advance planning next year for the staging of the when and where for each element of the day. Members agreed that the Road Race awards would have been better handled to award medals to the top Male and Female finishers, as opposed to the top overall. It was also suggested that 2019 incorporate a 1 Mile Walk option into the Road Race. Chairman Shute suggested pulling in more adult games, the leaky barrel and wife carry were two suggestions amongst the group. T. Crotty suggested using a map of the space, both for planning purposes, and in the brochure. Chairman Shute relayed that the Blue Bowl may be able to assist with ordering the Chicken for the BBQ next year, N. Lawrence confirmed that he will find out what they can get for per pound pricing.

### **After School Clubhouse Update**

N. Lawrence updating the Commission that the After School Clubhouse (“ASC”) wait list currently holds 32 kids, this is primarily due to lack of staffing. Three interviews were held this week and two of the candidates have accepted positions. Members recognized that the situation is causing stress to families and the community. N. Lawrence indicated that they are using a max student to staff ratio of 10:1. J. D’Agostino asked whether the two hires would result in the waitlist being reduced to 12, N. Lawrence answered that he is not able to make any commitments at this time, as it will depend on staffing and other factors. J. D’Agostino asked whether the Program continues to use the Staff in Training (“SIT”) help and whether the participation may increase if those were compensated positions, N. Lawrence responded that the SITs are generally 12 to 13 year olds and that there are legal limitations on employment and compensation.

T. Buffington asked what the onboarding lag time is for new hires and N. Lawrence responded that with mostly on the job training the lag would be roughly five days. B. Fisher asked about the target number of additional staff and N. Lawrence answered that it would be nice to hire at least three more. He indicated that the starting wage is \$8/hour and confirmed that it can be a difficult shift to fill from 2p to 6p each day. T. Crotty asked whether the ASC supervisor had been invited to the meeting, N. Lawrence confirmed that she had. T. Crotty expressed that \$8/hour feels a bit low. N. Lawrence said that they have reached out to area schools and the positions are posted on Indeed, the Town Website, Facebook and in the Communicator. T. Buffington suggested shifting the focus of the recruiting efforts to include older individuals in Town who may have some time to spend with the youth. T. DuBois suggested waiving the attendance costs if there were a local parent who could fill the position and bring their own child. Zach Langlois, School Board Representative, suggested that the School’s Facebook page may be another good way to advertise. Chairman Shute suggested that Nick connect with Paul Yergeau who is organizing the Teacher Intern pool this year.

Z. Langlois spoke that the Deerfield Community School has 555 students currently enrolled, a number that is 25-30 students ahead of last year’s projections. This drastic bump is straining the bussing situation and, adding to that 32 waitlisted ASC students who are now needing to be dispersed among the other busses,7 is creating a very stressful situation. He indicated that School Administrators are having to deal daily with bussing needs and monitoring capacity. He spoke that, if growth trends continue, it would not be unreasonable to see 600 students at the school, and encouraged the Commission, if they are seeing demand for 120 students at ASC this year, to expect as many as 150 in years to come.

N. Lawrence has met with the Fire Chief who took the square footage of the space and verbally indicated that capacity could be between 150 and 160, he is waiting on that number in writing. Chairman Shute reminded that the ASC is a service, akin to private after school care, and stressed that it is not the responsibility of the Town to provide care to every student, when it’s full it’s full. J. D’Agostino suggested utilizing a gift card or program credit for any Staff referrals that result in a hire.

### **Soccer Kick Off Review**

N. Lawrence recapped the success of the Soccer Jamboree, the event took a lot of preparation and it was great to have an opportunity to recognize the volunteers. He thanked Jeff Shute, Jeff D’Agostino, Jack Hutchinson, Ernie Robert and Dwight Barnes for their time and effort that went into the day. J. D’Agostino noted that he estimates 100-120 hours of time, outside of Nick and Kevin’s time as Department employees, went into the event. He feels the Commission needs to figure out a better way to address planning and efficiency, including the formation of sub committees and spreading the commitment across more individual volunteers who are taking ownership of the endeavour. N. Lawrence commented that the time commitment was specific to this year with the new Program focus and launch, and he does not feel this would be an annual lift. T. DuBois noted the annual Spring Clean Up day where Baseball/Softball families are asked to help get the playing fields in order and suggested something similar should be coordinated for Soccer.

T. Buffington expressed his frustration at seeing the concessions staffed by the 8th Grade volunteers as this is lost revenue for the Parks & Recreation Programs. He stressed the need for the Commission to relight the spark or community involvement. J. D'Agostino spoke that he was approached by three individuals at the Jamboree who volunteered services like website design or project management. He feels now is a good opportunity to harness the energy of the community. He mentioned that the Exeter Soccer Registration forms include a prompt that asks how families will participate, with the options being 1) Coaching; 2) Snack Shack Volunteer; 3) Field Set Up/Maintenance; or 4) Financial Donation.

Members extensively discussed the pros and cons of operating a Concession during sports. A. Harrington noted that most other Towns do offer concessions and so coming to Deerfield and not having that service available can be a surprise. T. Buffington felt strongly that it should be open and volunteering should be a requirement of every family's involvement in the Parks & Recreation Programs. T. Crotty expressed his concern that the sports activities stay true to the core of the support and not get too distracted with items away from that core, such as concessions.

Members agreed that Basketball and Baseball Registration Forms reviewed and updated as needed to include a section on how families will participate. Conversation continued to return to the need to establish subcommittees within the broader Commission and to appoint individuals from the Commission and the Community at large to head each area. N. Brown volunteered to take lead on Basketball and D. Barnes will take lead on Baseball and Softball. T. Crotty volunteered to participate on both of those two subcommittees.

B. Fisher noted that it would be helpful if the subcommittee structure included identification of a Team Parent or other point person responsible for communicating the needs out to Parents. Coaches often have enough on their plates with communicating practice and game information. J. D'Agostino noted the importance of saying "thank you" and setting clear expectations and boundaries associated with someone saying "yes" to volunteering.

D. Barnes spoke that, one of the challenges this past year has been that baseball was run for 15+ years by Joe Manzi wonderfully, but that much of the information was in Joes' head. He is working with Kevin and Nick to document everything that goes into each activity and the goal is to become more proactive with the timeline of preparation, this will be important to the success of all the Department's programming.

Regarding concessions, D. Barnes spoke that it is important to remember that someone donated \$35,000 of their own money to construct the building at Hartford Brook and that this has been a source of insult each time they drive by and see it unused. In the future, the community needs to do a better job in this regard.

### **Tailgate Trick Or Treat**

N. Lawrence spoke that the Tailgate Trick or Treat is scheduled for Sunday, October 28. Once again parking will open at 12p and the gates will close promptly at 1p. Participants will not be permitted to leave the fairgrounds until 3p. The intent is for participation to be limited to Deerfield residents. Members agreed that a sticker or parking pass system be used so that Residents will be required to present a pass when they arrive. The passes will be obtained through the Parks & Recreation Office. Marketing and advertising will be clear on this requirement as well as the expectation that attendees participate fully, including parking inside the fairgrounds and bringing candy.

Chairman Shute will speak with the Chief of Police about how to enforce the parking and unwanted foot traffic and the specifics of using a Police Detail.

### **Veterans Day**

N. Lawrence spoke that this year Veteran's day falls on a Sunday, historically the event has been held 11/11 at 11a, but he is looking for input as to whether the ceremony should be scheduled for Saturday, Sunday or Monday. Members agreed that the best approach would be to hold the event on the day of observance, Monday, November 12 at 11a. The event will include a ceremony, cake and coffee.

### **Other Items**

E. Robert asked whether the rusty goals mentioned earlier were a safety concern? J. D'Agostino will review and revert.

### **Citizens Comments**

Katie Libby suggested that the Commission work to develop a clear Mission and parameters for the After School Clubhouse, including identifying the maximum number of children they are looking to serve. She noted that there may be unintended consequences of too much growth and trying to keep pace with the broader Town trends. It would be helpful to clearly define what the Program is and what it is not. Having a clear communication with the Community around capacity and policies, for example giving families previously enrolled in the programs preferred registration placement, may head off a lot of confusion and frustration.

### **Adjournment**

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

**Second:** E. Robert

**Vote:** Yea 10, Nay 0, Abstained 0 - Motion Carries

**Next Meeting Wednesday, October 3rd @ 6:00pm**

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

*Pending Approval by the Parks & Recreation Commission*