

## Lee Recreation Commission Meeting

December 3, 2012

**Present:** Phil Sanborn, Geoff Carlton, Dawn Genes, Dave Young

**Guests:** Charles Cox, Annie Gasowski, Paul Gasowski, Laura Gund, Lori Wright, Cynthia McClain, Charles McClain, Larry Kindberg, Jane Sanders, Dave Cederholm, Steve Slovinski

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes of the November meeting were read out loud. Geoff made a motion to accept November minutes as read. Phil seconded it. Minutes approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Geoff said the fund balances for accounts is approximately the same as last month. CR Smith electrical bill was for \$147. The revolving account has approximately \$1,000.

### Letter from Selectmen to Lee Recreation Commission

Phil and Geoff will talk with Randy Stevens about relocating the materials currently stored in Geoff's trailer (banners, fertilizer, tarps for the baseball field, batting cages, nets, etc.) at the park to town owned storage. ORYA may need to store some.

### Special Town Meeting Voting Results

The vote by the town on November 29 was 709 "no" and 171 "yes" for artificial turf indicating that the voters prefer a natural grass field at Little River Park. Phil said there should be an outside group volunteering to write a warrant article for grass and that no one on the Rec Commission has the time. He said he already put an effort into an artificial field and voters didn't want it. Dave said the Selectmen need to decide if they want a competition field or just a grass area. Phil said the Selectmen can decide what they want for this field and if they want irrigation or not, or to use sod or seed or if they want any fencing protection, or not. Geoff said we are using rocks right now to contain cars in the parking lot at Little River Park. Phil said 4-wheelers come up the back side.

Geoff presented some cost figures to build a grass field from professionals he contacted. He presented the following estimates:

Re-grade existing subgrade	\$ 6,750
Loam (12 inches deep)	\$120,000
Fine grade and laser grade	\$ 5,900
Irrigation	\$ 13,000
Sod and installation	<u>\$ 37,400</u>
	\$181,050

Geoff said it takes two years to get a field ready if using seed. Geoff said he is still working on the right pH at the baseball field.

Phil said if there is an organization or group that wants to do this then they should work on it.

Dave Young said if the town wants the field for tractors, tents, etc. then it might be just a grass field.

Phil suggested that perhaps there should be two warrant articles – one that is competition level playing field and another that is just a grass area.

Geoff said he will work with any group that is trying to get a multi-use competition level field there.

Erick Sawtelle asked what the criteria are for a “competition level playing field”. Phil answered that UNH does compaction testing on their grass fields. Geoff said a competition field is one that is pitched properly, used in various traffic patterns, irrigated, rested and down time, and used 200 to 400 hours per year. Stevens field has no irrigation, is not pitched, and only 6 inches (maybe) of topsoil.

Dave Young said the volunteers on the Rec Commission have put their hearts and souls into making the park and is not sure why the Rec Commission has been painted as having gone rouge.

Geoff said he is very willing to work on this to get quotes.

Paul Gasowski said the Recreation Commission is essentially down to three members and there is a need for many to get things done. He said that many more people need included in this process. He said the Master Plan needs done and articulated. The citizens need to know what this park will cost. This must be crystal clear. Other commissions do this and he doesn't see that what the Selectmen have asked for is unreasonable. They need to know what the plans are. If a subcommittee is needed then the Rec Commission needs to form one. The town has clearly said they want natural grass. “We voted on this action and would like for members of the community to volunteer”.

Phil said no other commission has to do a Master Plan. Phil said when the current people got involved we were volunteering to get something to happen at the Granger parcel. Then we were the Rec Commission. We held a public meeting and asked for input. We took those ideas and moved forward. We got a DES Alteration of Terrain permit, we got engineering drawings, the major league baseball field happened quickly because of the fill coming from the Mill Road project. That catapulted us ahead since we had to move quickly. At each stage of this park, hosting Little River Fest we were listening to folks at that fair, getting input. We want to build a park that is what the Town's people want. The Master Plan would vary greatly depending on if the multipurpose field was artificial turf or not. Last summer the Selectmen said ask the town what they want. Then they said no turf. Then there was the petition.

Paul said the Master Plan completion should be priority one. The Recreation Commission needs to write it in draft form and be vetted by the Selectmen and the town. He said this is a big park, a big project, multigenerational and must meet the needs of a lot of interests in town. A plan that is transparent and that people feel ownership of are necessary.

Dave Young said for seven years that this has been an open committee. Dave said he walked around at past Lee Fairs asking townspeople what they want at the park.

Paul said the Rec Commission needs to go public and get something in print. Be transparent.

Erick asked about the pavilion drawings and if anyone in the room has seen the plans. Phil said the selectmen wanted a budget number and a volunteer offered drawings for free. Erick said you “just got to tell people what you are doing”.

Geoff pointed out that pavilion plans have been shared at the last two town meetings. Dawn said that at one of the July Selectmen's meeting when the architect was present and Geoff and Dawn

were there that it was suggested that there be a public meeting to get input on the final plans for the pavilion. Dawn said for a warrant article we only need the cost estimate, not the final plans.

Paul said the idea should be flushed out and ask the town if they are with us on this.

Phil said that with the atmosphere in the town now that at the town meeting the people could say “no money”. Phil said the interest in athletics in the past from this town has been minimal.

Dawn said that the Master Plan draft was presented to the Selectmen but it hasn't gone beyond this commission and the Selectmen. The draft Master Plan should be revised and shared with the selectmen and posted as a draft on the town website for a review and comment period.

Charles McClain said he understands that the Rec Commission is feeling a bit ‘beat up’ but commended the Recreation Commission for getting what has already gotten done at Little River Park. He feels that there is support for a decent and useable grass field for soccer and other sports. Charles said that it is an accomplishment of the Rec Commission to have moved the selectmen and the town to a more favorable position regarding athletic recreation.

Geoff discussed the authorities of the Recreation Commission and how now everything must be approved by the Selectmen ahead of any actions. Phil commented he doesn't have the time to go before the Selectmen to get approval for every little thing. Dawn commented that she has gone before other town's Selectmen for approval to do things in other towns with the Lamprey Watershed Association and that Selectmen approval is not unusual.

Steve Slovinski noted a change in atmosphere and some tension. He acknowledged that all here and the Selectmen have the best interests of the town in mind. We need to address those. A standard form to request use of town-owned facilities and get prior approval is a good idea. It will help make sure the group has insurance and is responsible for their liability, etc. Steve suggested a meeting with the selectmen to work out these issues.

If the town does not have an application form to use a town facility then there should be one.

Dave Cedarholm said the November 30, 2012 letter from the selectmen to the Recreation Commission was in reaction to the Rec Commission not bringing agreements before the selectmen ahead of time when directly told to do so.

Paul said that once the park is complete it is likely that there is an operating budget to maintain it and that some personnel will be needed to run things. The Rec Commission will then be an oversight board. Right now people are looking for communication and some understanding. The Ag commission relationship with the Selectmen is very good and that if there are things that need discussed with the Selectmen that they have the working relationship to do so.

Phil asked if Paul would help find the “master plans” or long range plans of other commissions and committees in town.

Lori Wright asked if there is interest in an on-line survey to get people's input. She mentioned some free survey assistance from UNH. This might be a good opportunity right now and get everybody to join in the conversation. It could be a feedback tool to a circulated draft Master Plan.

Erick said his own frustration is Rec Commission saying that they are not responsible for the petition to install artificial turf. It seemed to be in opposition to the Selectmen having instructed the Rec Commission to do a survey first to find out what people in town want. Phil said that two weeks later the Selectmen did a draft letter telling the Rec Commission that they MUST go with a grass field. The response from some individuals was to submit a petition warrant to the town to put it to a vote. Geoff said the artificial turf momentum came from him.

Erick said to Geoff that Geoff is seen as representing the Rec Commission and when Geoff is pushing artificial turf it looked as if the entire Rec Commission was for this.

Erick said “if the same amount of energy and attention had been spent by the Recreation Commission on the master plan as had been spent pushing artificial turf that the public would be fully informed of activities and plans”.

Dave Cederholm said that the pavilion may not get built on volunteer labor and volunteer materials. Sometimes these improvements will have a cost.

Larry Kindberg asked about a long range strategic plan for what it will cost to maintain the park over time. Phil said we had an ambitious goal and asked about what other parks have done. Volunteers, banners and concessions are fund raising tools that other parks use and we have, too. Larry asked about the unintended consequences of higher taxes due to facilities. We have an aging population and young people cannot afford the town. He built his house across from the park and think it is a good thing. Information for informed decisions is important.

Phil said that it might be possible for UNH interns to do an internship with the town to help with scheduling, park maintenance, etc.

Dave Cedarholm expressed that all grass fields should be considered multiuse fields.

### **Playground Work at Little River Park**

The Principle at Mast Way talked to the Rec Commission at the Lee Fair and she shared a park in Massachusetts incorporated physics and science principles. A teacher at Mast Way is willing to assist developing a plan for the playground at Little River Park and has experience with building playgrounds and finding grants.

Dawn made a motion that a Playground Sub-Committee be formed that includes teachers, day care operators, and parents to plan the playground area at Little River Park. Geoff seconded it. Motion passed.

### **Ice Skating Rink**

The skating rink has been reassembled. When conditions are right it will be flooded.

Phil thanked those present for coming and for their input.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm. Next meeting is January 7, 2013.