

**Town of Northborough  
Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting  
November 10, 2009**

*Amended Minutes  
Per Request of Parks & Recreation Commission Members  
At December 1, 2009 Meeting*

**In attendance: David Rawlings, David Putnam, Sean McCann, Sean Durkin, Jim Wing, Kara Buzanoski, Allison Lane and Michelle Lyseth; Guests: Police Chief Mark Leahy, Betty Tetreault, Donna Wamback, Rick and Janice Ferenchick, Claudia McGuire (Dog Officer), Anthony and Laura Ziton, Russ Thompson and Tom Hamilton.**

**6:30pm—Meeting called to order.**

**6:31pm—October Minutes.** Sean McCann (SM) made a motion to approve the September minutes, motion seconded by Dave Putnam (DP), motion passed 4-0.

**6:32pm—Security Cameras in Town Parks.** Chief Mark Leahy (ML) told the Commission that he was present to discuss the potential use of security cameras in the Town's parks. ML handed out an outline documenting the pros and cons of using video cameras in the parks 'as part of a crime suppression strategy' (please refer to attached outline). ML said that while cameras would not be a panacea [for criminal activity], he does find them to be a great investigative tool. Discussion followed. Dave Putnam (DP) suggested that better lighting in the parks would be needed as well, in order for the cameras to record images adequately; ML suggested considering infrared cameras. Sean Durkin (SD) said he is 'not a huge fan of cameras [in parks]' but that he doesn't want the town to continue spending time and money resulting from vandalism. Kara Buzanoski (KB) agreed that, as the DPW Director, she is also tired of paying overtime and interrupting the daily work schedule to deal with situations stemming from vandalism. DP worried about displacement from the parks to other areas in town. More discussion followed, then a vote was taken. Four commission members voted 'aye' in support of cameras in town parks, one commission member voted 'nay'.

**6:58pm—Dog Park Presentation by Anthony and Laura Ziton.** Anthony Ziton (AZ) distributed copies of slides he was showing. He said that the group was no longer called 'People Who Play With Pups' and was now called 'The Friends of the Northborough Dog Park'. Approximately seven members from that group were present in the audience. AZ spoke on behalf of those guests, saying that the group has been actively searching for a spot in town where they can let their dogs loose off of their leashes and allow them to socialize with other dogs, in a local, fenced in area. AZ said his group has about 165 families on his mailing list who support such a facility. He also said that there are 1800 registered dogs in town, many of which would benefit from a dog park. He went on to say the group is focusing in on Assabet Park as a desired location. Prior to that, they had been working to use the Yellick Conservation Land as a dog park but were turned down by the DCR. Space at Assabet Park became the next choice, having fit many of their criteria. The area the group is proposing to use is the grassy area near the Splash Pad and at the top of the hill in the park, which is currently not used at all. This area fits their criteria, as they feel it is underutilized and isolated; central location; and will have minimal impact to the surrounding area. AZ went on to say that once a property has been chosen, then the group can work to gain nonprofit status and being fundraising for fencing, mulch, etc. for the dog park. AZ acknowledged that the same park rules would be in force at the dog park, with one exception being that dogs would not be required to be leashed. The same park rules regarding behavior and etiquette will be in force. In addition, they are proposing double-gated entrances to prevent dogs get loose. AZ concluded his presentation by saying that they need guidance going forward, and approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission, before the next step of meeting with the Selectmen.

AL applauded the groups' efforts for their hard work. She added that, at recent MRPA (Massachusetts Recreation and Parks Association) meetings, discussion came up regarding dog parks and how successful they have been in their towns. She said she would welcome anything that would deter dogs from being at Ellsworth McAfee Park. Jim Wing (JW) asked if only Town residents would be allowed to use the proposed park. AZ said that he assumed it

would be open to all as it would be difficult to police. Discussion followed regarding other possible areas in Town. SD suggested the old Fish and Game property, the group said that had been their informal location before the building of the new Senior Center. SD wondered whether there wasn't still sufficient space there, but Claudia McGuire (Dog Officer) said that it wasn't possible per Town Administrator John Coderre, who said that trails at that site are earmarked for 'passive recreation'. DP asked if the proposed park would be open year round, to which AZ replied 'yes'. DP was concerned about reaction from the abutters, SD asked if anyone had spoken to any abutters yet, the answer was 'no', the first step had been to approach the commission. DP said that he was concerned about noise levels but the dog park supporters in the audience chimed in and said that it was 'surprising how quiet the dogs are'. JW was concerned about overcrowding at the park, and said that it always seemed as though the parking spots were full or almost full whenever he went to the park with his son. AL said that she felt the dog park would be utilized on an 'opposite schedule', meaning they would be there in the mornings or evenings, so there would be no significant impact to the park-goers. DP asked if there could be any opposition to Assabet Park being earmarked as a dog park, and KB said that the park's benefactor, Cyrus Gale, donated the land to the town for purposes of 'Recreation for Residents'. She said that once the Commission votes in favor, then the project would move forward, and the public would be notified of the plans. David Rawlings (DR) asked what kind of fence would be erected, to which AZ replied, 'A four foot high chain link fence', Laura Zitton (LZ) added that it would completely circle the park.

A formal vote was taken regarding support for a proposed Dog Park at Assabet Park. Four commission members voted 'aye' in support of cameras in town parks, one commission member (David Rawlings) abstained.

**7:24pm—Eagle Scout Presentation by Tom Hamilton.** Tom Hamilton (TH) introduced himself as a scout from Troop 101. He proposed a list of projects that would benefit the skate park at Ellsworth-McAfee Park. Discussion followed. KB informed TH that he needs to do some more research, and that she was concerned about the installation of several additions that he proposed. KB also said that TH would not be fabricating any of the additions for the park so he would have to consider how he was going to put in the number of hours required to complete an Eagle Scout project. Russ Thompson, TH's advisor, was on hand to help answer some questions. JW asked TH when he saw the project starting, TH replied 'Spring' since it was getting too late in the year, and that fellow scouts would help. DP said that he was concerned that the structural elements of the skate park preserve their integrity. TH will follow up with KB after more research is done.

**7:35pm—Recreation Report by Allison Lane (AL).** AL reported the winter brochure went to print the day before. Approximately \$3500 was raised in advertising sales. No other news to report.

**7:36pm—DPW Report by Kara Buzanoski (KB).** KB told the Board that the department was blowing leaves and doing general fall cleanup. No other news to report.

**7:40pm—New Business.**

- CPC Applications. AL told the Board that December 11 was the deadline to submit CPC applications.
- Open Space Liaison. DP will be the new liaison to the Open Space Committee.
- **New Commission Meeting Time.** The Commission will now meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm (instead of the second Tuesday).

**7:47pm—Meeting Adjourned.**