

PARKS COMMISSIONERS
MASON LIBRARY
231 MAIN STREET
GREAT BARRINGTON, MA 01230
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014
5:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

PAUL GIBBONS

CHARLES BOUTEILLER- NOT PRESENT

THOMAS NORTON

STEPHEN BANNON

PATRICIA SALVI

KATHY PLUNGIS

KAREN SMITH – NOT PRESENT

ANTHONY TROIANO

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. The Parks members introduced themselves to Donovan Lally who is the newest member of the committee. (He was advised by the committee to get sworn in by the Town Clerk).

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Minutes of September 15, 2014

MOTION: Stephen Bannon to approve

SECOND: Pat Salvi

VOTE: 5-0

2. PARKS CARE AND MAINTENANCE:

A. Updates from Joe Sokul – DPW Superintendent - Joe noted that the fountain at the skate park was packed with dirt. It has been cleaned and is now operating. The fountain at Lake Mansfield has a bubbler and a key lock operation for turning on the spigot. Water fountains have been purchased for the Housatonic Playground, Grove Street Park and Memorial Field and will be installed in the spring. Memorial Field will be power raked and the bowl will be sandblasted to remove the graffiti. The climbing apparatus at the lake is worn but still stable. There are no sharp edges but it could be painted. Mulch needs to be added to the swing area and the climbing apparatus area and this will be done next spring. One more parking sign will be put up at Lake Mansfield and one will be moved by the beach area. No dogs allowed signs need to be put in at the water front.

B. Berkshire South Regional Community Center – Laura Martin – Laura noted that she sent out the parks management report to everybody. A suggestion was made for a longer weed fabric and to purchase two more umbrellas as the current ones are worn out. She noted the skate park program ran very well. Another suggestion was to paint the bowl with a mural and to use appropriate paint. The surfaces on the ramps need to be repaired as they are getting worn. Laura noted she would follow-up on the number of people that attended the skate park and Housatonic on Sunday because the report indicates it was slow. Laura said the staff is wondering if dogs are allowed at the Housatonic Playground. She noted there are dog waste bags available and the staff

was confused as to how to deal with dogs. Dogs have been banned at Memorial Field/Skate Park/ Lake Mansfield Beach area, Giggle Park, and Olympian Meadows. It was decided to revisit the dogs in park rules in the spring. The 3 year contract with Berkshire South is up for renewal. Joe advised it will be advertised in May.

PARKS USAGE REQUEST:

Paul said a Parks Usage Request was received from the Hunter Valley Ballet (Pioneer Valley) for a free outdoor dance performance at South Street Park in July of 2015. It was noted that parking may be an issue. We will contact them in the New Year and invite them to come to a meeting.

4. **OLD BUSINESS:**

None

5. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Housatonic Playground – Replacement of Swings – Paul said he received an E-mail from Emily Shaw in regard to the swings at the Housatonic Playground. Paul said he went up to look at the swings and they are in bad shape, they don't meet code and they are on a hill. Tom said he and Andy went to look at them and he contacted John LaRue from Big Toys in regard to fixing the swings vs. purchasing new. His proposal consists of 6 swings/3 bays of two which could be installed at the new playground in a different location than the original plan. Tom said it would fit if we squared off a mulched area that is currently grass near Pleasant, Meadow and Front Streets. The swing set would fit with the proper clearance. The cost would be \$4,063 plus shipping plus 30% for installation. He could come and look at the space and offer suggestions for our next meeting. The area is 23 x 16 sq. feet. The fee is \$250 to do a site visit and inspection but if we purchase something from him he will deduct it. Anthony said we should contact the Tree Committee to see what their recommendations are for trees to establish a tree line. Paul said he would contact the Tree Committee for Arbor Day planting. Paul advised that as of the first of October, our original appropriation was \$45,000 and with carryover it went up to \$65,844 and currently we have spent just \$12,941.18. We have encumbered \$5,650. We still have \$47,252.99 for this fiscal year.

MOTION: Steve Bannon that we authorize \$4,063, for the Big Toys Swing Set, plus shipping and 30% installation cost for Housatonic Playground minus the cost of the mulch.

SECOND: Tom Norton

VOTE: 6-0

Tom said John LaRue will come out and re-measure, confirm the cost and get a proposal to the Committee. Tom said he would check with John LaRue to see if he would include the removal of the existing swings at the Housatonic Playground.

MOTION: Steve Bannon that we authorize \$1,000 for the purchase of mulch.

SECOND: Pat Salvi

VOTE: 6-0

B. Lake Mansfield – replacement of climbing bars – Joe indicated all that needs to be done is to mulch the area. There are no exposed sharp edges and the apparatus is worn but stable.

C. Policy – Individual Request for Parks Usage – Paul said occasionally we get receive requests from people who want to use the park between meeting dates. This particular person (request came after a meeting and before our next meeting) wanted to have a birthday party for between 30 to 40 children and a clown at Giggle Park. Paul said he explained the policy that we could not give him permission to use the park. Paul said he thought that maybe we need a policy for requests that occur in between our meetings. Steve noted that if they want to close the park and have 30 to 40 people, we need more notice and they still need liability. If it is a small number of kids, and they are tax payers, then they have a right to use the park but if they want us to close the park, that is different. The Mahaiwe was also not given permission to use the park because they asked the day before the event. It was also noted that we may want to have a fee for reserving a park. We need to make the policy more explanatory as to what can and cannot be done. Paul said in the future, he would advise that if the park is going to remain open it can be used but if you want the park closed, then it has to come before the board. This needs to be put on our website. Paul said he went to the last Town Manger’s meeting and he brought up a policy for the use of the facilities and what he was told was that we can set any policy that we wish to because the Select Board is not looking at policies for outdoor facilities – they are talking about indoor facilities. At Olympian Meadows and Memorial Field the Little League people have done a lot of work and the Millers prepared the park and we would consider that to be in kind services but if someone wants to use a park for a Tag Sale, etc. there is going to be a fee. It was noted we can come up with a fee policy next year.

Kathy Plungis noted the Lake Mansfield Task Force and Jennifer Tabakin met this morning to give guidance as to what the Task Force and the Parks Commission needs to look at as far as the beach, access to the beach, the playground and the woodlands trails and road. There was a question on what the road serves, is it seasonal, recreational or is it a two way road for the Town. Jennifer wants us to envision the whole space. Our next step may be for Chris Rembold to request from the Select Board money for a landscape design and obtain an environmental landscape architect to determine the best use of the lake. Christine Ward said we will need help in developing the park space. It was suggested to do a survey to garner community thoughts. Parking is an issue at Lake Mansfield and if we expand the parking area it would go into some of the woods and there are wetlands there. It would require another entrance into the parking area. Paul advised that Parks only has jurisdiction over the beach and playground and not the road. It was also noted that we cannot close the lake to people who live outside Great Barrington because federal funds were used so we have to keep it open for everyone. If more equipment such as a permanent changing room or bathrooms were to be put in the area would have to be enlarged. Paul noted the beach area only exists because we have controlled the weeds with the weed fabric. How much more can the park area accommodate? We have to decide if we want to make any changes in the area.

The next meeting is November 10th which will be devoted to the budget.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Wichmann
Secretary,

