

PARKS COMMISSIONERS
MASON LIBRARY
231 MAIN STREET
GREAT BARRINGTON, MA 01230
MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2011
5:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

KAREN SMITH – VICE CHAIRMAN

PAUL GIBBONS – NOT PRESENT

CHRISTINE WARD

STEVEN BANNON – NOT PRESENT

CHARLES BOUTEILLER – NOT PRESENT

ELIZA CRESCENTINI

THOMAS NORTON

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. because of lack of a quorum at 5:00 p.m.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A. Minutes of September 6, 2011

MOTION: Ms. Crescentini

SECOND: Mr. Norton

VOTE: 4-0

B. Minutes of September 14, 2011

MOTION: Ms. Ward

SECOND: Ms. Crescentini

VOTE: 4-0

2. **PARK CARE AND MAINTENANCE:**

A. Updates from Joe Sokul – DPW Superintendent

Mr. Sokul was not present.

It was noted that the status of the park exercise equipment needs to be followed up on. The speed bump at Lake Mansfield will not be put in until the spring of 2012. The porta-potty enclosure fence has been vandalized. Sections of the fence were chopped out and burned.

MOTION: Ms. Ward that the DPW repair the fence that enclosed the porta-potties for next season.

SECOND: Ms. Crescentini

VOTE: 4-0

The weed fabric is scheduled to be removed by the installer.

MOTION: Ms. Ward to authorize the installer to remove the weed fabric from Lake Mansfield.

SECOND: Ms. Crescentini

VOTE: 4-0

3. **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. **Grove Street Park:** Ms. Crescentini presented a wish list submitted by the residents of Grove Street. New nets, and a new swing set are their priorities. Ms. Smith noted she would like to know how much capital money is available. She thought only about 15 children used the park. She noted we need to know what the expenses are for all the parks. It was noted that Mr. Sokul needs to clarify the water fountain situation at Grove Street Park.

MOTION: Ms. Ward that heavy duty nets are installed at Grove Street Park as a high priority.

SECOND: Ms. Crescentini

VOTE: 4-0

Ms. Smith noted that we need to direct Mr. Gibbons on obtaining a price from John LaRue on a swing set. We also need a plan and price from Mr. Sokul on handicapped access at Grove Street Park. Mr. Norton said he would speak to Mr. Sokul. Also handicapped accessibility should be investigated for Lake Mansfield and all other parks.

4. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Parks Usage Form – Draft

After review, it was noted that the following sentence be changed in the first paragraph of the cover sheet and on the form itself.

MOTION: Ms. Ward - It is recommended that this request be submitted as early as possible. Submit your Park Usage Request form and **proof of Liability Insurance 5 days before the Park and Recreation Meeting of the month previous to your event** so that consideration of your request can be included on the monthly meeting agenda of the Parks & Recreation Commission.

SECOND: Ms. Crescentini

VOTE: 4-0

B. **Use of Gazebo Procedure**

Ms. Smith read the e-mail from the Town Manager dated October 6, 2011 in regard to Music In Common using the Gazebo behind Town Hall and the Parks Commission now having jurisdiction over it. Lynette Naimy of Music In Common submitted a Parks Usage Request to use the Gazebo on Sunday, October 23, 2011. Ms. Najimy did not attend the meeting. Ms. Smith said she followed up on the insurance issue because they stated they are a volunteer organization and can't afford to purchase insurance.

Ms. Smith said she suggested to them to contact a nonprofit organization to assist in sponsoring it because they would have insurance or she could request the Parks and Recreation Commission sponsor it as a Town event. . A Parks Usage Request form needs to be completed for use of the Gazebo just like any other park. Ms. Ward said the Arts Council sets the concert calendar for the gazebo. Ms. Smith said they can set it and advise the Parks and Recreation Commission of the schedule. This includes the summer band concerts and David Grover Concerts.

Ms. Smith said she would follow-up with Mr. O'Donnell on the requirement of insurance and the Police visits to Memorial Field.

6. **BERKSHIRE SOUTH REGIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER:**

A. **Laura Martin – 2011 Summer Park Services Management Report**

There were 3 areas managed by Berkshire South, Lake Mansfield, Memorial Field and the Housatonic Playground.

LAKE MANSFIELD:

Ms. Smith said the way visits are counted at the Lake is confusing because hourly counts are taken and it could be the same people being recounted. There were some people who had an issue with arm floats and someone panicked because they went out too deep.

Ms. Martin noted that the Waterfront Supervisor made the following suggestions:

- 1) Adding more staff hours. He noted people are already at the lake before the staff arrives at 11:30 a.m.
- 2) Hire a third lifeguard for when it gets busy.
- 3) Adding changing areas; possibly something that could be put up and taken down.

Ms. Ward said the Police notified her of an offender who was hanging out at the beach. He wanted to post the picture of the offender and a picture of every other offender at that level at the beach. Ms. Ward said after she spoke to the members of the Lake Mansfield Alliance that they felt it was not appropriate to post their pictures on the bulletin board. It was suggested that the lifeguards could have a book. The offender subject should be included on next month's agenda when there is a full board. Ms. Smith said that Berkshire South should get ideas from other Towns as far as changing stations. Ms. Smith noted that she is concerned about vandalism.

4) Traffic Cones and Pooper Scoopers – Ms. Ward said the traffic cones didn't get put away. She questioned who is responsible for replacing materials when the lifeguards don't take responsibility. She noted that traffic cones help in the cross walk space and should be purchased. Also the pooper scoopers should be supplied.

5) New or back up umbrella holders

The Snappers Swim Team came earlier than they said and Mr. Gibbons gave The Snappers Swim Team permission to use the rescue board but because the lifeguards were still using it, they couldn't let the Snappers use it. There was also a parking problem. It was noted that next year the committee would request that they bus the people up to the lake. They acknowledged that they would do that next year.

6) Expand Staff: The cost for staff at the lake this year is \$19,296.00. It was suggested to have a third guard early in the morning as well as a third person in the afternoon. Ms. Smith requested that Ms. Martin come up with a cost.

7) Swim Lessons – 33 children signed up. There were no problems until the geese arrived. Next year we may need to have a staff person begin 15 minutes before the lessons to clean up the beach area.

MEMORIAL FIELD:

1) Bikers at Memorial Field: The BMX bikers are making up a larger percentage of park goers than previously. Ms. Martin noted that she spoke to a park representative in Rhode Island and they have set up a separate schedule for bikers and skaters. Ms. Martin said there are 6 helmets and they are getting worn out. Ms. Smith noted that they should be sanitized between uses. Ms. Smith said the police need to be called when there is illegal parking and littering at Memorial Field.

Smoking at Memorial Field: Ms. Smith advised that she is going to contact Ms. Barlow at Railroad Street Project about assisting the Parks and Recreation in providing a healthy space for children. There is supposed to be no smoking at any of the parks.

Invite Railroad Street Youth to the March meeting to discuss the smoking issue.

Ms. Ward said that the trash receptacle should either be relocated at Memorial Field or we could add a new one. Ms. Martin said that the people who are playing pickup basketball appear to be leaving their trash. We should make it known to them that an announcement needs to be made about picking up trash. If the groups continue to not pickup trash, they should be banned from the park. Approval of parks usage comes with responsibility.

The water fountain at Memorial Field was repaired but it doesn't work.

Justin Leveille – Skate Park Coordinator advised that the ramps at the skate park need to be repaired. He suggested that once they are repaired plans could be submitted to paint or graffiti sections of the skate park to encourage real artistic graffiti and discourage offensive graffiti. Ms. Smith advised Ms. Martin to put together a list of repairs so she can get them to Mr. Sokul.

Have Joe Sokul investigate the lighting at the park. The basketball nets need to be replaced every spring.

Housatonic

Ms. Martin advised that the Housatonic Playground had lots of activity. Most of the attendants at the park were under 12. The staff noted that they would like signage to notify that playground is being held in the Housatonic Community Center during inclement weather. The staff noted that they would like signs informing patrons of helmet laws when riding bikes. A sign clarifying the drop off policy and a trash receptacle located near the park entrance would be helpful. Advertising of the program should be increased for next year. They also requested putting up signs about "no smoking". Ms. Ward suggested putting a Kiosk in at the Housatonic Playground to post with the calendar of events, parks rules and a daily memo of where the parks group is meeting if a different location or inside.

Ms. Smith said that the total parks visits for Housatonic was 1699 with a cost of \$13,910.40. Memorial field visits was 3835 at a cost of \$19,04.12. There was twice as much visit for 30% of the cost. There was a question if the count is the same? She said cost wise Housatonic is no where near as efficient as Memorial Field or Lake Mansfield. The costs are going to stay the same. The report is showing a decrease. If data is going to be done, we need to have accurate counts. Ms. Martin suggested opening the playground July 1 to begin staffing. Ms. Ward suggested offering workshops, crafts and drama classes. She also noted that Berkshire Pulse is interested in doing workshops. Ms. Ward suggested that announcements be e-mailed to Eileen Mooney at The Newsletter and to Dawn at the Library. Posting also may be made at the Great Barrington Trails Kiosk.

Ms. Crescentini suggested that benches could be put at Hosuatonic Playground. Ms. Ward noted she would like to obtain the opinion of the people who use the park before installing benches.

Ms. Crescentini said she would like Berkshire South recognized for their efforts of operating the parks on behalf of the Parks Commissioners.

The final summary of the Overall Management Report from Berkshire South in regard to the Parks management should be posted on the Town website. The follow-up report should include an itemized request list.

Mr. Norton said he would like to know places where soccer can be played. It was suggested that he look into the back section of Olympian Meadows. Also the basketball court in Housatonic needs to be improved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn Wichmann
Secretary